

Thought for the Day 8th April - John Reed

Read Hebrews 10:1-14

The day after tomorrow is Good Friday, when we remember the death of our Lord Jesus. What does it mean to you? What did it achieve for you? Why should we still mark this day, all these years later?

Because Jesus' death achieved something nobody else ever could for us.

Here's a little story ... A car skidded on wet pavement and struck a light pole. The occupant was stunned and momentarily unable to speak. Several bystanders ran over to help. A tall, middle-aged woman was the first to reach the car. She started to speak when a burly truck driver rushed in and pushed her back. "Step aside, lady," he shouted. "I've taken a course in first aid." The woman watched him for a few minutes, then tapped his shoulder. "Pardon me," she said. "But when you get to the part about calling a doctor, I'm right here."

How often do we see that happen: the well-meaning amateur barges in without realizing that they are out of their depth. Or we opt for the so-called "Band-Aid solution," that is we try to fix with a Band-Aid something which actually requires radical surgery. For example, a quick Google search of that phrase took me to three articles, entitled: *The Global Environmental Facility: A Green Band-aid Solution?*; *Petrol Sniffing Band Aid, Why Not Address the Real Issues?*; and *Microfinance is a Band-Aid Solution to Poverty*. The environment, substance abuse, and poverty. These are some of the biggest issues in our world today. And what are the experts saying? That we are only applying Band-Aid solutions – we are not dealing with the real heart of the problem.

The Bible tells us that the biggest problem of all in the world today is not pollution, or the coronavirus, or capitalism, or any of the other things we rail against. It's sin. Our rejection of God, and our refusal to live his way.

And the problem is, too often we try to patch it up with Band-Aid solutions. All the self-improvement programs in the world cannot solve the underlying problem of sin. Even the world's greatest experts are reduced to nothing but well-meaning amateurs at this level. The only person who can truly deal with the heart of the issue is God.

In that passage from Hebrews 10 (and it really should be read in the light of chapter 9, too), we are told that even the Old Testament system of the temple, with its priests and sacrifices, was never really effective against sin: "*For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*" (v. 4). And so a more effective, permanent, one-time-fixes-all solution was both needed and provided: "*we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*" (v. 10).

Jesus often described himself as a doctor, who had come to heal those who were sick and needed healing. On the surface level, he healed people from their physical sicknesses. But his true mission was to deal with the deeper problem, our spiritual sickness. The Pharisees and teachers of the law questioned why he was associating with the social outcasts of the day, saying: "*Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?*" He replied: "*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Luke 5:31-32). These were the very people he had come to seek and to save – those who needed his healing. Of course, the irony in that comment was that in fact we *all* need his healing – it's just that some of us don't recognise our need. We make do with our Band-Aids when we should be calling for the doctor.