



THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

MAY YOU HAVE A RESTORATIVE EASTER

The last decade has seen an explosion of television shows focussed on building and furniture restoration. Shows like The Repair Shop, Fixer Upper, The Block, and Flip or Flop all focus on restoring the old and bringing life to the discarded.

This Lent, we invite you to join us as we learn about the greatest restoration project of all time. Over seven weeks we'll focus on God's plan for humankind – a plan for restoration, a plan for new life, a plan that was both unexpected and brilliant.

Over the next seven weeks, there will be many activities that you can engage with.

You can:

- read about the theme of the week,
- learn some restoration and tool facts,
- make a toolbox with tools,
- read and reflect on scripture, and
- engage with a restorative practice.

You might also like to find your own restoration project to work on – bring to life an old table, chair, cutlery, teddy bear or other item.



This resource is for everyone, young and old! Families, singles, couples, groups, churches, and schools are encouraged to use this to engage and journey deeper in their discipleship this Lent. There are also related resources for worship. If you have any questions or need additional materials, please feel free to contact your local church leaders, or the Mission Engagement Team at discipleship@ucaql.com.au.

However you prepare this Easter, we pray you will be restored by God's love and grace.

Our deepest thanks to everyone who has helped bring together this resource. Special thanks to Kath Ruhle, Hannah Staines, Paul Wetzig, Phill Smith, Shirley Sargeant, David McGregor, Jess Pinkerton, Rebecca Riggs and Michael Mann.

LENT
WEEK 1



THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

Easter is coming, but first, let's take some time to prepare. Let's look around, and let's look within, with fresh eyes, to see where God is at work.

This week, we encourage you to take some time to recognise the places in your life and community that need God's restorative power. Where is God already at work? Who is in desperate need of God's restoration? How might we join with God in bringing restoration to others?

For our restoration project, we're going to need a toolbox to hold all the tools that we need for our project. You might like to find or make one, and then each week add to it.

This week, find a piece of furniture (or other item – cutlery, teddy bear) that needs restoration that you can work on as your own restoration project over the seven weeks. Actively look at, and touch the item (if safe) imagining what it once looked like, and how it was used.

Think and chat with someone about what needs to happen for this piece of furniture to be restored to its original state, or to a new and improved condition. Don't do too much planning yet, but use this week to recognise the value that the item once had, and what it could become once restored.

Think and chat about people (individuals or groups) who are often discarded or rejected by society. Write or say a prayer for these people and add them to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

Toolboxes became popular in the industrial age.

In 1904, Harry Gurstner, a patternmaker, made himself a toolbox. It took him a whole year and his coworkers liked it so much they asked him to make more.

In 1906, Harry started his own tool chest company in Dayton, Ohio, which is still running today.

Henry Studley designed and made a beautiful toolbox that was both functional, and a work of art.

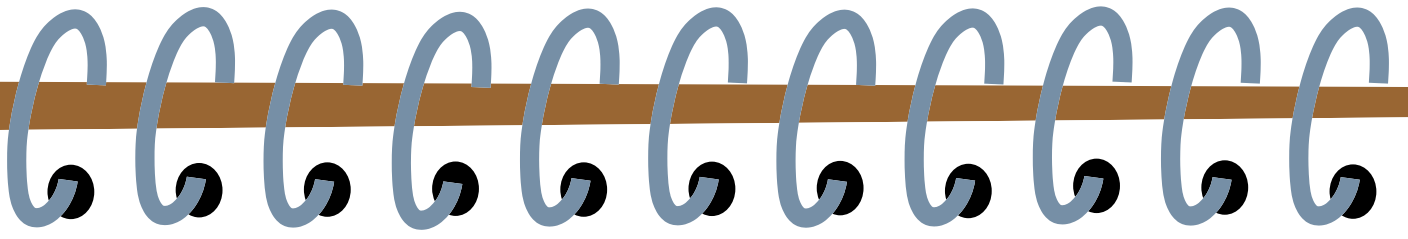
Check it out and see if you can count how many tools it holds.

Look at some before and after restoration pictures.

What would you discard?
What would you restore?



Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaqlld.com.au/lent



REFLECTION

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

Have you ever broken a favourite item? Maybe it was a beloved coffee cup that made your mornings extra special, and one day it fell from the dishrack and cracked. Maybe it was a toy that you loved playing with, but one day played a bit too hard, and the wheels literally fell off! Or maybe it was a piece of clothing you loved and it got ripped or stained in a way that made it not nice to wear anymore.

We can probably all recall something precious to us that has somehow been damaged and has created a sense of great sadness at the loss and the damage that's been done. And I'm sure we've all wondered what can be done to repair our precious item and restore it to the way it was so that it can be enjoyed and cherished once again.

One of my favourite forms of art is the Japanese practice of Kintsugi – the unique and traditional art of repairing broken, chipped, and cracked pottery using lacquer and gold. It's an art form that most often takes practical items like cups, bowls, or plates made from pottery that have been broken in some way, and seeks to mend them.

Supposedly, this repair method started in the 14th century when the favourite tea bowl of a Japanese army commander broke and none of the usual ways of repairing it wouldn't work. Tasked with finding a solution to restore the bowl, his craftsmen recognised that the way they always did things wasn't going to work this time. So, they devised a way of fixing it that not only restored it but made it more beautiful in the process. As a result, this special item became even more precious and a thing of greater beauty because someone recognised its inherent value and through time, patience, and love, worked with the damage to restore it.

During this season of Lent, we are going to be exploring the idea of restoration: how God recognises the beauty and value of all things and is seeking to restore them and maybe even make them better than they were. This reminds me that originally things were very good until we, humanity, made some dodgy choices that resulted in relationships being broken; relationships with God, with each other, and with creation.

In this situation, of things being broken and messed up, the Bible tells and shows us how God has been patiently seeking to fix these relationships and restore things to a new and better way. Having tried a bunch of different things with different groups of people, that kind of worked for a little while, God recognised that what was needed was a craftsperson with the skill, time, patience, and love to create a new and more beautiful way to repair the damage. And to this task, we discover Jesus giving his life to undertake this most enormous task as God's craftsman.

Over the coming weeks, we will be exploring what this undertaking of Jesus looked like, and what it now means for us in continuing this loving, patient, time-consuming work of restoration and the hope of creating something more beautiful out of the pieces of brokenness that surround us.

Will you join us on this exploration of God's Great Restoration Project? We hope that you will.

