



BURSTING HEART

July 2018

But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

1 Peter 4:13

I've written much about how stigma has affected me and others. But I realize everyone has a story. Everyone has experienced some form of rejection. It must be one of the worst sources of emotional pain. For many of us, the memories never go away. We tell our stories, express our pain, and hope the telling will make things better. But it only does so temporarily.

My mind often goes to a person who also experienced rejection—but in the worst way possible. I've talked about Jesus' story many times before, but I believe it's worth re-telling here. We may find comfort in it. Jesus was a perfect man—God in human form.

*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself*

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*by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Philippians 2:8

Jesus suffered the ultimate rejection but bore the pain without complaints. Why? Because he knew he was suffering for the sake of many.

Have you ever found that when you're hurting, the pain is easier to bear if there's a good reason for it? Interesting how it seems to lessen if it's with the welfare of others in mind. Nevertheless, I'm not Jesus, and I still can't avoid complaining. If I didn't give expression to it I think I would feel even worse. I think my heart would burst.

I'm reminded how a lot of artwork comes about in response to pain—as a reaction to a “bursting heart.” The best paintings, sculpture and photography have been artists' responses to the deep feelings they have inside. Feelings that include emotional pain. Maybe what matters is not *whether* we express pain, but *how*.

Your pain and suffering can sometimes be useful. It can do a lot of good, especially when you keep others in mind. It could bear fruit that might not otherwise develop.

What are you doing with your pain? Have you ever thought that God could help you turn the ugliness in your life into something beautiful? Something that might benefit others in some way?

Doing things that would lessen your pain will be different for everyone. It will depend on the gifts you'd like to use. Everyone has gifts that could be helpful to others. You could use them for big projects or small ones—whatever you might feel up to.

Sometimes I work on big undertakings, other times small ones. Whatever you choose to do could be helpful to others, as well as yourself. Today, for example, I'll start making some notecards. I'll be able to share them with friends. It'll be creative, fun and meaningful.

I'm starting to feel better already.

marja