

Words of hope and comfort

Earlier this year, Dawn turned a corner

It was a significant moment and one that was completely **understandable**...

She went from 'I'm going to **beat** this at all **costs**', 'I'll leave **no stone** unturned', 'I'll trial **any** new treatment on offer'...

...and all of that she had done **courageously**... despite the **side effects** and **challenges** those treatments caused...

She would try **anything** because she **loved** you and didn't want to leave you... she had a bad case of **FOMO** – fear of **missing out**...

But the corner she turned came, after knowing some days of terrible pain...

...and she reached a place of **acceptance** of what would be the final **outcome**...

But having **reached** that... and now, as it were, facing straight up to death, she had some **questions** for me...

I visited her – with the family - in the Wesley one night and we had an **amazing conversation**...

She wanted to know what happens **now**... what happens when you **die**...

It's probably a question **most** people ask eventually...

I saw a meme on Facebook the other day where a patient asked a doctor 'what will happen when I die' and the doctor said 'we change the linen and put another patient in'...

Probably not the answer the patient was looking for...

So there we were, gathered around the bed in the Wesley and Dawn had asked this question...

In this building this afternoon – there'd be a **range** of **answers**... some of you would no doubt be of the firm opinion that when you died you **die** and that's it – **nothing**.

Some of you may share the view that you come **back** and get another chance to do it all **again**

Some of you may think that if go to God if you're **good enough** and haven't done anything wrong that's too **serious**... /

And there would be a range of **other** views no doubt... ...and those who've never really given it any **thought**...

And I **understand all that...**!

One of the absolute **privileges** I have as a **minister**, is to be able to speak to people in Dawn's situation and (a) tell them what the **Bible** says about the **future** and (b) tell them how they can **sure** they'll be **part** of that future...

...because in the end... we can **speculate** all we like about the future... but what we really need is some **authority**... someone who **knows** what they're talking **about**...

And that authority we have from **God** in his **Bible**

And what he tells us that this world has been totally mucked up from the **perfect** world he **created**...

It's been mucked up by mankind's 'go-it-alone-without-God-attitude'... Mankind has pushed God out and lived as though he doesn't **exist** or doesn't **matter**...

And that has had a **profound** impact in the world... causing so much all that is **sad** and **hard** and **tragic** among us...

But here's the thing... God promises something **new**... a whole new **creation**...

...a whole **new creation** where there will be **no more tears**, no more **sadness**... because there will be no more **sickness**, no more **pain**...no more **evil**, no more **tragedy**... and even no more **death**...! //

Dawn thought that sounded pretty **good**... //

do **you**? //

But then we needed to deal with the question of how Dawn could be sure she'll **be** there... //

And I was able to share with her, that what God wants from us is not a great list of our **achievements** and why he should be so **impressed** with us as to welcome us into his new creation... but rather a frank acknowledgement of our **failures**.

And when we come to him - not in **pride** but in **humility** – he **forgives** us our failings and says 'welcome!'. //

Easter was a few short weeks ago: when Jesus **died**, he died taking the impact of our '**go-it-alone-without-him-attitude**' on his **shoulders**... he took the **rap** for the way we pushed God **aside** and lived **without** him.

And then he **rose** from the **dead**... showing he had won the battle over **evil** and **death**... and **his** resurrection was the guarantee **our** resurrection. //

Anyone who **wants** to be **forgiven** – **can** be. //

So that very night, I led Dawn in a short **prayer** – it went something like this – “Dear Lord – I’m sorry for pushing you aside and living **without** you – **forgive** me. Thank you that Jesus died and rose so I can be **forgiven**.”

So Dawn then, had clarity about **two** things – that there **is** a beautiful future promised to those who turn back to him... and that she was **forgiven** and was **heading** there to **be** with the Lord. //

How can this bring comfort to **YOU** today?

Perhaps in these four ways

1. That you can know Dawn faced her last days with a **clarity** and **certainty** about what is **beyond** death
2. That she knew that she was **heading** to that promised future because through **Jesus’ death** and **resurrection** she was **forgiven** and **reconciled** to God; and
3. That right now – we can sure that she is **with** God now – she is **well** – she is **content** – she is **revelling** in being in that place without **pain** and **suffering** and **tears**... and without **death**.
4. If **you** are in relationship with God – if you are among those who have **acknowledged** your failures and turned from **self** to **God** – you can be **certain** that **one day**, you will be **reunited** with **her**....!

That doesn’t mean we don’t **grieve**... of **course** we **grieve**!

But it may just mean that your grief is not one of utter **despair**...

But a grief that is **real** yes – but has **perspective**... has **hope** – has **comfort**...

God **loves** you **today**...

He wants to **minister** to you in your **grief**...

He wants to **bless** you and put his loving arms **around** you...

...he longs to **open** his **arms** to you and **welcome** you **back**...

...if you will just **turn** to him and **run** to him... in **humility**... and **trust**...