

Repairer of the breach

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Isaiah 58:12 And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Among the men of time there was one who had given all that men might have life and there was no other name among heaven, among its stars, among the leaves of all the trees that could compare to his name. Jesus. He was born in a stable, settled in Egypt, learned in His fathers temple, submitted himself to his father Joseph and became a carpenter of homes and buildings and bridges. I speak of bridges because he bridged the gap between heaven and hell, stripping the grave of its power so that we who are small in these things might have life.

There is no one else who has the understanding who settled the times who stripped death of its power and took sin and cast it down. There is no one else who could do these things except he who was, is and will be.

When I think of times that pain has seared my life and sorrows have stripped my mind I think of him. I think of his grace, his joy, his teaching, his hope and his life that he would take all that wrong of my life and take it away. And that his father would take my tears and cast them into the sea of forgetfulness. Not because my tears are not worth having or seeing but because I find that days pass into sorrow and I do not wish to remember all things. But some days, like today, when I feel the most alone, and when tears shower my cheeks and it seems there is nothing in this world worth clinging to beyond family, its then I say there is hope.

Hope leads me to Faith but IN the process of finding faith I find love. What greater joy is there to know that the process is above all that I can see or understand. Love is there. Love is faithful. Love is true. Love is pure. Love is hopeful. Love is divine. Love is.

I live in a broken family. 25 years ago I moved to Canada and left behind, along with my parents, all of my relatives in the states. Some may say "They are still there" and it is true. I cannot lie that they were distanced by time and circumstances. Some lived in Florida, some in California and some in Wisconsin and Michigan. We moved to Canada because this was Gods call on our lives. I came because I believed that also. But it was a hard time for me coming from a world like America with its openness to a land where people were a little more reserved. More British like. It didn't make them less human just less American of which most would be pleased.

But for me and my American heart I cried and I was lonely and I felt forgotten by all and often by God. It seemed my best efforts working alongside my father in the church came to little. All my strength poured into the youth and working with him in any capacity that arose. I worked in radio putting on a Christian radio program and it eventually closed down. There

were things I did which I can look at in perspective and it was like building a home in the forest and then being forced to abandon it. Time stripped away the paint, a branch broke out a window, the hinges on the door slipped, animals went in with insects and began the process of disintegration. And I watched these things from my perspective wondering when it would end. Wondering if it would end. For it went on and on and on without surcease.

And family wrote us and we visited when we could and our lives revolved around Canada and its ways. But time wasn't kind and my father suffered his first heart attack in 1985 and it was then I took on more responsibilities in the church including preaching. It led to an increase in spiritual desire which took me to the Far East where I visited places wild and exotic. And I learned and grew of other cultures and grew to love people more. And I realized that I wasn't alone. There were many people wanting to be loved. And sometimes going far from home was the answer to which I sought.

Dad's health continued going badly and mine worsened in the early 90's when I was diagnosed with a rare voice disorder. It worsened into other disorders while my father got worse. And time didn't stop and still I sought for answers. I prayed some and cried out much. Wishing wasn't for things but for an end to sorrow. I wanted to go home to be with the Lord.

But God had made a promise in 1985 or so. I don't remember the exact date. But that we, our family would be there to see Him return to earth. And he left out one, my brother in law who ended up dying 3 years later. I look at my life then and now and it is ironic. I kept saying it could not get any worse but it did. Today I look and see myself and my parents in continuous pain and struggle.

Yet in the midst of the struggle I see something else I find hard to understand. Despite the tears and sorrows I see hope. And hope is not ashamed. It is hard to understand the world I live in sometimes. Around me there is a desire to cease voices on things like the Rapture or Heaven. I hear those around me speak and say "Don't hope say you know its so..." But I don't know its so in myself. I can't. I'm just a man searching for answers. Just a man crying out to God. When I look at myself I see no answer. I only see my circumstances and those make me cry often. But when I look to God I see faith, I see love and I have hope. And that hope is what keeps me going. Day by day its like a tender embrace that takes away the deepest of the pain and sorrow.

And when the day is done and when the day has finished and darkness comes there will still be hope. There will still be God. And there will still be life. And perhaps in the midst of the forest with the wind blowing through the tree tops I can hear the sound of his sweet still voice speaking "Joel, I'm here!" And that is all I need to know that I am safe in the arms of the Lord.