R U OK? I wasn't.

Today is R U OK? Day. We've all seen the ads with Hugh Jackman. The concept is simple – take a moment to look your friend or co-worker in the eye and ask them "Are you OK?" It may not be necessary, but it does no harm. But it can do a lot of good, as my friend Sally Oakley, blogs, and asks "Well, are you?"



It is also rather poignant for me because a year ago today, I wasn't OK. On the afternoon of September 15 2010 I went to bed and couldn't stop crying. I call it my "crash." It was "burn out", a "nervous breakdown" – whatever you call it it was the fruit of mismanaging self-made expectations, working too hard, too long, not listening to my own body when it was sick, nor to my wife in her ever-present wisdom. Above all it came from forgetting the core purpose of my existence – to worship and glorify God through faith, trust and hope.

Last year I needed more than just the question (although that may have helped), I needed to heed the statement: "U R not OK." But I didn't.

This is not the place to tell the details of the story. Suffice it to say that there has been much grace from many people – not least of which was Gill, and Josh Skeat and many others at Connections and the Parish of Burnie teams who stepped up as I fell down. God, in his grace, switched off my brain and made me rest. He taught me how to worship again, in weakness and utter dependence. He met me through gardening, through sleeping, through moving concrete and walks on the

beach. He ministered to me through doctors and counsellors and the wisdom of those who are my leaders in the church. He ministered to me through the soothing truths of my wife's words and affections. I think I learned a lot.

I am now OK.

Some of you are not OK.

Some of you, if I asked the question would answer falsely – with bravado, or assurances, or caveats. Perhaps you need to hear a statement then: U R not OK – you have lost your first love, you are running on empty, that performance-giving stress is about to cause the fuse to blow.

If this is you. If you are where I was…

Please stop. Take the time-out now. Don't fall off the edge. Don't give an excuse. This must be your priority. Because a crash costs. It costs you. And it costs, very dearly, the ones who are near to you. Go to a doctor. Take some advice. Don't let the diminishing returns spiral out of control.

If you can't stop. If it's "too late" in some sense. Please hear this: even though you are not OK, *you,* as a person, are much much much more than OK. No matter how you feel. Or where you are at. Or what people are saying. This does not change God's love for you, his grace towards you. He is your refuge. You are safe there. Trust, simply trust.

Hear the heart of Christ, described as the servant in Isaiah 42:3

A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.