Paul Wetzig



BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 9: 8-17, Psalm 25: 1-10, 1 Peter 3: 18-22, Mark 1: 9-15

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder if you have ever had something precious to you break in such a way that seemed really challenging or even impossible to repair? How did it make you feel?
- I wonder if you've ever taken the time to repair or restore something that you could see beauty in, despite how it appeared? How did it feel as you started the project?
- I wonder if you've ever been in a relationship that got a bit messed up and needed to be restored? What helped you to fix things?
- I wonder how you might experience God restoring things in your world? Share what you think about this with someone.
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - BREATH PRAYER

The Breath prayer is an ancient way of practicing the presence of God. It is a way to cultivate a posture of constant awareness and availability toward God. Like prayers of repetition, breath prayers can be phrases from tradition, scripture, or hymnody. We repeat these phrases with our lips, carry them in our hearts, and whisper them under our breath. Practice your breath prayer at special times when you give God your undivided attention. Continue to say your breath prayer under your breath; let it become a habit of the heart. (Companions in Christ)

You might like to use one of the following or make your own:

Inhale: Give me an imagination for healing,

Exhale: You are the Creator and Sustainer of our Restoration (Sarah Bessey)

Inhale: We are invited to participate in the healing of the world,

Exhale: Give me courage to say yes to your good pathway. (Sarah Bessey)

Exhale: I release my worry and what-ifs,

Inhale: And I welcome Your prevailing peace and holy possibilities (Sarah Bessey)

LENT
WEEK 2

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

We've started thinking about restoration. Now, it's time to come up with a restoration plan.

This week, we encourage you to reflect on, and recognise, God's faithfulness and restoration, in your own life, over many years. How has God guided you, and worked through you to bring restoration to yourself or others? Where is God calling you to bring restoration now, and into the future? What might that look like?

For our restoration project, we will need a carpenter's pencil. Find one and add it to your toolbox.

This week, use a pencil and make a plan for your restoration project. First, think about the intended final restoration outcome and understand (or find out) the history of the piece. Then, map out a plan for the project. What does the project plan involve, and what tools, or help, will you need? How will you stay true to the history of the item you're restoring?



Using the pencil write your name or add your initials to your toolbox. Think and chat about the ways that God has been faithful in your life. Say sorry for the times when you haven't followed God's plan. What is God saying to you about restoration? Write or say a prayer and add it to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

Flat carpenter's pencils are used by builders as they easily mark on rough surfaces like wood, concrete and stone.

The flat shape means it will stay in place, and won't roll away.

Their shape and lead density aid in marking legible lines with a straight edge that are clear and easy to follow with a saw blade.

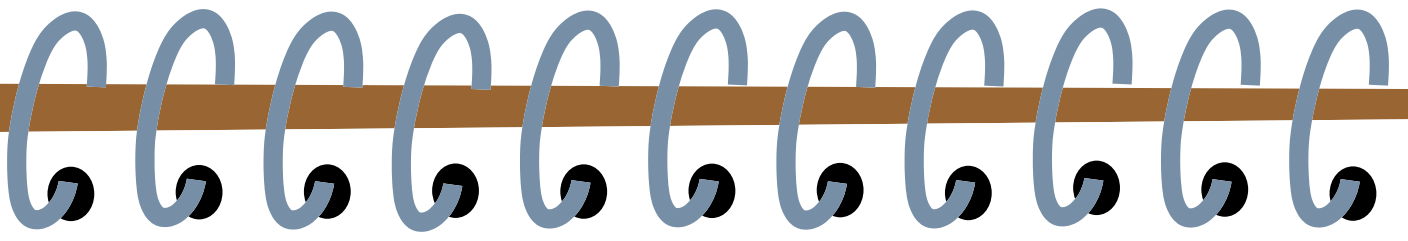
The flat pencil is one of the oldest pencil types. The first versions were made by hollowing out sticks of juniper wood.

Find and watch the video of the failed restoration of this painting.

What planning do you think should occur before a restoration?



Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaql.com.au/lent



REFLECTION

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Anyone who knows me, knows I love to plan. I like writing lists and ticking off tasks when they are complete. I love being organised, knowing what's next, and getting things done. I remember someone telling me as a young adult that "planning and preparation prevents poor performance," and I wonder if the alliteration, or just the fear of a job not being done well, made it stick.

Like anything, a restoration project needs a plan. I did Manual Arts (Woodwork) in high school and remember my final year 12 project. We had to design and build something. It could be anything but had to include timber and demonstrate the skills we'd learned. A while earlier, we'd pulled apart my grandparents' milking shed, and I'd decided I wanted to keep the doors. They were old, heavy, covered in dirt, and very well-worn, but full of wonderful memories of milking and being on the farm.

At that time, I didn't know what I'd do with them, but when that final project was released, I quickly got to work. I got out my 2B pencil, drew a design, and wrote up a plan. First was cleaning, then sanding, measuring, cutting, more sanding, drilling, joining, screwing, and finally oiling. The project took a long time and almost wasn't complete in time for moderation.

Although not everything followed the original plan, (like finding that the warped timber meant that the butt joints didn't sit flush on one side and that the original castors weren't strong enough to hold the weight), I stuck at it and adapted the plan as required. The finished product is a blanket box that sits proudly in my lounge room today. I originally used it as my glory box (ask someone who grew up in the 50's or 60's what that is if you don't know) and it's moved with me to every house I've lived in. It's a beautiful piece of furniture, and I'm so glad I get to hold onto this piece of my grandparents' farm. I hope it stays in the family for generations.

I wonder whether Abram had ever thought about how something would be passed down the generations when God appeared to him at ninety-nine years old. He was childless at that time, but God revealed to him a plan that included children, royalty, new names for him and his wife, and a covenant for a relationship for generations to come (Genesis 17).

No doubt Abraham and Sarah were surprised, but we see that they, and God were faithful. If we follow the trail through history, we find that there were children, royalty, and a covenant relationship that still lasts today. We read later in Romans that Abraham didn't waver, "but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised" (Romans 4:20-21).

I wonder if Abraham ever wished to know more of God's plan. I know I do, and sometimes find it hard when I don't know the full plan. But then I remember that God is faithful and has revealed the plan to many along the way and that we are all part of that plan. The great plan for all people to be in relationship with God. So, as we journey to restoration this Lent, let's recognise the faithfulness of God throughout history. Let's recognise that God has a plan, that we, the people of God are part of that plan, and that God is waiting for us to join in, be changed, and be transformed.



BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16, Psalm 22: 23-31, Romans 4: 13-25, Mark 8: 31-38, Mark 9: 2-9

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder what you think God's plan is? What do you think your part in it might be?
- I wonder if you knew the whole plan for your life, whether you'd be happy with it? Looking back on your life so far, what parts would you, or wouldn't you have wanted to know about beforehand?
- What areas of your life do you think should or could be changed or transformed? Make and share your plan for how you could achieve this?
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - SPIRITUAL JOURNEY DRAWING

(from Companions in Christ)

Use a pencil to draw your spiritual journey. Draw a line that represents your journey, showing the ups and downs, turns, circles, or whatever pattern seems right to you. Mark particularly significant events with symbols that represent what they have meant in your faith life. You may like to add colour to express your feelings as you journal or draw this week.

Thank God for being present in your life and ask God to continue to work through you and with you in the years to come.

As an alternative, use a pencil, to draw a line down the middle of a page. On the left side, name one to three aspects of your old self that you want to find the strength to "put away". On the right side, name one to three aspects of your "new self, created according to the likeness of God" that you hope to "put on". Share with God your desire to grow or be restored and ask for the grace to move toward your goal.

LENT
WEEK 3



A LABOUR OF LOVE

We've planned our restoration project. Now, the hard work begins! Often it takes a long time, and a lot of 'blood, sweat and tears' to restore something. Are you up for the challenge?

