

A

## JOHN'S SKETCH

few years ago, this sketch arrived through the mail as a Christmas card from John.

I have shown this sketch by my friend John to several people. Generally, the response has been a casual, "Oh, that's nice."

They don't know my friend "John".

We have been friends since childhood because our fathers were "army mates".

A friendship of many years, always there but not taken for granted.

As I pondered this sketch again, I was led to think about what it must have cost John to create this just for Ruth and me.

For many years, John has suffered a degenerative illness. His body, constantly in pain, propped up in a chair by cushions, his hands so crippled he struggles to hold a cup.

Yet those same hands masterfully control a pencil, creating sketches illustrating the indomitable spirit that shines from eyes that crinkle in laughter and friendship. Those hands, not in words but in a much more meaningful way, say, "This is for you, my friend."

My mind turns to another body wracked in pain. A body not in a chair with cushions but hanging from a wooden cross. Hands nailed to that cross. Hands bleeding and saying, "This is for you, my friend."

Those hands, of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, even with nails like "dog spikes" driven through them, still reached out, even to those who mocked him and made fun of him.

Those hands, still even today, are offering forgiveness, friendship, and a new way of living. Regardless of what might have been your way in the past, those outstretched and bleeding hands are offering a new way. A way filled with the love of his father, the God of the Bible. A new way where there is forgiveness, hope, peace and joy that is great and can never be taken away. How to accept what those hands offer? Tell him with your heart, through your thoughts, and with your voice, "Jesus, I really am sorry for whenever I have messed up in my life. And I accept all you offer. Thank you."

Pain can demonstrate love.

Caring knows no boundaries.



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