

Teams Commentary for August

'Pain: the Gift that Nobody Wants' is the intriguing title of a book I came across recently. It's always hard to say anything about the subject of suffering without it sounding hollow, especially if we are in the middle of it. But at the same time when we look back we can all say with real authority that some of the most important lessons we have learned, some of the most significant moments in our maturation as individuals and in our relationships, have come as a result of suffering. Not that we looked for it, or would wish it be repeated, but it certainly put us in touch with resources we otherwise would never have guessed were there.

When two people are taking their vows and say 'for better, for worse' I often wonder if they are thinking 'we hope things won't get worse, but if they do, we pray that we'll have what it takes to see it through.' But surely the point is that realistically there will be times when things are worse. There will be times when you are poorer. There will be times when you are sick. And these times are meant to be at least as important as the good, prosperous and healthy times. Both are necessary. In the better times we learn the joy of loving. But in the worse times we learn to love unselfishly. Because it's the worse times that really stretch our hearts. And, painful though that is, there truly is no other way, even though we might wish that there were.

And if the marriage between God and his people is anything to go by it is actually the times when that relationship was put to the test in the wilderness that came to be appreciated as among the most precious periods of that covenant. The desert sand

came to be seen as sacred. Because, though it was the scene of failure and sometimes going round in circles, they knew in the crucible of those years was forged a bond that could never be broken.

Christian Medical Foundation's Review.

Amazon's Reference