This week, we encourage you to reflect on the ways that God has been working in and through you. Sometimes in subtle ways (like sandpaper) and sometimes in 'can't ignore' ways (like a hammer). When have you felt that God was stripping things back in readiness for what was to come? What do you need to strip back in your life now?

For our restoration project we might need Sandpaper. You might like to add this to your toolbox.

This week, start sanding your project. You might need to flake off some paint with a scraper first, then start with a coarse-grit, and end with a fine-grit paper to smooth out all the rough parts and create a smooth surface. Sanding is tough and dirty work, so be sure to work in a ventilated area, and wear a dust mask and eye protection.



Gently rub your fingers over a piece of sandpaper. As you do, think and chat to God about the things in your life that are a bit rough, or need stripping back. Ask God to help you do this hard work, make things smooth, and work on the next step of restoration in your life. Write or say a prayer and add it to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

Sandpaper is a special thick paper with a rough, abrasive surface. Painters and woodworkers use it to smooth a surface before applying paint, varnish or oil.

Shark skin (placoid scales) has also been used as an abrasive, and the rough scales of the Coelacanth are used for the same purpose by the natives of Comoros.

Sandpaper is also used for removing loose paint, grit, or dirt

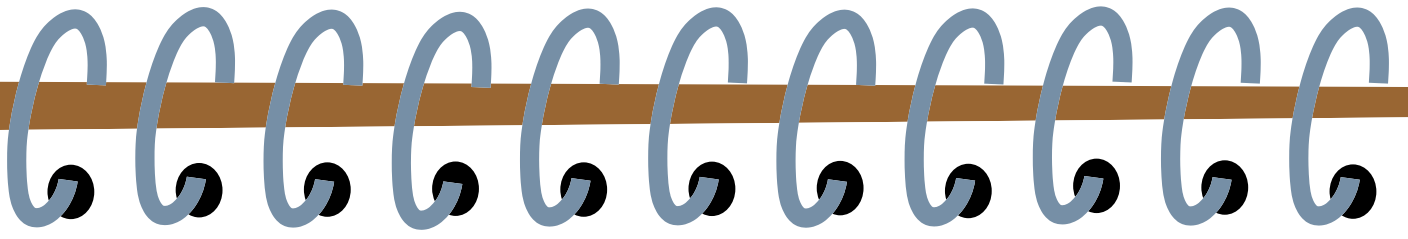
It takes time, and a lot of 'blood, sweat and tears', to restore something. Watch this unfold in the transformation of this house in an episode of Grand Designs.

Sandpaper isn't made of ordinary sand - it's made of abrasive minerals like aluminium oxide or garnet that are glued onto a paper backing.



The first recorded instance of sandpaper use was in 13th-century China when crushed shells, seeds, and sand were bonded to parchment using natural gum.

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REFLECTION

A LABOUR OF LOVE - NO PAIN NO GAIN

My restoration story begins quite a few years ago with a marriage that collapsed. I had floated along in it, never thinking anything was wrong. I discovered how bad things were when my husband made it clear that, in his words, he was doing his own thing. Divorce followed. Our relationship could not be repaired.

For the next twelve months, I cried myself to sleep each night, asking God what I should have done differently. In my misery and brokenness, I called out desperate, tear-soaked prayers to God. And then each morning I would try again to be strong and loving for my three children. I certainly could not do that in my own strength. But even since I was a young child, I knew without doubt that God truly loved me.

Over that year I grew into a real person – I think I was only half a person until then. I had gone from being dependent upon my parents to being dependent on my husband. I did not even know how to change a light bulb!

Over that year God led me into full-time employment, so I was able to be responsible for the house payments and meet all the expenses involved in looking after three school children. A good friend from Church became their “second mother” after school each day. We had become God’s restoration project!

One year on, and I could hardly believe how much we had achieved in partnership with our faithful God. Through all the hardship and sadness, God had shown us the way to live, trusting in him for all our needs. Slowly joy had returned to my life. How wonderfully God had guided, cared for, and loved us, and set our feet on the path of healing and restoration.

Truly, as our reading from Psalm 19 says, *The revelation of God is whole and pulls our lives together... The life maps of God are right, showing the way to joy.*

Shirley Sargeant



BIBLE READINGS

Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25, John 2: 13-22

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder if you have ever faced a time of sadness or even despair when you felt all alone? What (or who) helped you to find your way again?
- I wonder whether you have suffered a broken relationship, and had to accept that it could not be repaired? Did you turn to God for help to go on?
- Paul Bane says in his book with Matt Litton, *In the Presence of Jesus*, "My deepest desire is to restore that heart-to-heart connection between us". What steps can we take to become more aware of God's ever-present love and care for us?
- Sometimes in a church community, there are rifts. Share with someone else how we can let go of "set-in-stone" opinions and learn to love one another. Perhaps you might like to pray together.
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflections? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - NATURE WALK AND BODY PRAYER

Go for a walk in nature and look at the beauty of the tall trees. The trees have weathered storms, fires, floods, and human interaction and are still standing strong. Breathe in God's beautiful creation and be aware that God has been here long before the trees came into being and continues to be present.

You might like to feel the roughness of the bark and think of the tough things in your life, and then feel the smoothness of the leaves, and thank God for being continually present with you during the good and the tough times.

You might also like to try this Body prayer based on the words from the Order of Julian's motto (from Richard Rohr, *A Spring Within Us*)

- **AWAIT** (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment.
- **ALLOW** (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations.
- **ACCEPT** (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God's presence, which is present whether you are aware, or not.
- **ATTEND** (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to those actions that God invites you to take from this stance of openness.

Julian of Norwich experienced severe bodily pain when she was thirty years old. It was during her illness that she received visions, which she later recorded in *Revelations of Divine Love*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_of_Norwich

LENT
WEEK 4

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

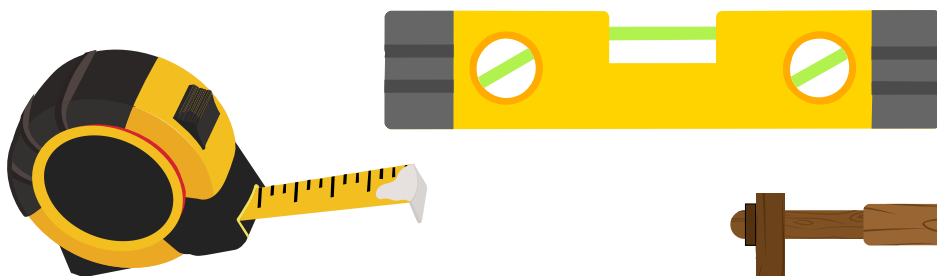
FLIP OR FLOP

There is often a time in restoration projects when you wonder if it's worth all the hard work – things start to go wrong, and you wonder if the project is going to be a huge flop. It's at times like these, when you must decide whether to continue, despite the setbacks, or to give up on the project.

