



JESUS IS A CRUTCH

by Mike Powell

if we're truly honest with ourselves and others, God's existence is debatable. if God is invisible – as claimed by those who believe – then, God's presence here in the world is open to question. what i can't and won't try and do is prove God's reality, because – quite simply – no one is going to be convinced of something they don't want to believe. all i can say is that we're here now – alive – and i'm not persuaded that our existence is merely by chance, accidental or unintentional. and if there is in fact a Heavenly Artist who started this thing we call life, my impression is that there would be at the very least some continued investment on behalf of the Life-Giver...like how a musician dedicates oneself to finishing or perfecting a song; or how a parent makes sacrifices, provides and genuinely wants the best for one's children. at least that's how it should be, right?

the world as we experience it is anything but perfect: questions outnumber answers, difficulties lead us to doubt, reject or even resent the assumptions that we have about God. and unless we're actually involved in refusing to admit it, we all wrestle with ambivalence, emptiness, dissonance, hopelessness, faithlessness, disconnection and not really believing what we want to believe.

often we view crutches in a negative sense, whether we're talking about physical crutches that help us when we're injured or psychological ones that we find referred to when religion or a belief in God is criticized. in both cases, the crutch is only there or present to help someone going through a hard time. ultimately, the idea is that one will eventually let go or give up a crutch once they no longer need it. i guess the question we have to ask ourselves is whether our belief or unbelief in God reflects a negative or positive understanding of a crutch. because on one hand we can choose to see faith in an invisible God as putting one's trust in an imaginary, impotent projection. but on the other hand, if there is validity in the assertion that God does exist, perhaps there's a positive perspective. after all, can't crutches be genuine and necessary components in a person's recovery or mobility? what if our situation is such that a crutch is what we desperately need? and what if that crutch is a person named Jesus?

now, it's been said in song that, "Jesus is just a spanish boy's name / how come one man got so much fame? / it's pointless to anybody that doesn't have faith." very true. but whether or not the name "Jesus" has or had personal significance for us, if this jewish rabbi who walked the earth 2000 years ago truly was who he claimed to be – who the authors of the newer testament recognized him to be – this has majorly positive repercussions for all of humanity.

it was once written by a guy named isaiah that God said: "I made you and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you." many years later when Jesus was on the scene in galilee, another guy named luke tells us that after raising a widow's only son from the dead, witnesses said: "God has come to help his people." if God does exist (which for whatever reason i have a hard time not believing) and if Jesus is God (a claim that ultimately landed Jesus on a cross) and if His death wasn't the end of the story (as the bible maintains His resurrection from the dead), perhaps our brokenness isn't the conclusion of our story.

could it be that Jesus is a crutch in the most positive sense that we can conceive? like a person who deliberately risks their life to rescue someone mortally wounded on a battlefield or trapped in a burning building. a God who made us, who will care for us and who will carry us along and save us. one responsible for the inception of life itself, who came in the person of Jesus Christ to help His people...to give us a way forward, a way to live that has value and momentum.

faith is about learning to become dependent. it's about recognizing that we need help. it's about getting over ourselves, owning the fact that we are weak and moving beyond our own and other people's stigmas, reservations, preconceptions and expectations of God.

all lot of the time when we hear the words "can i help you," our response – usually unvoiced – is annoyance, because it implies that we're in need of help when we don't think we are. more often than not, we'd much rather do it ourselves. we have our own ideas about what we want. after all, isn't dependence on someone else a display of our own ignorance, disability and instability?

perhaps this first step of recovery – admitting we're powerless – has farther reaching application than its common relegation to overcoming addiction. especially when coupled with the second step of depending on One who is greater than ourselves to bring about restoration and peace. it's inevitable that some days or months or years we might face serious doubts, as another musician did when he sang, "Jesus, are you listening up there to anyone at all?" but maybe He's not up there. could it be that He's down here with us? unseen yet not uncaring, often unnoticed but genuinely existent. our heavenly crutch invisibly present with us through our stumbling. if so, then maybe there's hope for us yet.