

## Hanging out with Jesus in the ruins.

A few weeks ago, I was stunned “big time”, and was wondering what to do, but all I could hear Jesus saying was, “WAIT!”. So, I retreated, as always to my *inner* place of prayer, my green valley. Not a geographical place but an often-pictured landscape in my sanctified imagination.

Unusually, it was dark in this inner vision – night-time - but I could see a small fire ahead and as I looked around in its flickering light, I noticed I was standing on ruins. Great slabs of concrete collapsed at random angles in mounds with finger-like protrusions of broken columns, and blocks of stone tumbled aslant.

Pervading it all, a sense of something incomplete, raw, and unadorned - an unfulfilled design collapsed mid-construction and abandoned to the might-have-been lists of history.

I could feel the abandonment deep inside, carried on the shock waves of grief. Not a personal grief but one of connection. An acute grieving for others, for missed potential, and for something lost, of which I was a part. It was underlaid by a long-suffering sadness, discerned, rather than felt.

At that point, I knew Jesus was inviting me to sit there atop the ruins. He had been there all the time, of course, waiting by a warm blazing campfire.

And so here I am, leaning into Jesus. Waiting. Resting. Breathing in the quiet space, embracing the moment, feeling the warmth. Knowing I am loved. Just being. Hanging out with Jesus in the ruins.

Sometimes the mountain of the Lord is a mound of ruins - and not a spiritual peak of holy delight we choose to ascend. It is something big that has come crashing down slap bang in the middle of the life we are living, the ideas we are constructing, and the goals we thought we were moving towards.

Sometimes the mountain of the Lord is a mound of ruins - that consist of shock, disappointment, grief, or frustration - broken dreams or a broken heart - and we find ourselves sitting upon it, weeping.

In this place, Jesus lights the fire of his love and simply sits with us.

How precious, O God, is your constant love!

We find protection under the shadow of your wings.

<sup>8</sup> We feast on the abundant food you provide;

you let us drink from the river of your goodness.

<sup>9</sup> You are the source of all life,

and because of your light we see the light. Psalm 36:7-9

(GNB)



The prophets, Isaiah and Micah call out, “Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord” (Is 2:3; Mic 4:2). Consider the symbolism of the mountain as a place of worship, security, and encounter with God.

Reflect on the account of Elijah running away from trouble and then hiding in a cave on the mountain of the Lord in 1Kings 19.

Consider when in your life, your mountain top encounter with Jesus has been on a “mound of ruins”. How did you experience Jesus’ love for you? In what ways did he sustain you and shine his light to lead you forward? What did he say to you?

Song: *Glorious Ruins* - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgMV3\\_Md8MU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgMV3_Md8MU)

If you are reading this and it resonates with an overwhelming personal grief, sadness, or sense of helplessness that you are feeling unable to handle, PLEASE SEEK HELP straight away. Call:

Lifeline 13 11 14 – [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 – [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

Sometimes we just need someone else to help us see the way ahead.

May you know that you are loved and acceptable, that Jesus is there in the ruins and mess of your life and loves you anyway. May you see his light in the darkness and may hope come to life within you.

A message of encouragement:

*<sup>5-6</sup> Remember, our Message is not about ourselves; we're proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Master. All we are is messengers, errand runners from Jesus for you. It started when God said, "Light up the darkness!" and our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful.*

*<sup>7-12</sup> If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. As it is, there's not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we're not much to look at. We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. While we're going through the worst, you're getting in on the best!*

*<sup>13-15</sup> We're not keeping this quiet, not on your life. Just like the psalmist who wrote, "I believed it, so I said it," we say what we believe. And what we believe is that the One who raised up the Master Jesus will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive. Every detail works to your advantage and to God's glory: more and more grace, more and more people, more and more praise!*

*<sup>16-18</sup> So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever. (MSG 2Cor 4:5-18)*

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