This week we encourage you reflect on the times, in your life, when God has restored you, even though you felt like everything was broken and too hard to fix. The good news is that God never gives up on us or discards us, instead God reaches out to bring beauty to our brokenness.

For our restoration project we might need a spirit level and tape measure. You might like to add these to your toolbox.

This week, do whatever you need to do to keep going with your project according to your plan. Do you need to keep sanding? Do you need to make sure it is level? Do you need to measure it and make some adjustments to the size or shape? Whatever you need to do, and no matter how hard it gets, keep going with your project.



There is a saying 'to take measure', which means to have or get a good understanding of what is needed (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Take 'measure' of what is going on in your life. What needs more or less attention, and what needs to be completely changed to bring restoration? Think and chat to God about these things and add them to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

A spirit or bubble level is an instrument designed to indicate whether a surface is horizontal (level) or vertical (plumb).

The Romans used water filled tanks as primitive spirit levels when building their famous aqueducts.

The modern spirit level, was reportedly invented by wealthy Frenchman Melchisedech Thevenot in the mid-1600s but did not gain popularity until the 1700s.

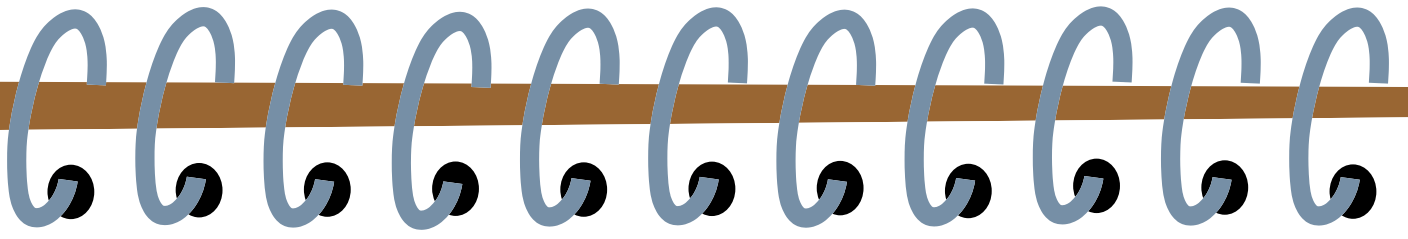
On nearly every measuring tape, you'll find a small slot on the end hook. It's designed to grab onto the end of a nail or screw to steady the tape for easy use.

One of the first documented tape measures arrived on the scene in 1829 and was patented by James Chesterman.

It was made using steel left over wire from hoop skirts.



Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaql.com.au/lent



REFLECTION

FLIP OR FLOP

In our first year of marriage, my husband and I moved to a new town and found ourselves living in a large rental house. We had very little furniture, so family members gave us their unwanted furniture.

We instantly fell in love with a large table that we'd been given. The table had a story to tell – it was originally a kitchen table built by my husband's Great Uncle. At one stage, it was discarded in a barn on the Great Uncle's farm. My husband's dad discovered it, covered in yellow laminate (those were the days!), and it became the kitchen table for my husband's family of eight. Before we were 'gifted' it, the table had been sitting on the verandah of the farmhouse – neglected and unwanted.

We loved the story of this table and so we decided, over the summer break, to restore it. First, we removed the very ugly yellow laminate, and then, using sandpaper, started the process of stripping back the paint, varnish, and glue. We sanded and we sanded. Some parts of the table were easy to strip back – the legs and side only needed a bit of elbow grease. Other parts of the table were impossible. It didn't matter how hard we rubbed, or how much sandpaper we used, we could not remove the thick glue marks. In the Summer heat, it was exhausting and demoralising work! There were times when we both whinged and complained. There were times when we wanted to give up and discard the project. But we didn't...

We realised that if we wanted to finish the project, we had to change what we were doing and so we flipped the tabletop over. Instead of having thick patches of glue, this side had all the markings of a well-used table – circular saw marks, clamp marks, indentations, and burns.

Suddenly, we felt re-energised, and we got to work – sanding, fixing up holes, and then varnishing. And the end result, though far from perfect, was something we were proud of. A beautiful table with many stories to tell. A table that became our family table for many years.

As I reflected on my story of restoration, and read this week's Bible readings, I wondered about how God must feel when looking at and interacting with humans – God's well-loved and special creation who often whinge, complain, make mistakes, and wander away. God's people who often don't even realise they need restoring. God's people who are sick, distressed, and separated from God.

God doesn't give up on us. God doesn't discard us. God doesn't call us a 'flop'. Instead, God draws near and reaches out. And if we allow, God 'flips' our lives so that we can be fully restored.

I love the imagery of Psalm 107, and the stories of God's restorative power. Some wandered in desert wastelands... Some sat in darkness and gloom... Some were sick through their sinful ways... Some were hungry and thirsty BUT they cried out to the Lord and He delivered them from their distress. (NRSV)

Kath Ruhle

BIBLE READINGS

Numbers 21: 4-9, Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22 (or read all), Ephesians 2: 1-10, John 3: 14-21

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder if you've ever given up on a project because it was too hard. How did that feel?
- I wonder if you've ever cried out to God in distress. How did God respond?
- I wonder what you would add to Psalm 107 to describe the ways that God has restored you?
- I wonder if there are areas in your life, where you need to shift direction or try a new approach.
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - LECTIO DIVINIA

Use Lectio Divinia to Read Psalm 107 (NIV) (Companions in Christ). Lectio Divina (Latin for divine reading) is a pattern for prayerfully reading scripture. Use the following sequence to guide your reading:

Lectio – Slowly read the passage. Read it as though you are hearing it read to you. Read it silently and aloud. Experiment by reading it with different emphases and inflections.

Meditatio – Mull over the text; internalise the words. Listen for the phrases that stand out for you as you read the passage. Turn them over in your mind. Reflect on why these words catch your attention, what they bring to mind, and what they mean for you today. Jot down meaningful words, noting associations, reactions, feelings, or challenges.

Oratio – Turn your meditation from dialogue with yourself to dialogue with God, which is prayer. Share with God in all honesty your reflections, questions, or feelings. Offer your thanksgiving, confession, petitions, or intercessions as they arise within, during your dialogue with God. Listen for God's response and inner nudging.

Contemplatio – Rest your mental activity and trust yourself completely to God's love and care. Relax in God's presence. Pick a phrase from the text to which you can return again and again as you keep your attention on God. Allow this prayer-phrase to sustain your presence to God throughout the day.

Or Read Psalm 107 (NIV)

This Psalm, like many other Psalms, tells faith stories of people. Were you to add to this Psalm a stanza for your story, how would it read?

Choose a way that suits you to portray, express, or picture your story. Be creative; let the Spirit guide you.

LENT
WEEK 5

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

MASTER AND APPRENTICE

There's a lot of value in having a mentor or master to guide, demonstrate, teach, and encourage when taking on a restoration project.

This week, we encourage you to consider who has mentored, guided, and taught you God's ways, and who has introduced you to Jesus. You can also consider who you have mentored, guided, and taught?

