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75 YEARS OF HOPE

Richard Fox

What gives you hope, even when the situation seems impossible?

Hi, I'm Richard Fox and this is Messages of Hope. Telling stories is a great way to give people a lift, especially when they're desperate. You might have a story that has given hope to someone you know. Sharing a story to encourage someone can make a big difference in their life.

Messages of Hope has been sharing inspiring stories for many years. In fact, Lutheran Media has been sharing the story of hope in Jesus Christ for 75 years. Coming up you'll hear some of the stories of people who have heard these messages of hope and the inspiration, encouragement and hope they have now.

We all need hope to get through these seemingly impossible times. When has there been a time in your life when you've wondered, "How am I going to get through this?"

Brock asked himself that question too. Brock was driving home on a Sunday night after spending a weekend with his young son. He only got to see his son every 2nd weekend so time with him was precious. This particular Sunday night, he'd just dropped his son off at his ex-partners place and was heading back home. He was alone in the car and alone in his thoughts. It didn't take long before the negative voices started playing on his mind and anxiety started building up.

Brock had suffered with anxiety for many years. Even when playing his favourite sports, cricket and footy, his anxiety would strike at any moment. It would be so bad that he wouldn't enjoy the game and he'd feel like running away. His mum was worried about him too. So much that she thought she was going to lose him. She would often call Brock and say, "Just get through today and you can go back to bed." That gave Brock something to aim for, Just get through today. It helped him deal with his painful anxiety.

So, on that lonely drive that Sunday night, Brock was fighting with his anxiety again. However, he had no idea that his life was about to change. He had the radio on to try and keep him company and hopefully distract him from his growing anxiety. On the radio Brock heard someone sharing a story he was familiar with. A story of someone struggling through the difficulties of life. But there was a difference. This person was talking about the hope they had, even amongst the challenges! And how it had changed their life.

Brock was glued to the radio. He empathised with what he was hearing and the story cut through him so much that he had to pull the car over and stop. All he could do was break down and cry. Cry for help to cope with life. Cry for hope to deal with his anxiety and life challenges.

That story on the radio made such an impact on Brock's life, that he planned all his Sunday drives to be at the same time as that radio program. That program was Messages of Hope. The stories Brock heard on Messages of Hope shared how Jesus Christ and his loving presence helped get people through tough times. The good news that Jesus loved them made an impact on Brock and he started to hear that God loved him too.

Years later, when I met Brock for the first time, he shared with me "I got strength from hearing other people's stories." He told his sister what he was hearing. After 2 years of listening to him she got so sick of him just talking about it so much that she walked him into their local church. Together they learnt more about Jesus' love for them and found a supportive community. Eventually they were both baptised there.

Brock found hope and now shares his story to inspire and encourage others. His role as a local footy coach has helped mentor many others who are struggling through life. As a result of Brock's transformation, his mum said, "If God can make such a difference in your life, he must be real, tell me more about God."

Brock is the reason why Messages of Hope and Lutheran Media have been sharing the good news of Jesus Christ for 75 years. 75 years ago, nearing the end of World War 2, people were also desperate for hope.

We go through tough times like bushfires, floods, droughts and even global pandemics, but I can't imagine what it would have been like to have lived through World Wars. The horror of war and the many people who were killed was beyond tragic. We can learn from those experiences, especially what gave people hope during those very tough times. Hope that can inspire and encourage us today.

It was during the world wars that radio began to be very popular. A group of people saw how this media could be used to share stories to give people hope. So as the war was ending and people were looking for ways to recover, hope filled messages were shared on radio.

On the 2nd September 1945, at the end of World War II, the first Lutheran Hour message was heard in Australia. Here are a few of the responses to those radio messages:

From a ten year old girl in country Victoria:

"On September 2nd, I listened to your broadcast and thought it was very interesting. I hope that more will be broadcast in the future."

From Launceston in Tasmania:

"We listened to your broadcast yesterday and were thrilled with the glorious message. The world is in sore need of such a message."

From the West Australian Military Hospital:

"I listened in at this hospital to your broadcast. It was splendid. The Word is the only answer. I am interested. Send me literature please."

These people heard about the love Jesus Christ had for them and how he was with them even through the tough times. This message gave people hope.

Today, people are looking for hope and peace too, especially during these uncertain times. And the message remains the same - Jesus Christ loves you and is with you. He can give you hope to get through. You can trust in him and ask him to help you.

This is a wonderful message. A message that offers hope to people today. Even when going through tragedy, uncertainty or illness, including when people receive a diagnosis of dementia. Dementia robs people of their memories and is a heart breaking disease as even loved ones can fail to recognise each other. However, even when people lose their memory, there is still hope. Even a diagnosis of dementia is not the end.

When Maureen was diagnosed with dementia, her and her husband, John, were heart broken. They would do anything for each other and as Maureen fought the illness, John felt hopeless. He would move the world to help her but now he couldn't do anything to help. He even punched a hole in the wall out of frustration.

John would visit her every day and give her ice-cream. It was Maureen's favourite. Their love for each other was very obvious and helped carry them through their journey with dementia. And that was because of the love they knew God was giving them. They knew God was with them and they would often remind each other of their favourite saying: the best is yet to come.

They knew that Jesus had saved them through his death and resurrection and that he was going to make them new in heaven. They even had the quote framed so they could both be reminded of what God was going to do for them in heaven. They were going to be made perfect. Maureen would have her mind, and John would have a healthy heart. They wouldn't be in anymore pain but in eternal joy and peace.

This is the story John shared on Messages of Hope and it has gone on to impact millions of people. Their story was recorded for radio and also videoed. Their story has been seen by millions of people, including 2.4 million people in Italy in only 2 weeks! Many have watched their story on YouTube and Facebook and have commented and thanked them for giving them hope.

The story of hope that God gave John and Maureen has offered hope to many relationships and families who are going through similar issues. One of these people was Lynda. Lynda was struggling with guilt from a past relationship and reached out to know more about the hope John spoke about. This led to Lynda being baptized and is now free from guilt. The hope that Jesus offered John and Maureen, was now also Lynda's.

This is the reason Lutheran Media has been reaching out with a message of hope in Jesus Christ for 75 years. Through real stories of hope in Jesus Christ, many people have come to hear and believe in Jesus Christ and his saving love and presence with them. You also may be struggling with the anxiety of life and in need of hope. Like Brock did, I encourage you to ask Jesus Christ for his help. Jesus is always ready to listen and he definitely cares about you.

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Thank you for ordering a script of Messages of hope. We pray that it is of benefit to you and gives you hope.

You are free to share this with other people and offer them hope.

Messages of hope radio messages, scripts, and booklets are also available for you at www.messagesofhope.org.au

You can also order Messages of hope monthly CDs that have the radio messages on them.

If you would like to support us to reach out to more people with messages of hope, or you would like more information about us, please go to www.lutheranmedia.org.au or call FREECALL 1800 353 350, or write to us at Reply Paid 65735 Lutheran Media, 197 Archer Street. North Adelaide SA 5006.

Thank you for your interest and support of Messages of hope.

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