

It's Broken: Hope and Healing for the Struggle

BY REV. TOM ECKSTEIN



“It’s broken!” That sounds familiar, doesn’t it? Because we live in a sinful world, and because sin lives inside of each one of us, brokenness — in one form or another — is a burden from which no one is exempt. Whether it’s a new Christmas toy that only works for a few days or a human relationship that was intended to last “until death parts us,” things break, and the results can be devastating.

Brokenness affects the physical, spiritual and emotional health of every human being loved by God. God’s perfect design for sexuality is broken, and the consequences (i.e., abortion, homosexual behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, divorce) are matters of life and death. The struggle can seem overwhelming at times, leading many to despair, even Christians. And in our culture today, nowhere is that struggle more evident than with those who face the temptations of same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior as well as their loved ones who are told that a friend or family member is gay.

Consider the following: Kaylee is eighteen years old and entering her freshman year in college. She has been raised by Christian parents who attend church almost weekly. Ever since she can remember, she’s had thoughts and feelings toward other girls that are at odds with her Christian faith. She hasn’t said anything to anyone; she’s afraid of the scorn and ridicule that she would face if anyone found out. So day and night she suffers silently. She’s prayed about it, but nothing seems to change. She’s even thought about suicide, which only adds to the overwhelming amount of guilt and shame that she feels.

Linda is married, and the mother of four children. She and her husband have tried to teach their kids the difference between right and wrong, and apart from the usual indiscretions of youth, they’ve been good kids. That is, until her son, Bryan, came home from college and announced that he was gay — and that he’s had a relationship with a young man for the last few months.

From the moment she found out, Linda’s felt depressed and anxious about her life. Why has this happened? What did she do to deserve this? What could she have done differently? In her mind, life will never be the same. Confused and hurt, she needs God now more than ever. And so she prays that God would make her and her family whole again.

Pastor Schmidt has had the privilege of serving the Lord and His Church for nearly five years. He enjoys preaching and teaching the Word of God and helping people in their times of need. But in the last six months, on three separate occasions when he’s had the

*“Come unto me, ye fainting, And I will give you life.
O cheering voice of Jesus, Which comes to aid our strife!
The foe is stern and eager, The fight is fierce and long;
But thou hast made us mighty And stronger than the strong.”*

*“And who so ever cometh, I will not cast him out.
O patient love of Jesus, Which drives away our doubt,
Which, though we be unworthy Of love so great and free,
Invites us very sinners To come, dear Lord, to thee!”*

(LSB 684, vv. 3-4)

opportunity to give counsel and guidance to individuals struggling with some form of sexual temptation, each of the encounters have made him feel inadequate and unprepared. He wonders if he was any help at all.

Into the midst all of this heartache and pain comes the One who preaches peace to our hearts when He says, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b). Jesus can say that because sin, death and the devil have been eternally defeated as a result of His sacrificial death on the cross and the resurrection proclaimed by Easter’s empty tomb! And knowing that Jesus has taken care of the eternal things, we can trust Him to care for us in all the trials of this life.

God’s Law condemns the unbelieving and unrepentant, which includes those who, by the way they live their lives, change the Third Petition of the Lord’s Prayer from “Thy will be done” to “My will be done.” But the Gospel of Jesus Christ brings comfort and hope to those who, through repentance and faith, struggle with sin and its consequences, including same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior. The Gospel comforts broken sinners, assuring them of God’s love in Christ and promising them that they will never be alone as they do battle against the forces of evil.

Living under the cross means that things will continue to break, and that brokenness will be experienced by all of us in this life. Some must bear the burden of same-sex attraction in the same way that others must endure the temptations of lust, greed or covetousness. But thanks be to God: There is hope! In Jesus, through the hearing of God’s Word and in receiving the Holy Sacraments, we are new creations, completely new, one day at a time, and forever!