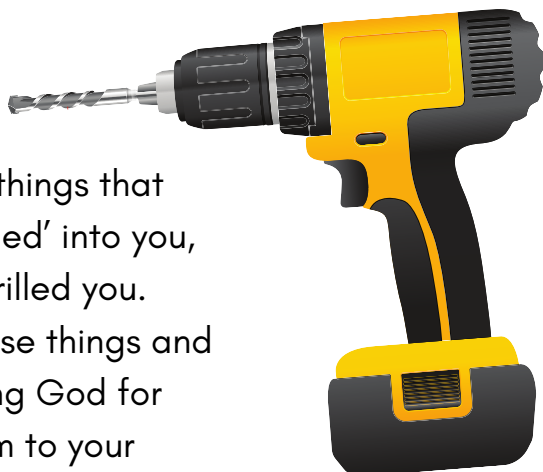
For our restoration project we might need a Drill. You might like to add this to your toolbox.

This week, check in on the progress according to your plan for your restoration project. How are you going with it? Do you need some help? Do you need some encouragement or guidance? Who can you ask to help you drill into the detail and keep going? Are there parts you need to attach to your project? Do you need a drill to make holes to attach handles, legs, or other items? Do you need someone to hold the screws while you drill? No matter what your project is, it's always good to ask for help and guidance when you need it.

Apart from being a tool, Drill also means:

- an activity that practices a particular skill and often involves repeating the same thing several times. (Cambridge)
- a way that teachers teach their students something by making them repeat it many times. (Collins)

Reflect on the things that have been 'drilled' into you, and who has drilled you. Write down these things and people, thanking God for them. Add them to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

A drill is a power tool that's used for making narrow holes or sometimes for pushing screws into wood or other hard material.

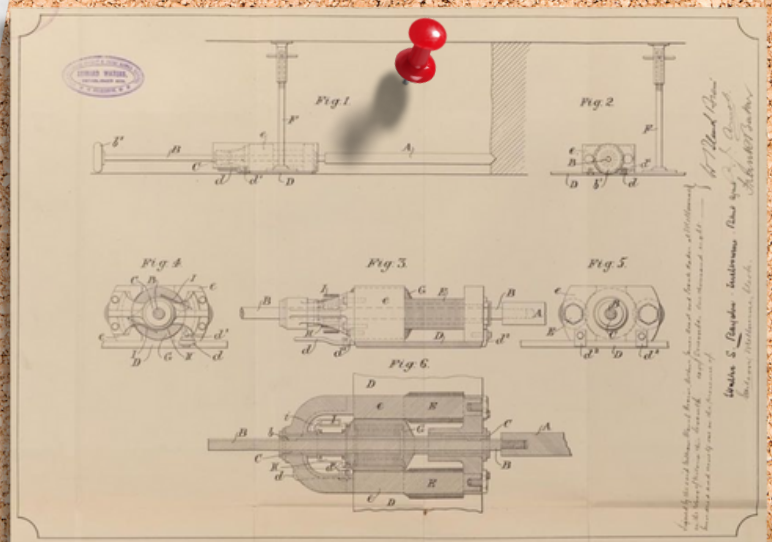
There's always something new to learn and there are so many talented people willing to share their expertise and knowledge. Check out The Repair Shop to watch some of the different skills that the repairers have.

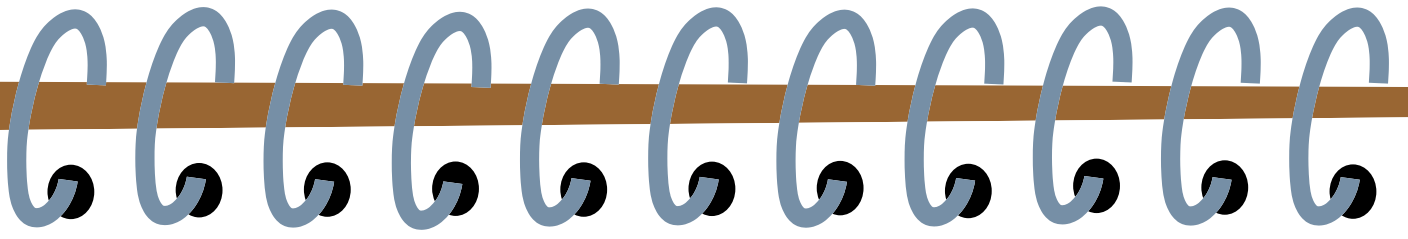
One of the first drills was the bore drill. It was invented in Egypt sometime around the year 3000 B.C.

Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaql.com.au/lent

The next drill invented was the auger drill during the Roman ages.

The first drill with an electric motor was invented by two Australians, Arthur James Arnot and William Blanch Brain, in 1889. Check out their drill patent.





REFLECTION

MASTER AND APPRENTICE

There's a barber shop in the old city of Jerusalem - at least I hope Ahmed is still there. It's in the Arab quarter. When we walked in (me, my wife, and two other traveling companions) it didn't occur to me that very few women would have been in that shop. However, the old Palestinian blokes reading their papers didn't seem to mind.

Ahmed had a customer in his chair, so he assigned me to his trusty teenage apprentice who spoke almost no English! I don't have any Arabic and I know nothing about cutting hair. So, I explained to Ahmed. He explained to the young fellow, who produced a cutthroat razor and began stropping!

Checking in now and then with a nod or a raised eyebrow we got underway. When it was done, I had a smile like a slice of watermelon. Mustering his best accent, the apprentice said, "Sir, I think you look 'fresh'."

At which point one old bloke lowered his paper, checked me in the mirror, and announced to my female companions, "Sir, with a haircut like that, you could have four wives!"

There followed laughter and interpreted conversation about life in Australia, and being who we are, life in the Old City and beyond the wall, family, and diaspora: wonderful.

When we don't know what to say, when we don't speak the language, when we shrug our shoulders and admit we don't have all the answers - we can learn together, from one another and find a way.

In John 12, My namesake, Philip (his family could only afford one letter 'L') was from Bethsaida in Galilee. In his time, he would have been just up the street from Ahmed's barber shop; in the big city, meeting foreigners who had questions about Jesus.... And he was stumped.

So, he asked Andrew; two apprentices, learning together on the job, what Jesus would assign them to later as they went among all nations making more disciples. Then they asked The Boss, who explained and demonstrated what they all needed to learn.

We get to do the same.

Phill Smith



BIBLE READINGS

Jeremiah 31: 31-34, Psalm 51: 1-12, Psalm 119: 9-16, Hebrews 5: 5-10, John 12: 20-33

THINK AND CHAT

- How does the term “apprentice” work for you alongside being a “disciple”?
- There are many Lone Ranger Christians around us – disillusioned with church, they don’t have a community of disciples around them. What do you enjoy – what do you long for – in having other trusted apprentices you can turn to for help?
- When I first read John’s account, I thought Philip wasn’t the sharpest tool in the shed. Why go to Andrew – it’s not as if he was the smartest bloke in the room either! How do you think the Greeks responded as they were drawn into Jesus’ crew?
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflections? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - SPIRITUAL SUPPORT & MENTORING

Make the time to talk with someone who gives you spiritual support, mentoring or guidance. You might already have a mentor, coach, or a relationship with an accountability partner in place. If so, reach out and set your next meeting time, and thank them for their support.

