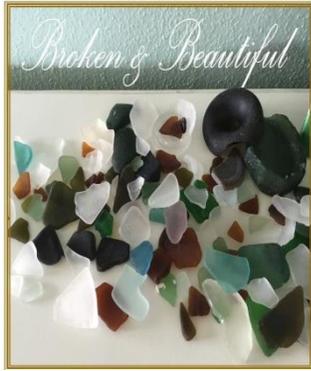


Broken and Beautiful



I have a fascination with sea glass, there is something about the frosted, velvety feel of sea glass that I just love. Much to HubbyMan's grief, I can hardly walk a beach without looking for some choice pieces to add to my collection.

A few years ago, after spending time on the island, I brought back a baggy full of sea glass to my grandchildren, eager to share its beauty with them. The "Oooo's" and "ahhhh's" made the sharing worthwhile.

Later that week we went to watch our Number One Grandson play a ball game at one of the local ball-fields. As my daughter and I sat to watch, the other two children, bored with the game, began wandering around beneath the bleachers, only to come back hurriedly with some exciting news, they, too, had found some sea glass, and held out their hands to show a handful of nothing more than broken, dirty glass from beer bottles that had been trashed below. (Um...Close, but not quite.) In their minds, that's all that sea glass was after all: broken, dirty, trashed pieces of glass, and they were right.

So, what makes a pile of broken glass become something to be sought after? What causes something seen as worthless, something no longer able to be used in its original form, to become something beautiful and treasured, something given a whole new purpose?

Those were my thoughts as I walked the beach this morning, scouring for more sea glass, while singing, "Good, Good Father". And there was the answer. The broken, the dirty, the misused, when placed into the hands of a Good, Good Father creates something new, something beautiful. Just as He can do with our lives. Taking what was, and creating something new, something beautiful.

For many of us, **2 Corinthians 5:17** is one of our favorite verses, ***"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."*** What promise and what hope fill this verse. ***"Behold, new things have come."***

Out of a piece of glass that most would throw away, comes a transformation that somehow makes it beautiful and given new worth. It's not an easy process of transformation for the piece of glass though. First, it must be broken.

The reality is that in that instant of its brokenness it is no longer as it was, nor will it ever be again. An irreversible change has occurred. Just as with us, at the point of our salvation, we, too, must be broken. ***Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."*** Being broken before God is handing our "self" over to a Good, Good, Father. Giving over our free will to Him and allowing His will to reign in our life. It's accepting what He will make of us, as His Spirit leads us in the process of

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transformation from within. Just as the glass cannot accomplish anything on its own, it will take time and other influences to make it something beautiful. But first we must be broken.

Secondly, in order to see the color of the glass at its best, it must be seen in the light. In fact, sometimes the glass I find is so dark that it looks like a rock, and the only way to be sure it even is glass is to hold it up to the light, for that's when its true color is revealed.

Ladies, we have been blessed by the grace of God who has given us the Light of the world, and it is in the shining example of Jesus Christ that we learn how to handle the difficulties in this world, allowing His responses to be our own to gain the maximum effect of change.

Look at **2 Corinthians 4:6-9** which says, ***"For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed;"***

"This treasure in earthen vessels..." we are given at salvation as we are placed into the body of Christ, and His Spirit into us. It's our position in Christ that makes us something new, but it's our experience of living in that new position that is much like the process that it takes sea glass to change. After it is broken the glass must endure all the elements of the world washing over it, crashing into it, for its only as the glass is rubbed against the abrasive sand, rocks, coral and water, that it is changed from what it was to something beautiful. Much like God uses the abrasive things of this world to change us. ***"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed..."*** Our aspiration then is to respond to the world's agitations like the One who was broken for us. To allow His light to shine through us, so that others will come to know Him too.

Are you broken? When we are broken that is when He is able to make something beautiful from the pieces. To give new purpose and worth. Follow Christ's example and allow those agitations of this world to refine and to shape you, then let His light shine through you. ***"The surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves..."***

Father, You are a good, good Father, and Your grace is greater than we could ever imagine. It reaches to the lowest, taking something that was broken and making it beautiful. Change us, Lord. Help us deal with the abrasions in this life. May Your light so shine in our hearts today that we glow with Your love and grace to those around us. To Your great glory!