

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



HIDDEN STRENGTH

I had walked past this little shoot before realising what was there, one of the miracles of our Australian mallee trees. Some consider these gnarled, twisted, rough-barked strugglers of nature as lacking in botanical beauty. But their ability to regenerate and grow even though burnt by a bush fire, or in this case cut off, gives them a uniqueness among trees. How is this possible? These new shoots of life are connected and drawing strength from the parent plant. The source of the energy and strength for the shoot to continue growing was hidden inside what appeared dead and of no consequence.

I almost walked past him. He was leaning against the wall of the rental property, bushy beard, faded torn jeans, a stained shirt front, and a self-rolled cigarette limply hanging from the corner of his lips like a dehydrated worm. Something made me stop, walk over, and start a conversation about the dog, which, as I approached, cowered behind his nonchalantly crossed legs.

We chatted for a while. Over time the sharing of thoughts became easier and something to anticipate. Then came the day when the bombshell exploded.

The "ciggy" was removed from the lips and crushed under a thong. "You go to a church?" "Yeah."

"Which one?" "The one on Swanport Road". A thonged foot pushed the dead "ciggy" to one side. "So, you're a Christian then?" "Depends what you mean by Christian. I prefer to call myself a 'Jesus follower.'" Then came the unexpected rush of words, "Me too! I read His Word every day! Look!" and from behind the front door, an old black, battered and 'dogeared' Bible clutched by tar-stained fingers was lovingly and excitedly thrust towards me. "What's yer favourite verse?" Gathering myself I said, "John 10:10." His excited reply was, "I know that one. 'Jesus said, I have come that you might have life in all its fullness' It's a good one!". I agreed, "And what's your favourite one?" was my question. 'John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'" I agreed, "That's a good one too".

Then the whole story came out—Sunday school as a child and a young faith. Marriage and a young family. A horrific road accident and the loss of two children. A broken marriage. Unemployment. Moving interstate. And then, as his hands folded around that book of words that had helped support and grow a sustaining faith, his closing words of, "It's had its rough patches, but My God's love and strength kept me going."

A few days ago, I saw my friend. He was all smiles as he headed off to another day in an exciting new job. His parting words, "Don't forget. God is good!"

Trust and faith in a loving God, which may not have been evident at first sight, had continued to nourish and grow the life of my new friend to a "Life in all its fullness!"

Not sure about where your life is going? Dig into His Word, the Bible and talk to Him about what you find. He loves your questions. You might be surprised at the answers.

God bless you in your growing,

Kevin.