If you don't already have this in place, chat with someone about setting up something. Think about what kind of support and mentoring or coaching relationship you need or want from them. If you're not sure where to start, chat to a minister, pastor, chaplain or another other church leader.

PALM
SUNDAY



AN UNEXPECTED TREASURE

Sometimes in a restoration project, an unexpected 'treasure' will appear or be found. Suddenly, the restoration project has new life and meaning, and great care is taken to look after the unexpected treasure and make it a feature for all to enjoy.

This week, we encourage you to think about the unexpected treasures that God has revealed in you, or others. How do you share that treasure with others?

For our restoration project we might need Varnish or Paint brush. You might like to add this to your toolbox.

This week, if you've finished all the stripping back, sanding and preparation work, it might be time to paint, stain or varnish your project. Choose a paint or varnish that will help to enhance the treasure that you've restored, and carefully apply it. Ensure that you have all the necessary items for cleaning up, and keeping yourself safe while you do.



As you paint or varnish this week, thank God for being a God who restores individuals, humans, and situations. Pray for your Church and community that you'll be open to the unexpected ways that God works, and the unexpected people God works through. Write or paint your prayers and add them to your tool box.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

Painting has been important since before recorded history, the earliest paintings made using sticks, split palm leaves, and wood shavings.

Ancient Egyptians used reeds with crushed ends, to paint their hieroglyphics. By the 15th century, quills were the favoured style of brush.

The end of a brush is called the bristle. This is because they were made from the bristle, rough hair, of hogs, pigs, and boars.

Different handles are used for different painting applications.

Can you find out what these different handles would be used for?

Old painting kits, estimated to be 100,000 years old, were discovered in a cave in modern South Africa.

Paintbrushes are usually made by clamping bristles to a handle with a ferrule and are available in various sizes, shapes, and materials.

Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaqld.com.au/lent



GOURD



SHORT



FLAT BEAVERTAIL



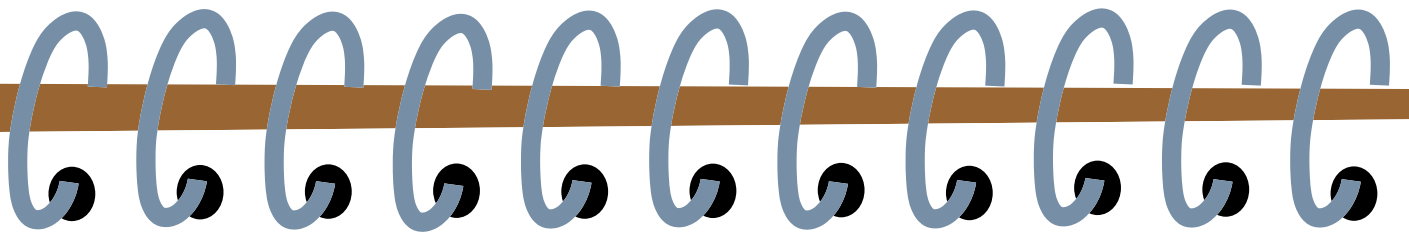
SQUARE



RAT TAIL



LONG



REFLECTION

AN UNEXPECTED TREASURE

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. These words of praise begin and end Psalm 118. The wonder of this praise is that the celebrations concern an unexpected treasure – “the stone the builders rejected”. This rejection becomes the basis for praise and celebration. Unexpected. Foretells Jesus eventual rejection on the cross.

Jesus rides through Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday, unexpected on a donkey. Unexpectedly no one has ever ridden this donkey. The crowd shout out words from Psalm 118: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (26)

The Lord? That’s what Caesar the Roman emperor expected people to call him. But no. This is not Caesar. This is Jesus Christ; the miracle-working, friend-making, hope-giving, faith-sharing, teacher, and healer from Nazareth on the Sea of Galilee. Unexpected big time! “The builders rejected”.

We all know what rejection looks like, feels like. It may be with friends, at school, at uni, at work, or even on the sports field. Sometimes totally unexpectedly, other times way too familiarly. We all know what that does to us; how we feel deep inside, how we feel about ourselves. It’s not nice. It’s horrible!

I remember my high school years, at Indooroopilly in Brisbane. I was the original geek – shy, tall, gangly, pimply, no friends. I volunteered for a couple of years at lunchtimes in the school’s canteen helping sell drinks, chips, and ice blocks. It was something to do. It also gave a mob of hefty, loudmouthed, footy-basketball-crazed year 12 guys someone to “give heaps” to each lunch-hour. And they sure did. They sledged me like some cricketers. One name stuck – Ronnie Raisin Toast. Toast for short. It became my name school wide. I really felt like “toast”. Useless. Rejected.

Imagine my surprise a few years on, when who should show up at our church young adults’ group but one of the Year 12 ringleaders! Gary. Gary was going out with Lynn, a committed Christian friend from primary school and church days. “What do you see in this guy, Lynn?” I asked myself more than once.

In time, via Lynn, Gary came to faith in Jesus, threw away much of his past ways though kept his humour intact, and became a mentor to me and countless others. Talk about unexpected treasure! Through Jesus’ transformation, the “new Gary”, though imperfect like us all, began displaying a robust inner beauty and purpose... that transformation from God began revealing itself in others. My life and others’ lives being shaped for the better. “Marvellous in our eyes”. Yep, God’s too!

Gary remains a mentor to this day, this unexpected treasure in my life, though physical distance makes that different now to times past. You see, Gary’s Christ-inspired encouragement helped me see myself deep down in God’s loving heart, as an unexpected treasure too. Decades on, that has been “a marvellous thing”. As the old song reminds me, “For he made something beautiful out of my life.” And by the Holy Spirit, that’s Jesus’ promise to us too!

David MacGregor (Rev)



BIBLE READINGS

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29, Mark 11: 1-11 or John 12: 12-16

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder if or when you've experienced rejection. I think we all have. Think and talk with someone you trust about how that was for you and what (if anything) helped you overcome that. If you haven't overcome it, find someone you can talk to about that to help you. You might take it to God first, and then someone else.
- I wonder who or what have been the unexpected treasures for you in your life? Share about them.
- Palm Sunday starts Jesus' journey to the cross where he experienced rejection of the worst kind, His own death? I wonder – how does that impact your life?!
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - REFLECTING ON GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE

(Companions in Christ)

Read Ephesians 1: 1-14. The opening of this letter is like a downpour of blessings or treasures. Pay attention to the expressions of praise and prayer, allowing the many spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us to soak into the soil of your mind and heart. Which aspects of what God has done for us in Christ are most important for you? What remains a mystery for you? Take time to offer your praise to God and to list other ways God has blessed and sustained you with grace.

