

## The Bad and Good News.

Good day to you. Allow me first to apologize for the offence that you will inevitably be tempted to take as a result of the message I bring to you today. I, like you I suspect, try to avoid conflict as far as I can, but sometimes it is thrust upon us, and we can do little to avoid it. In fact your conflict is not with me, as I am a man who knows your state and condition, because I once shared it with you. No, your conflict is with One whom to war against is as futile as a speck of dust fighting with the Sun. But in the spirit of human kinship I am compelled to bring you some news of a double aspect.

It is common for charitable men to ask if one would like the good or the bad news first. But with news of my sort I'm afraid the bad always comes first like midnight before dawn. The bad news is to remind you of the tragic events of the past. Sadly no longer remembered, or believed by so many. But its repercussions are evident every day in our wilderness world, in the miserable history of humanity. So we must take some time out of our busy lives to discuss this bad news. News which has an ominous sound like the crackle in the air just before the lightning strikes in judgement. It is news of a terrible Fall. A Fall so bad it resulted in death. But it would be an inadequate commemoration to mark it by building even ten thousand gravestones, the number being a woeful underestimation.

There are of course those who do not want this news spoken of. They twist and squirm in their attempts to avoid the finger of blame pointing in their direction. So they pick at details in thinly veiled ad hominem attacks. Such as - they don't like the tone of voice of the messenger, or his handwriting. This is done in order to deflect the thrust of the message from striking the heart. I suspect even now, minds are scrambling to criticise, and judge, when it is not me, but the message that actually judges us.

Why?

Because while the human heart is hard as a stone, it also has that weakness that often accompanies hardness - namely it is brittle. And words will always retain their power. Especially when it is the Word of God. Sticks and stones may break bones, but Bible words may break hearts. These words give meaning to meaning, a reason for reason, and, for those with ears to hear, they give the enunciation of truth. And the truth is there is something terribly wrong with humanity isn't there? Cruelty and injustice, selfishness and pride. And where once in the first garden you had the freedom to act, think, and speak as you willed, you are now lame and blind, and principalities and powers coerce your conformity and solicit your submission. They say a 'watching pot never boils', but the cauldron of human iniquity boils over because few are watching. Or should I say reading? Reading words like Romans 2.5 "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart

treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"

How did this happen? Who's to blame? Well certainly there are those more responsible than others, and they will be held accountable, but again truth be told, if you're looking for the guilty, you need only look into a mirror. I know you were tempted into unrighteousness, and ever since then it comes naturally. Seemingly harmless selfishness and greed can cause a war. Simple temptation, disloyalty and lust can break, not only hearts, but families, and Kingdoms apart. There were a myriad of influences which conspired to corrupt your reason and rob you of your common sense. Sin got the better of you, and in your ignorance of this message you turned to the prince of this world. He promised you pleasure, he promised you knowledge, and life, and all he demanded in return was your silent obedience, service, worship, and consent. However, he doesn't keep promises, and this message seeks to end your silence, to remind people of what they have forgotten, and cause them to utter trembling words. Your silence is broken by the power of prayer.

More than two thousand years ago a great Fellow of ours wished to embed an event forever in our memory. His agreement with His Father was to redeem His lost sheep. That the world might see that love, forgiveness, justice, and mercy are more than words, they are actions. So if you see nothing, if the crimes of this human race remain unknown to you, then I would suggest you are already in a grave unmarked. But if you see what I see, if you feel as I feel, and if you would seek as I have sought, then I ask you to swallow your pride and foolish judgements, and turn to bow humbly before the Judge of judges. And plead the only plea that can be acceptable - The good news that this Fellow Man was your Divine Substitute, your Sacrifice, your Resurrection from an earthly grave, and your Life from a living death (Romans 3.21-26). You may take His work for yourself, there is no theft in this. For a beggar has nothing to give, so must freely receive from the hand of a willing benefactor. As God is such a Benefactor, it would be a grave, offensive folly to suppose we could offer anything. Instead know that you must receive everything - gratis. Without this gift a traveller must remain on that widest of roads leading towards the worst of destinations. Nonetheless, there is 'many a slip betwixt cup and lip', and because the cup of wrath has been drunk to the last drop by this 'second Adam', then you may slip off that road onto a narrower path, of which none is straighter, and that leads to the best of destinations.

I alone cannot persuade you of this great Truth, but there is One who I pray will do that work in a heart which, instead of being brittle and broken, will beat - softening in salvation. And thus for you a new day will dawn in a promised land.

Respectfully

A Servant messenger