

Some broken hearts... 29th May 2022.

In 1977, before some of you were born, an American songwriter called Waylan D Holyfield released a song called, 'Some broken hearts never mend.' It was co-produced by Don Williams who has the stage presence of a rice pudding, so I am sparing you a video of him. Shame, really, as he has a good voice.

However, the Bellamy Brothers released a musical video cover of the song in which you see this guy of about sixty go into a bar and drink himself into a stupor, despite a load of his friends coming up to him and trying to make him feel better.

Right at the end, you see that he is not snacking from a bowl of peanuts on the bar, but tiny dog biscuits, and then a little Yorkshire terrier walks along the bar up to the man, his face lights up, and as the little dog licks his face, we realize that

all along the man's heart was broken because he thought he had lost his little dog.

I don't think that was the intention of Mr Waylan D Holyfield when he wrote the song - nor of Don Williams when he sang it - but it was a sweet take on the lyrics.

I was told once - or read it somewhere - that there is a broken heart in every pew, and in my days of life on this planet, it does seem to be true. It is also said that misery finds its own companions, but having a massive pity party doesn't help us get on with life.

Whilst searching for new songs and music for services, I frequently find sad songs that make a big impact on me, and although they may be sad in subject matter and even musical phraseology, they perform a useful function.

Sad songs help us to express our grief vicariously, through the agency of others, and grief that is not acknowledged becomes an unhealed wound.

When God made us - or we evolved - or both, depending on where you put your money - He allowed Nature (with a capital 'N') to have a mechanism whereby injured creatures would heal. The first reaction of an injured creature is to seek safety and rest. To continue to be exposed to danger is not going to win you any prizes - except, perhaps, a Darwin Award, which I explained last week. So safety is number one priority.

Next is rest for the injured part; if you have a broken leg and keep on running, the bone and muscles will bleed more, as you are demanding a greater blood supply and oxygen to keep them working. Bad idea - therefore rest.

Once the initial pain and bleeding have stopped, the natural repair processes of the body can kick in. Relax, you are not going to get a lecture on reparative pathophysiology.

Let me just say that injury leaves scars, but those scars are frequently stronger than the original tissue. There are some exceptions which, if you are really interested, you can ask me about afterwards, but for the most part, scars are stronger than the original tissue.

So your broken leg will never fracture or break in exactly the same place twice, unless it was not fully healed in the first place, or the underlying tissue is diseased.

Our readings today are about opening the eyes of your mind and the eyes of your heart to see and understand the purposes of God. And that's not easy because we tend to assume we know

what those purposes are. Unfortunately, we are often wrong, so we whine and plead and try to bargain with God. Remember Janice Joplin's song, "Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz; my friends all drive Porches, I must make amends..."

We come to God to heal and be restored in body, mind, and spirit, yet we have often not done the first essential; we have not stopped doing what it is that is harming us. When I first went to AA in Mission, a man who was a regular attender used to say in every share, 'I come here to heal.'

Many people come to this type of church for the same reason, but AA is as good a place as any to start.

Last Sunday, I talked about the lame man at the pool of Bethesda who was asked by Jesus if he wanted to be made well.

This week I want to ask you, if you are wondering why you are constantly in pain and your broken heart is not mending - is it because you are always pulling the scab off it, and making it bleed again.

Jesus said, "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Remember that rest is one of the first essentials that Nature expects us to do in order for healing to occur is to rest. When King Lear goes mad in Shakespeare's play, the doctor says, 'Our foster nurse of Nature is repose', - that is, rest.

There is something strange here too, for in my experience I have found that both I and others

feel a kind of unwillingness to rest, as though it were a sort of betrayal of the person or event that has broken our heart. I find myself asking the question, 'How can I take my ease and relax when such a tragedy has taken place?' And yet, without taking that minimal care of ourselves, we cannot nor will not heal.

Exhaustion, we know, is not conducive to top performance - and actually, it is that top performance that we owe to our situation. Remember that Jesus also said to his disciples, 'Come away and rest a while,' (Mark 6:31).

Clearly, going to Jesus also puts us into a place of safety as well - the other primary essential.

In Sierra Leone, the first time I went up to the local hospital, I arrived to the sound of agonized screaming of a child. I traced it to a small girl of about 6, who was having her burns 'cleaned', as they just wouldn't heal. The nursing and medical

staff - such as there were - did not understand that for a burn to heal, you have to let the new skin grow; and they were scrubbing it off with brushes every day, under the mistaken impression that it must be dirty or it would have healed by now. What that burn needed - and that poor little girl - was rest, in order to heal.

So, your heartache, your anger, your resentment, your jealousy, your emotional pain of whatever sort - your spiritual pain of whatever sort - is never going to heal unless you put down the scrubbing brush, unless you stop picking at it with your finger nails to see if you can lift the scab, unless you desist from mixing with those people you know are leading you away from a safe path.

Only seven weeks ago it was Easter, and on the Good Friday we had a big wooden cross on the floor here; we all put rocks at the foot of it to

represent those things that we really needed to get rid of - we laid our burdens down. How many of you picked up your rock again (mentally or spiritually) before you went home that night, and are now suffering again because of the same old wound reopened?

Is that Jesus fault? I think not.

However you perceive God, at least acknowledge that He, or She, or Whatever, is greater than you by an immeasurable amount. God is either everything or He is nothing - and for me, He is everything.

That's why I am not spending any time trying to explain the Ascension to you; it is as inexplicable as the Resurrection - but both events occurred. If they hadn't, why hasn't Jesus' body been produced to defeat all us foolish Christians with

the lie? The simple answer to that is that it isn't a lie.

If you wish to enter into a discussion on particle physics and matter transfer, it is actually potentially explicable, but it is beyond Richard Dawkins, though possibly not Stephen Hawking. And despite the fact that I have a brain the size of a marshmallow and of similar consistency, I am not going to give you the explanation here and now.

Once again, if you want to know, make an arrangement to see me at a later date, and bring your sandwiches and a sleeping bag.

I cried this week over abused children, over dysfunctional and abusive marriages, over senseless violence due to lack of gun control, over the sudden loss of someone's dad - but

perhaps most of all for my lack of ability to help any of these situations.

That's why I'm here; that's why I am asking Jesus to hold me, to let me rest in His arms, to either show me how to help these folk, or take the burden away from me.

That's why we have intercessory prayer - not to tell God what to do - believe me, He probably knows - but to come to him as a child to its safe place, which I know, for some, was not a parent.

One thing we can be sure of in the arms of God, is that He will let us rest - and if we let Him, He will take that burden away, He will give us time to heal. He knows we must grieve - that is Nature's way - but He also knows that we can heal - stronger than before.

All broken hearts will mend - if we take them to the right place.