

THE GIFT OF DOUBT

A talk by Pastor Lucy Baker, 22 March 2009

I recently went to see a film, called Doubt – in which some powerful words were spoken about the very subject of Doubt and how it appears in our lives, and I have added some of the words from that movie to some of my own today that I would like to share with you.

When we become ill, we stop trusting our bodies. When we face awful events and death in our lives, we can stop hearing the support of Spirit. We feel lost.

What do we do when we are not sure?

When the tsunami happened, when the Bali bombings happened, when the recent bushfires happened, who among us did not experience the most profound disorientation? Despair?

Which way, what now? What do I say to my kids? What do I tell myself? It was a time of people sitting together, bound together by a common feeling of helplessness.

But think of that! Your BOND with your fellow being was your Despair. It was a public experience. It was awful, but we were in it together.

How much worse is it then for the lone man, the lone woman, stricken by a private calamity? No one knows I'm sick. No one knows I've lost my last real friend. No one knows I've done something wrong. Imagine the isolation. Now you see the world as through a window. On side of the glass, happy, untroubled people and on the other side, you.

A cargo ship sank one night. It caught fire and went down. And only this one sailor survived. He found a lifeboat, rigged a sail... and being of a nautical discipline... turned his eyes to the heavens and read the stars. He set a course for his home, and exhausted, fell asleep. Clouds rolled in. And for the next 20 nights, he could no longer see the stars. He thought he was on course but there was no way he could be certain. And as the days rolled on and the sailor wasted away, he began to have doubts. Had he set his course right? Was he still going towards his home? Or was he horribly lost... and doomed to a terrible death? No way to know. The message of the constellations – had he imagined it because of his desperate circumstances? Or had he seen truth once ... and now had to hold on to it without further reassurance? There are those of you in church today who know exactly the crisis of faith I describe. And I want to say to you: doubt can be a bond as powerful and as sustaining as certainty.

When you are lost, you are not alone.

When you feel rejected and unloved, you are not alone.

When you feel worthless and less than in the eyes of others, you are not alone.

When you don't like who you are becoming because of the pain you hold inside, you are not alone.

When you feel imprisoned by an addiction, a grudge, a habit you feel too weak to fight, you are not alone.

When you have lost a loved one, and no-one around can understand quite how it feels, you are not alone.

Mother, father, Great Spirit – remind us that we are part of a great circle of others who are experiencing the same lessons and hardships regardless of the differences between us. Remind us we are fully connected to the Light above, around and below us and that in our greatest and deepest moments of Doubt, we have never been more encouraged to surrender into Trust of what is, and what is waiting for us at the end of our individual tunnel.

Help us to open our hearts with hope in the most fearful moments when all our instincts command us to shut down and run inwards. Remind us that we have never BEEN more ready, more qualified, more courageous than THIS moment in time and that the only surrendering now required of us is into a deeper level of connection with You.

Amen.