GOOD
FRIDAY

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

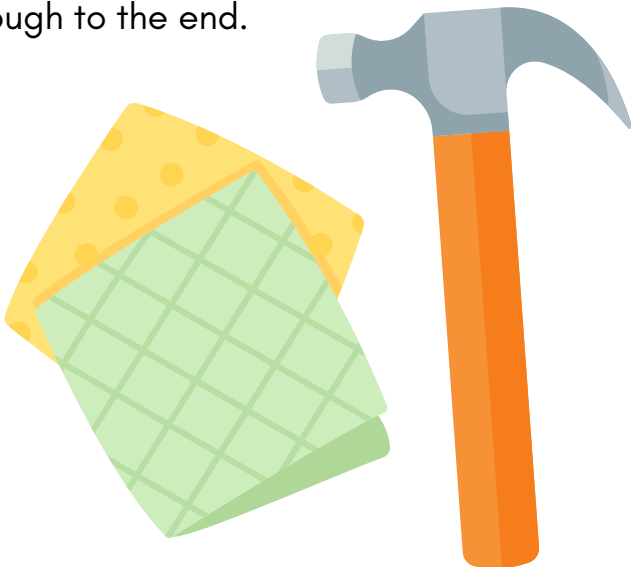
PLEASE HELP!

Restoration is often a long and tiring process. Sometimes you need to call on others for help, especially when exhaustion hits.

This week, we encourage you to reflect on the times in your life when you've cried out to God, or others, for help. How did they respond? How have you responded when people have called out to you for help?

For our restoration project we might need a Cloth to polish or clean up the project, or a Hammer to secure final touches. You might like to add these to your toolbox.

The project is finished, now it needs a good final clean and polish before it's ready to show others. Use a cloth to clean your project, and your workspace. Don't be afraid to ask for help in the clean-up process, it might just be what you need to see the project through to the end.



Hold a cloth and think and chat to God about how you have been cleaned, and what might need further work in your life. Then hammer some nails into a piece of timber as you think and chat to God about people or situations who seem to be forsaken, and cry out on their behalf. Add your prayers to your toolbox.



RESTORATION AND TOOL FACTS

Hammers are used to apply sharp force on to an object, often to force one item into another. They are often used to secure nails, shape metal or apply components, as well as crush and destroy objects.

Hammers have been used since the Stone Age. The first hammers were made without handles. Later, stones were attached to sticks with strips of leather or animal sinew, and used for building, food, and protection.

There are over 40 types of hammers.

Can you name some?

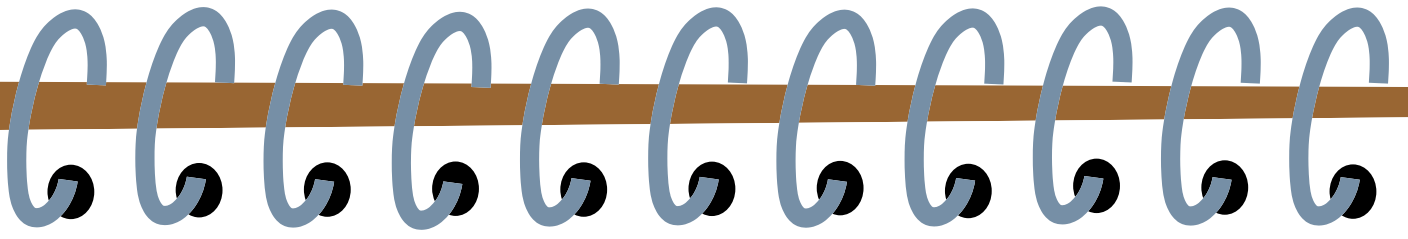


Rags were likely the first cleaning cloth, made from scraps or old pieces of clothing or other cloth, likely cotton or linen.

After the industrial revolution, traveling rag merchants would collect used clothing and textiles to return to factories, a great example of early recycling efforts.

Today, microfibre is widely used, due to it's high absorbency, dirt trapping efficiency, electrostatic charge, durability, reduced cleaning time, effort, and water use.

Check out these facts, pictures and print the Toolbox and tools at www.ucaqlld.com.au/lent



REFLECTION

PLEASE HELP!

Some days are hard – the tasks we have set for ourselves, the good intentions, the plans we have made, the effort we have put in – some days it feels like we can't get through it all by ourselves. And that's ok. We were created to ask for help and to help others.

Hebrews 4:16 reminds us that we can even *approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

In the 21st century – Winners! and FAILS! are pasted across social media, and we live in a time where independence and individuality are considered much more powerful than humility and sacrifice. It's sometimes hard to ask for help – maybe we don't want to seem weak, or incapable, so we keep on trying alone, in our own strength.

I give thanks for a broken ankle that taught me just how much help God has placed in the world for me. I was a single mum of 2 school-aged children in hospital telling the doctors – "I have to drive! You don't understand – I have to get my kids to school, do the shopping, all the things – I can't just not drive!"

They were not swayed, pretty unsurprisingly, and my dear friend Kaz came and collected me from hospital – happy to help when asked.

Over the next 6 weeks parents from school (some that I didn't know well) offered to help with the daily school drop-offs and pick-ups, and friends and family stepped in to fill the gaps and deliver some delicious home-cooked meals. It was honestly extraordinary. I am so very thankful to each of them.

Indeed, people do not always come through to help us, as it is also true that there are times that we have failed to help other people when we should have. Sometimes it is intentional, but more often it is from a lack of understanding, fear or lack of capacity, or the blindness of a self-centered life.

In all these circumstances we can pray and ask for help. We can seek forgiveness and the bravery to make amends. We can ask God to help us when we are lost, and ask Christ to guide us through, no matter what we face.

Psalm 22 gives me words to echo when I feel despair, and it also importantly reminds me to think about the many times I have been loved and helped before ... to trust that God will travel with me through it all, and to give thanks, abundant thanks "proclaiming his righteousness".

Good Friday is a hard day – Christ is bleeding, on the cross, carried to the tomb. But it is also a day to remind us all, just how much we are loved, how much we have been forgiven, and how much each of us has been helped. If we ever feel despised and rejected, we can remember that Jesus took our pain and bore our suffering, and realise that Christ made a Way when there was no way.

Rebecca Riggs



BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 52: 13-53: 12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10: 16-25, Hebrew 4: 14-16, 5: 7-9, John 18: 1-19: 42

THINK AND CHAT

- I wonder if you have ever found it difficult to ask for help. What happened?
- How does it feel when you've been asked for help and you have managed to make things better? How does it feel working together to get things done?
- How have you experienced God providing help for you when you needed it - Share your experiences with a friend.
- Is there something you need help with right now?
- Is there someone who is asking for your help that you may not have noticed?
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS

This week, ask God to bring to mind anyone who you may have neglected during their time of need. Spend some time with God reflecting on that person and situation.

Take the time, during the week, to talk to, or write to that person asking for forgiveness.

EASTER
SUNDAY

THE GREAT RESTORATION PROJECT

SHARING YOUR PROJECT WITH THE WORLD

The restoration project is complete. Now, it's time to share the restoration project with others and celebrate the amazing transformation.

This week, we encourage you to think about how you share the story of 'The Great Restoration Project' with others. Who needs to know about God's restoring love? Who can you share God's restoration story with?

