I came across an interesting article in a daily newspaper recently about the Japanese art of *‘kintsugi’*, a way of repairing broken ceramics using lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver or platinum. If a treasured piece of pottery gets broken, rather than discarding it as useless or disguising the flaw they choose to make a feature out of the repair by mending it in this way, thereby adding to its value and beauty.

The philosophy behind this approach is interesting. It says that brokenness is not the end. It treats breakage and repair as a noble part of the history of an object and as a reminder of human frailty. The piece is considered to be even more beautiful as a result and the marks of wear as adding value. It says that embracing the flawed and imperfect vessel is better than casting it aside.

Surely this beautiful practice says something to us who believe in redemption and the grace of God? Most of us will have known brokenness at some point in our lives, and we carry with us our own scars and cracks. If we give them to Jesus he can not only repair our brokenness but make something beautiful out of our frailty. We need not hide our imperfections or feel ashamed of our shortcomings. Forgiveness, acceptance and re-commissioning are available to us through the grace of God that is ours in Christ Jesus.

As the song says: ‘Something beautiful, something good, All my confusion He understood, All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, But he made something beautiful of my life.’

