

Isaiah 53 is one of the best known chapters in the Old Testament. It spelled out the meaning of the Cross 700 years before Jesus was crucified. It is followed by one of the least known chapters. Isaiah 54 explains the potential consequences of Jesus' death in our place, but sadly its message remains largely a well-kept secret. The image of the barren wife seemingly unloved because she has produced no children is drawn from Bible stories like that of Sarah, Rachel and Hannah. The illustration is of us supposing we have been deserted by God because our lives are fruitless and purposeless. So many of my patients daily ask themselves 'Where is God?' and 'What is the point of continuing to struggle?' The answer for them begins at the Cross. We are loved and there is a life of immense joy ahead. Let's expect to see it unfold.(**Isa.54:1-3**)

Before you read any further, could we suggest opening your Bible at Isaiah 54?

The real obstacle to joy is shame, humiliation and disgrace because of our guilt. Sin which enslaved us has been removed by the blood of Christ who redeemed us. Redemption meant to buy a slave out of slavery by paying the price for him or her. This, for Christians, is a fact which needs to be allowed to give rise to an experience of forgiveness. In a world which puts a price on everything, there is a deep suspicion of the idea of grace, that redemption could be a free gift of a loving God. We are told 'there is no such thing as a free lunch'. Exactly at the moment I was typing this sentence there was a knock on the front door. A good friend was wanting two of our plates to prepare me dinner for tonight and tomorrow, because Christine is away this week! There must be a price tag on forgiveness. But there isn't! Why don't we accept this and enjoy our complete cleansing by God every new morning? Why hang on to shame?(**Isa.54:4-8**)

We did experience God's cleansing the day we first trusted Christ as Saviour but all too often it seemed to wear off because we continued to mess things up by running our own lives. Surely He won't go on forgiving if we make the same old mistakes over and over? He has and He will. Like the promise after the flood in the time of Noah never to do it again, the Lord reminds us that because He loves us so much we can enjoy the security of His forgiveness, compassion and peace for ever. The image being used in this chapter is of a secure, loving marriage. Most people in New Zealand today have no confidence that their marriages will last regardless of what happens, so they live with uncertainty and tension, or they never bother to marry in the first place, thinking this will spare them hurt. Our 'marriage' to Christ is forever.(**Isa.54:9-10**)

There is an ugliness to life for so many people, beginning sadly with violence in the home. Only the tip of this massive iceberg reaches our TV screens. But marriage and the family should be the one safe haven in a hostile world. Our oneness with Christ made possible by the Cross provides first safety and then beauty because we are so precious to Him. Parents often despair of the apparent ineffectiveness of what they have tried to teach their children. They wonder how their kids will cope with the huge peer pressure they are under. We as His sons and daughters can have the privilege of learning directly from Him in His word. We can be confident that even young Christians can stand up to the pressure to conform that comes from the messages screamed at them by a world which hates Christ.(**Isa.54:11-17**)

Time and again at Fowey Lodge we are brought back to the simple question of why God put us here and has kept us through all kinds of tough times. The only answer we have ever come to is our calling to teach Christ, crucified, risen, indwelling and one day returning, throughout the scriptures. We have had the awesome privilege of seeing many lives changed for ever by Him. The number of students at any one time goes up and down but the enthusiasm to learn to know Christ among those who come remains constant. We do believe we have a great teaching team supported by a loving community. We want what is offered to be as widely used as possible. Most students have come to us through word of mouth. We would love you to encourage any one you know who is spiritually hungry to join us. The easiest way to draw in new students is either by a phone call to one of us, or to point them to the website – [www.foweylodge.com](http://www.foweylodge.com). Alternatively if you are near enough, just drop in and introduce them.

Because bringing students from developing countries still faces major obstacles from the NZ Immigration Service, we are moving more and more towards helping those we already know in various strategic places overseas to teach their own people. The number of Bible books offered on the website in both Korean and English continues to grow. There is also an on-line Certificate of Ministry course which is designed as a one year programme suited to those already teaching others. It is best used partly as individual study complemented by periods of coming together to study with help from someone experienced. If you know those who would profit from this approach, do point them to the website or let us know what support they need. Our dream for some time has been to video many more of our lecture series to spread good material as widely as possible, either on-line or on CD.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of October we have a return visit from Emmanuel Kopwe of Tanzania who works with African Enterprise. His special role has been to bring reconciliation through the gospel to warring factions in places like Burundi, Rwanda, Congo and Kenya. He will share his story at the Lodge at a dinner on the 1<sup>st</sup> and a public meeting at 7.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Come and be sure to bring someone else. If you would like an invitation to dinner, call (09)-538-0022 or email on [jahanne@clear.net.nz](mailto:jahanne@clear.net.nz).

In a couple of days, Ruth Harris from Canada, who was a student at the Lodge many years ago, is arriving to help us over the next few months. Be sure to meet her when you can. In early November a delightful American couple, Don and Vivian Rhody, will be arriving in Auckland to join us. Their special concern is to provide and encourage Bible teaching material for the Pacific Islands. You will enjoy them.

Philip Idufoa from the Solomons was another of our never-to-be-forgotten past students. He had been Assistant Police Commissioner for his country before coming here. We were sad to hear a few months ago that he had died. If you want to join us in offering some practical help to his widow and large family, please get in touch.

Leo Pologa lost his father recently. He went home to W. Samoa for the first time in over 20 years taking his daughter, Ashleigh. They had an overwhelming welcome from the extended family which they will never forget.

Nick's new adventure programme at Taihoa Farm near Opotiki is steadily becoming established. If you would like his newsletter, e-mail him on [nickjhane1982@hotmail.com](mailto:nickjhane1982@hotmail.com). He has a teenage guys' camp, 'Man versus Wild', planned for the first week of October. Phone him on 07-3155885 for details or to book. He would appreciate help with leadership. Pete is currently working on a farm on the Coromandel Peninsula and loving it but he will be at the camp. He is maintaining the camp website, [www.foweycamps.co.nz](http://www.foweycamps.co.nz) and would be delighted with your input.

Christine is as keen as ever to hear from those who want to be part of supporting orphans in Uganda. As a fellowship we are currently involved in supporting about 65 orphans but there are still about 2,000,000 more! You may have heard that the civil war with the LRA in Northern Uganda has broken out again. The rebels' chief target is children. Unwanted orphans are easily recruited.

Nick was over in Fiji a couple of weeks ago meeting our old friends at Muanicula and around Savu Savu. We are moving slowly towards exciting new plans. More than anything we only want God's plans there. If you have any thoughts, let us know.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit Shanghai in China for a long weekend to take part in a medical conference. It was an intriguing though brief glimpse of a country I had long hoped to see one day. It whetted my appetite to go back. God has given us some good friends there over the years.

We want to hear how the message of Christ crucified and alive is having consequence in your life. Please share your stories with us.

Our love in Christ

Tony, Christine, Nick and Pete