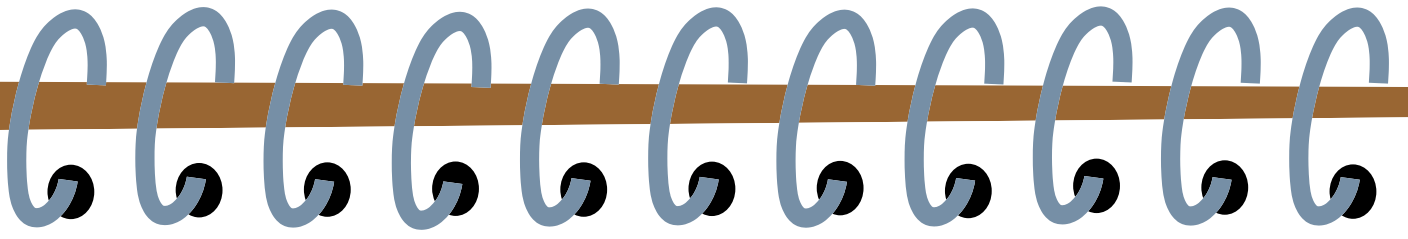
Once our restoration project is complete, it's time to share it with the world. You might like to take a photo of your project and add it to your toolbox.

Your Restoration project is complete. Now what? Who are you going to show? Who will get to appreciate it and enjoy it? How will you share you project? And who will you share it with?

Think about how you would explain this restoration project to other people. What have you felt as you completed this project. There is always more that can be restored, what's next for you?

Look at and admire your restoration project. What went well, what didn't go so well? Chat to God about that. Think about how you might explain and share your project with other people. Then, think about how you might explain and share God's great restoration project with others. What is easiest to explain? Why? Chat to God about that and add your prayers to your toolbox.





REFLECTION

SHARING YOUR PROJECT WITH THE WORLD

Do you like watching renovation rescue shows or shows about home makeovers? I've watched a few episodes in my time, and I've discovered that the last thing that usually gets done on such a show, creating the most tension, is the garden. There is always people running around like ants, laying grass, potting flowers, sweeping paths, and putting finishing touches to outdoor furniture, as the unsuspecting residents are driven back along their street to their new home.

A makeover is never complete until the garden is done because the garden invites everyone else in the neighbourhood to see that something new and different has happened here; to see how things have changed! Often on the show while the neighbours get to watch the project happen, at the end they're invited over to experience the restoration project for themselves. To explore with the homeowners the incredible gift that they've been given and to celebrate with them.

God's work began in a garden, a place where things were "very good". A garden where beauty abounded & relationship between humanity and God was deeply personal as they cared for this garden together. As we know, this paradise was lost and so began God's great restoration project. A project to restore the flourishing of all creation and particularly God's relationship with humanity.

In John 20:1-18 we meet a character who shouldn't surprise us at all: a gardener. The one to announce to the world that the next stage of the restoration project is complete and to reveal to humanity what it looks like – that love for God made real in being given for others is so strong that it can transform death into a new way of being in the world and create eternal hope. In flesh he'd also been a carpenter, and would have known a few furniture restoration techniques.

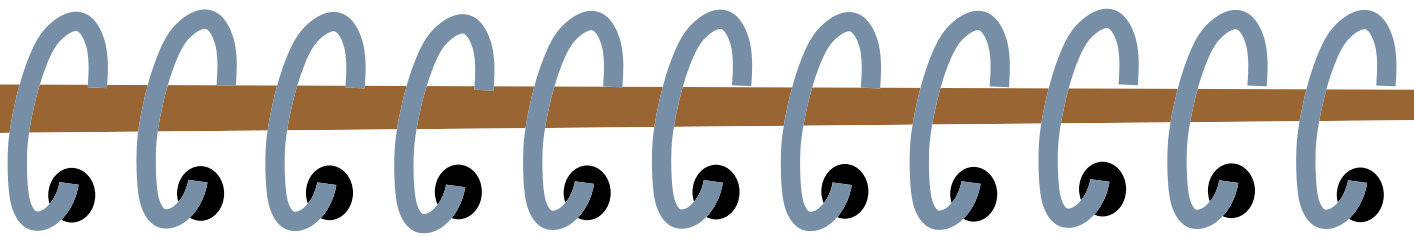
What joy this must have brought Mary. All she had believed in, and the new way she'd chosen to live while she travelled with Jesus; all that she thought she had lost, was restored and brought to a glorious new life! As Mary heard Jesus call her by name, she heard the greatest news that she could imagine – God can truly restore all things, even that which is dead!

What joy she must have known as she undertook the task given to her by Jesus to share that very good news with her best friends, to help them understand that this restoration project that had begun in a garden, so long ago, had resulted in miraculous new life.

This Easter Sunday, we are given time and space to reflect on our experience of the new life that we've discovered in knowing and living Jesus' way. We're invited to remember the power of love that has transformed our lives and consider how we can share the joy this brings us as we experience being known by God and called, by name, part of God's family.

What ways can you take the bold step to share your joy at being part of this restoration project with others that they too might discover the transformative power of love?

Paul Wetzig



BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 25:6-9, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24.1 Corinthians 15:1-11, John 20:1-18, Mark 16:1-8, Acts 10:34-43

THINK AND CHAT

- Imagine yourself in Mary's position, wondering what has happened to Jesus' body at the tomb, and the Gardener simply speaks to you by name. How would that make you feel?
- When have you experienced love that has transformed your life? Did it make you want to share your experience with others?
- Is there someone that God is inviting you to share your experience of life changing love with this Easter?
- What stands out for you in these readings and reflection? Make some notes.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE - JOHN 3:16 IN FOUR WAYS

Try this over four different days (This Practice comes from 'Companions in Christ').

"Head" Spirituality

Read John 3: 16. Think about what this verse means. Paraphrase the verse in a sentence or two that capture the essence of its meaning for you. Then write a prayer to God that expresses your thoughts about what God has done for us and why we need what God has given to us.

"Heart" Spirituality

Read John 3:16. List several people you love and those you have difficulty loving. Read the verse slowly for each person on your list, personalising this verse as an expression of God's love for him or her. Include yourself. Pause to add your prayer for each person and to pray for what you need in order to love that person. Notice any changes in you as you affirm God's love for the person. Decide how you are going to express God's love and your love to the people on your list. Record your experience.

"Mystic" Spirituality

Read John 3:16. Repeat this verse prayerfully as a way of focusing on God. Open your spirit to the loving attitude of Jesus Christ who allowed himself to be given for our salvation. Give yourself to the flow of God's boundless love for the whole world, a love that flows in and through you. As people and situations come to mind, bring them into the flow and allow them to be washed in God's boundless love. Finally, carry some part of John 3:16 with you in your daily activities as a way of practicing openness to God's love.

"Active" Spirituality

Read John 3: 16. Today you will not be seeking to understand, feel, or contemplate the love described in this verse. Rather, be a living prayer today, an expression of God's sacrificial love. As you are able, take a walk through your house, your workplace, or your neighbourhood. Bless everyone and everything you see with the words, "For God so loved the world..." Where do you see a need for God's love? Consider what Jesus would do in that situation and choose a way to embody God's love in action.