

HARVEST 2019 – DESECRATION to RECREATION

Rom 8:18-25

In those 8 verses we heard, there is a word repeated three times – a word we wouldn't usually associate with the Bible. It's the word 'groan or groaning'. Paul says that the whole creation is groaning. You can almost hear it, can't you? The creation groaning under the weight of the pollution; under the heaviness of the greenhouse gases encircling the globe. Groaning under the wounds of deforestation; groaning and weeping for its extinct animals and birds and insects.

The word 'desecration' is a very appropriate term. It comes from the word 'sacred'. A dictionary definition of desecrate is 'to violate a sacred place'. Our world is a sacred place, a holy place because it has been created by God. But we as humans have violated this sacred place.

As much as we may want to, we can never reverse something like the extinction of creatures and some other effects of the desecration of the planet. But there are some things that can be recovered and restored if humanity has the resolve to make the necessary changes. We can move from desecration to recreation.

As we reduce and reuse and recycle, we can still prevent further destruction. And as Christians we really don't have a choice in the matter. We have a responsibility as God's representatives on earth to do so. We must be those kinds of people, because the God we serve is Creator and Giver of Life.

I heard someone this week say, 'God is the greatest recycler of all'. God can take a piece of trash and make it into something wonderful. He can take a piece of trash like John Newton, a slave trader, and make him into the writer of probably the best-known religious song in the world – Amazing Grace. It's a song that describes that radical recycling, 'I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind but now I see'. St Paul, who of course, was himself totally recycled and recreated, says this in 2 Cor 5, 'If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation – the old has gone, the new has come.' A new creation; a re-creation. God doesn't just do a patch up, panel-beating job; it's a whole new thing.

We may not be able to bring complete re-creation to our world. But God can do that in our lives. It doesn't matter how desecrated, how damaged a life may be, God is in the business of re-creation. Maybe you know that song,

'Something beautiful, something good,
all my confusion He understood;
all I had to offer him was brokenness and strife,
And He made something beautiful of my life'.

Speaking of 'beautiful', Angela and I watched a movie this week called 'Beautiful Fantastic'. Its about a young woman who is renting a house, and she has let the garden go to complete rack and ruin. Its an overgrown jungle of mainly weeds. She is given a month by the estate agent to rectify things otherwise she will be evicted. She is terrified of being in nature and knows nothing about gardening. However, she has a neighbour who is an expert gardener, but he is also a rather unpleasant human being. But slowly they develop a close friendship and he helps her to create a wonderful garden from the chaos that existed before.

We too are tenants, tenants on this earth. It doesn't belong to us. We are accountable to the owner for how we treat it. And our very lives – they are not our own either. As Paul says in 1 Cor 6, 'You are not your own; you were bought with a price'. The price of course was the death of Christ on the cross. And it's His death that makes possible our new life; our re-creation.

And ultimately, we can look forward to God's new heaven and new earth, when we ourselves will be totally made new; not just on the inside, but on the outside too – our new resurrection bodies. Beautiful, fantastic indeed.