



Serenity

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Media Mayhem

Since our last newsletter, our home has become a television studio. The 60 Minutes TV crew was here filming an episode that screened on the 19th April, titled *Jesika Sylva*.

The story, in part, centred on the grace of the father of murdered man, James Polkinghorne.

The story was filmed here at the request of Karl and Fiona Polkinghorne, who found the grace to change their own lives and the lives of others here at *Matilda* – our Mission Serenity HQ. This story is the catalyst of our first article this month, *Can You Give Grace Without Forgiveness?*

A week or so later the crew from 4HG arrived for two weeks of filming for our *Recovery Road* program. Caroline and Daniel Laredo

are putting together a series of video testimonies and a series on how to run a successful *Recovery Road* ministry. All this material will be made available for download at our [Web site](#).

The new Web site will be a one-stop-shop for recovery with everything required available at the touch of a button.

In June we travel to Cooranbong in NSW to run a *Radical Shift* program over several days at the Memorial Church at Avondale. Following on, we will start shooting our new *Recovery Road*, 13-part, TV series at 3ABN. Very exciting times ahead.

Can You Give Grace Without Forgiveness?

Is it possible? Can you extend grace to someone without forgiving them? We posed this question at our

last *Church Without Walls* group at Mission Serenity last week. Everyone said it was not possible until one of those present shared his testimony.

Karl Polkinghorne was one of the main players in the 60 Minutes story called *Jesika Sylva*. Karl's son was murdered in Sydney two years ago and he testified at his son's murder trial. The woman who killed him was released on a suspended sentence for killing in self-defense. Jesika's life has not been the same since she stabbed her partner to death with five frenzied blows.

60 Minutes flew Jesika up to the Gold Coast to Mission Serenity to meet Karl and film the reaction. They embraced at the top of the stairs leading to our front door. Karl had decided to end his own imprisonment to anger and hatred by re-

fusing to be controlled by it any more. While he has not yet found it within himself to forgive her, he did tell her that he bore no malice or anger towards her and he was working towards forgiveness. When asked by Michael Usher during his interview why he was so calm, Karl simply said that it was his choice. He was extending grace to Jesika without actually forgiving her yet. He was affording her a space without judgement and leaving the door open to future dialogue. In doing so, Karl has also kept the door open to have a powerful impact in the life of his grandson, Tyrese.

As we watched the interview unfold we were witness to God's amazing grace in its purest form. Karl is not a Christian but acted in a very Godly way as an example to all of us who choose to be trapped in anger and resentment.

God never wastes a hurt.

Graham Hood.

Are We All Addicts?

When we think of addictions we often think of drugs, alcohol and gambling. Our thoughts are drawn to homeless people shooting up in drug dens in the back alleyways of large cities.

When we present our *Radical Shift* program at churches around the country we ask people to raise

their hands if they have an addiction. Few hands are ever raised and often those hands raised are by folk who have a large grin on their faces. When I say to lower your hands if you are referring to chocolate, few hands remain. Light is made of their addiction to chocolate as though it is not harming them at all. The truth on sugar and dairy is now very frightening indeed.

anyway. 20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 21 I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still

Lost Yet Found

I have had some difficult realisations of my own in recent weeks that prompted me to post the following on Facebook.

"Dear Lord,

I have missed you of late and I have been lost and yearning for Your company. Spiritually it has been a troubling time for me and I have been perplexed at Your absence. As I wandered around in circles thinking about what has happened, I realised that it was I who had strayed and that You were where You always are; at my door, awaiting my welcome.

Lord, in my despair at having lost my way I encountered many things. Issues I thought long gone from my soul. Pride and animosity. Judgement of others and criticism of the walk of my brothers and sisters. Cynicism and skepticism became close friends and strange bedfellows and I was becoming what I had hitherto despised. Fear and anxiety started to creep into my life and I started to doubt all the things that have kept me joyful these past 9 years."

Seeing my quandary Michelle looked for an opening to lead me home.

Last Friday night she opened Sabbath by reading from an amazing book, *Spirit of Baptism and Waiting on God*, by Dennis Smith. She read me a list of traits that describe pride in one column and brokenness in another (page 87). She read the list of pride's characteristics and the hair stood up on my neck. I was more relieved when she read

the list under the heading Brokenness. While I realised that I had more of those characteristics than the pride list, there were enough to show me where I had stumbled.

"As I woke this morning and went to the Word it hit me that You had reappeared.

It happened when I understood that I only turn to You in times of trouble. I also was able to see that I have become bone weary and lazy in that condition and I had forgotten that I needed You every minute in good times and bad.

My brokenness had struck me deep and You showed me that it was in that brokenness that You were close enough to touch. Lord my prayer to You now is that I should always remain humble and broken and that You would strengthen me. Thank You for showing me that it was never You that left but me and thank You, Lord, for the grace of the cross that keeps me ever hope-filled and humble. Thank You for never wasting a hurt.

Your grateful servant,

Graham"



In our March Newsletter we talked about us all having an addiction.

Paul indicates his own addictive personality in Romans 7.

"14 So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. 15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it

within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."

God is the answer but we must first pose the question. I spoke to an 82-year old, lifelong, church-going Christian who confessed to me that she needed recovery from her addiction. She admitted that she was addicted to her own self righteousness and that this had cost her many of her relationships with people whom she truly loved. It's never too late.

God never wastes a hurt.

Graham Hood.

Upcoming Events

Weekend of June 13

Radical Shift at Avondale Memorial Church in Cooranbong NSW.

This is a multi-day event so please refer to the [Web site](#).