

The Prisoner's Groan



**“... He looked down... from heaven...
to hear the groaning of the prisoner;
to loose those that are appointed to death”
(Psalm 102:19, 20).**

She lay there, her body racked with pain, her face contorted beyond recognition, reflecting the excruciating agony she was experiencing.

Her plaintive groans, her sudden convulsions were symptomatic of the intense pain pervading her entire body. She continued to groan, reducing the loved ones who had gathered at her bedside to tears.

Formerly energetic and indefatigable, now feeble and powerless, she was immobilized and fettered by a cruel and controlling disease.

My mother-in-law had been diagnosed with cancer. We recalled the chilling diagnosis: multiple myeloma. She presented with the classic symptoms: excruciating pain, muscle weakness, elevated levels of calcium in the blood, disorientation, dehydration. Now she was hospitalized and helpless. In another week she would be with us no more – an inevitable victim of an aggressive, pervasive and deadly disease.

While it might have built up slowly, the cancer had destroyed the plasma cells in the bone marrow and then spread rapidly, multiplying the incidence of tumours and lesions in the bones.

As I looked on, I thought of another disease, of which this was both a symptom and a product, but which affects the human race with devastating deadliness – the disease of sin. The Scriptures indicate that “...*by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin...*” (Rom 5:12). This disease, contracted through heredity, is more insidious than cancer. It is more debilitating and enervating and manifests itself in many painful ways. What is more, it is universal. “*All have sinned...*” (Rom 3:23) and “...*there is none righteous...*” (Rom 3:10).

Furthermore, apart from having morally reprehensible and socially offensive manifestations, sin separates from God and consigns its sufferers to eternal punishment (Rev 20:14, 15).

While the prognosis for cancer might be favourable (if it is detected early), the consequences of sin are inescapable and awful. The good news, however, is that a remedy is available. Even though God in justice demands that the soul that sins must die, in His infinite love, he has seen our hapless condition and has provided a cure for our sin-sickness. He sent His Son to deliver us. The story of Calvary is that on the cross, the Lord Jesus became our substitute and “...*bore our*

sins in His own body...” so that sin could be put away and we could be forgiven (1 Pet 2:24). The punishment and the anguish which he endured at the hands of a righteous, holy and just God are reflected in his agonizing cry of abandonment: “*My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matt 27:46).

The Lord Jesus was “...wounded for our transgressions....and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5). Because He died to secure our release from the bondage of sin and to heal us from its ravages, you don’t have to continue suffering and groaning in the throes of sin. Acknowledge your condition; repent of your sins; accept God’s provision by placing faith in the Lord, and you will experience healing and deliverance today.

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