

**Weekly Devotions
South Holburn Church
4th August 2020**

READINGS

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.
The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalm 51 :15-17

"Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

John 12:24-25 ("The Message" translation)

Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, broken for you. Eat it in my memory."

He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you."

Luke 22:19-20 ("The Message" translation)

"God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grains to give bread, broken bread to give strength."

Vance Havner



kintsukuroi

(n.) (v. phr.) "to repair with gold"; the art of repairing pottery with gold or silver lacquer and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken

REFLECTION

For many years I have been trying to lose weight. One of the ways I have tried is regular exercise and for me that means going to the gym. Gyms are indeed strange places! There are those who go there, like me, trying to get fitter and healthier. And then there are those who 'workout' obsessively trying to get the perfect body. In my youth, I felt uncomfortable in such places and amongst such people – I thought I was being judged for not being as perfect as others.

We are, in our society, somewhat obsessed with perfection. The perfect body, the perfect house, the perfect car, the perfect relationship and on and on and on. Such an obsession is not healthy. It leads to failure. For we cannot measure what perfection is. It is such a subjective thing and, as the experiences of COVID-19 and lockdown have shown, a fleeting thing.

Life is not perfect! All will encounter hardship and difficulty. Yet it is in our very brokenness that lies so much of our hope. It is in our deepest need that we find the love of God most relevant. And it is from our experiences of hurt and hardship, that we can bear greatest witness to God's healing love. Jesus speaks of the kernel of corn which must be planted and broken in order to grow the grain. Out of the brokenness comes the new. Jesus himself is broken, broken on the cross, but out of that brokenness comes the forgiveness of sin and the promise of relationship with God.

How has God touched you in those times of deepest need and greatest hurt? How does God call you now to show the beauty of his touch in your brokenness?

PRAYER

Gracious God,
Creator and redeemer
You are the healer,
You are the restorer,
You are the saviour
You see the loveliness in us when no one else can,
You see the potential when all we feel is crushed,
You turn us around,
Offering forgiveness for sin
Healing in despair
Beauty for brokenness,
Hope in the darkest times.

Gracious God,
These days are difficult days,
COVID-19 still dominates our lives.
There is so much worry and fear about what lies ahead.
So much sadness and hurt at what has already been.
Loving Father,
Bless us so that we never lose hope,
Guide us so that we do not act foolishly
Inspire us to faith so that we do not live selfishly.

Gracious God,

We are reminded that the pain and the suffering of COVID is not limited to our small place in the world,

All around the globe there are those who are in desperate need of hope and healing.

So, we cast our net of prayer wide,

And offer to you our sisters and brothers around the world,

Living through this pandemic.

We remember especially the places where the virus is most virulent today,

India, Australia, USA, Africa and South America.

Bring comfort and strength, healing and hope

Lord we pray.

In Jesus name we offer our prayers,

Amen

