

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

Update: A Singular Sojourn (Peter & Valerie Limmer)

One of the things we love about being missionaries is that we have a worldwide ministry: to the Japanese, in Okinawa; and to you, our partners, in Canada. This month, we have felt that God is leading us to do something a little different in our newsletter. This month, rather than sharing about our progress in fundraising, or our ministry in Japan, we want to take this opportunity to minister to you.

We each go through distinct seasons in our lives. Some are carefree, some are painful, some are full of anger and grief. On my happiest days—those days when the sun seems to shine more brightly, the air smells sweet, and the birds are chirping—I always try to remind myself that I am fortunate. I look at the people around me, and realize that many of them are hiding hearts broken by divorce, the loss of a job, the betrayal of a friend, serious health problems or financial issues, the death of a child or a spouse or a parent, and so on.

It is our deepest desire to walk with you, our partners, through these heartbreaks. We want to pray for you, and encourage you in any way we can. Sometimes, though, we know it's difficult to share about these things. Sometimes, rehashing everything causes its own particular type of pain. Peter and I can give specific encouragement to, and offer specific prayer for, those of you who can bear to share your pain with us. But for those of you who can't—well, we know what it is not to be able to share everything. We know that sometimes it's impossible to share and not gossip, and not give into bitterness, and still follow Jesus.

So, this newsletter is for you. This newsletter is for those with secret hurts—the ones that can't be shared.



To the Christian struggling for his or her faith:

We know the unnerving disorientation of the ground being shaky beneath your feet, and of not being sure what is real anymore. This is an incredibly painful time, and you have no idea if—or when—or how—things will end. Will you still believe in Jesus at the end of everything? He seems so distant now. Where is He? The questions

seem to swirl around in a never-ending tornado. There are so many difficulties with the faith you once had, and all of the standard answers now seem hollow.

Dear brother, dear sister, please allow us to share something that was immensely helpful to us during our own season of shattered faith. This is an anchor to hold on to when you feel like God hates you and is toying with your brokenness. When the world seems unbearably complicated, when you're not sure whether God even loves you anymore, the best—and sometimes the only—thing to do is go back to the simple truth that existed at that immovable pivot point in time: Jesus loved you when He died on that cross.

Focus your eyes on the certainty of that point. Don't let go. It will give you the strength to keep shouting at the ceiling, to keep going on when things seem futile. It is the truth. You and I both know it.

Jesus loved you when He was on the cross.



To the Christian hurting because of the deeds of someone else:

There's something so incredibly painful about the hurt we encounter from those we've opened our hearts to, from those we've selflessly served, from those we've admired and respected and called "friend". We may now be suffering because of a sin, an attitude, a careless word, or a chain reaction that has caused horrors we would never have foreseen. This place of pain is so lonely. The thirst for justice can be so incredibly strong.

One of the things I love about Jesus is that He is not a distant God. He is not indifferent to our pain. He has experienced great pain too. And He continues to experience pain. When we are suffering, alone, we need only look over our shoulder to see Jesus beside us. And He is suffering with us. Embrace Him. Embrace His fellowship. The fellowship of His suffering can be so very sweet and precious.

In this time of suffering, guard your heart, dear one. Do not give in to sinning against the people who have sinned against you. (If you have already given in, then perhaps the section below is for you too.)

Denying our thirst for righteous vindication is often one of the most difficult things we will ever do. But it is necessary. Because there is always collateral damage. Because right now, as we hurt, we don't want to cause this same hurt in other—innocent—people. There is always collateral damage.

Keep your heart humble and seeking Jesus. Resist the urge to gossip. Encourage someone else. Reaching outside of yourself may be painful—at first. You have wounds. Jesus can heal them. And He will. This will not last forever. But the things that you learn in this place—the ways that you grow—those things very well may last, if you let them.



To the Christian hurting because of his or her own deeds:

There's nothing quite like being stabbed in the heart by someone you trusted. You turn around, looking for the person with the knife, and then realize that the person holding the knife is you.

How do you recover from a self-inflicted wound? How do you go on? How do you live down the shame of what you've done? Maybe other people know about that shame. Maybe they don't. But you know. And you can never forget. You close your eyes and your sin is there. Sometimes, for an instant, you forget. Maybe you're with friends and someone tells a joke. You start to laugh, and the laughter dies in your throat. Because then you Remember. That Sin. It deserves those capitals. It's tattooed on your heart. There's no removal for that kind of stain.

Dear brother, dear sister, don't give up hope. Don't give in to the lie that what you've done is unforgivable. Jesus Christ gave His very life—skin hanging off His back, slowly suffocating, dying a torturous death at the hands of experts in torture—for you. No sacrifice was beyond His love, and nothing is beyond His power to forgive—if only you'll come to Him and repudiate that sin.

It seems so impossible right now, but He can wash you clean. Nothing is impossible for Him. You can become as pure as the freshly-fallen snow. He can make your heart as if you'd never...



To the person who isn't a Christian, and who is hurting:

This world contains so much pain and evil that perhaps we would go insane were we to comprehend the magnitude of it. The world seems determined to spiral downwards towards more evil, more injustice, more hopelessness. There doesn't seem like there will ever be an end.

In our own times of suffering, we naturally question, "Why?" I wonder why we ask that question. In the world today, it would seem that the number of people who are hurt is far greater than the number of people who are not. If it's normal to be hurting, then why are we surprised?

The world is not as it should be. We all intuitively know this. Our heroes are those who battle injustice, rather than give in to it. We feel that they are fighting for the world as it should be, and when we are at our bravest, in our heart of hearts we want to join them in that fight.

I don't have a lot of answers to the question of why suffering exists. But I do know one thing: Jesus Christ—the God we worship—is a God who is not distant and aloof. He is the only God who suffers along with His people; who suffered before us to procure a way to restore a relationship broken by evil; and who loves us, and desires us to come to Him and accept the forgiveness and grace that He offers to all who believe in Him.

Feel free to poke around the things we say in the other sections of this letter, and you will soon see that we freely admit that Christians don't have it all together. But we serve the God who can mend broken hearts and restore them to places of health and healing that are even better than the places we started out in, if only we let Him—if only we embrace His forgiveness, and love, and salvation.

Contact Information

Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us.

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