

The Importance of Personal Brokenness

11-6-2011

Psa. 51:17 – “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (ESV)

Psa. 34:18 – “The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” (NKJV)

Isa. 57:15 – For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (ESV)

Isa. 66:2 – My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the LORD, have spoken! “I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.” (NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the giver of life, open now our hearts and our ears to the truth of your Word. Speak to each one of us your words of life. Set captives free, and grace us with a broken and contrite heart so that we are usable for your kingdom’s sake. Help us to be your ambassadors laboring in the Father’s vineyard reconciling men unto God through faith in Jesus Christ.

I am intrigued by the word ‘**broken**.’ It means, literally ‘shattered, crushed, or broken into pieces.’ The word ‘**contrite**’ means to ‘bow low’ or to ‘acknowledge sovereign authority.’

God uses broken things to accomplish His glorious purposes. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to produce rain, broken grain to produce bread and broken bread to give us strength. The alabaster box was broken to release the fragrance of the perfume and Peter was broken after denying the Lord. He wept bitterly in repentance and returned to follow Christ with greater power than ever.

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The soul, instead of functioning independently, must become the organ or vessel for the human spirit. So it is the independent action of the soul that must be denied. The soul of man has been seduced, led captive, darkened and poisoned with a sinful self-interest that has separated him from God.

The apostle Paul tells us that endeavoring to annihilate the desires of soul and body through asceticism, a form of Buddhism, is futile.

Col. 2:20-23 – “You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, “Don’t handle! Don’t taste! Don’t touch!”? Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires.” (NLT)

We also need to see that the submission, subjection and servanthood in Christ’s relationship to the Father, was not a life of soul-destruction, but it was a life of rest and delight.

The apostle Paul acknowledges in his letter to the church at Rome that we are either slaves to righteousness or slaves to sin. Slavery in its bad sense- to sin -is the lot of those who live wholly from their souls, which are conformed to this world-system.

Slavery in the positive sense is to be spiritually alive and submitted to Christ; and it is not a life of suppression. It is a new life, not the old one striving to get the mastery over self-centeredness.

Today, the people in the world tell you the problem is your restrictive religious laws, but in reality the problem for mankind is that we are slaves to a sinful rebellious nature until Jesus Christ sets us free.

Romans 7:14, 24-25 – “So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.” (NLT)

It is, and has always been, God’s intention for the spirit of man to rule over his soul and body. But when Adam violated God’s Law-Word and ate fruit from the forbidden tree, his spirit, which gives man the ability to commune with and come to know God, died; and Adam’s sin poisoned soul and his bodily desires usurped the throne of man’s heart.

It is now God’s intent to redeem, transform, and conform us to the image of Jesus Christ; and in order for that to become reality, the soul must be transformed and learn the higher and different ways of God.

Rom. 8:29 – “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” (NASB)

That conforming process includes the transformational renewal of the mind, the submission of the human will to the will of God, and the yielding of the emotions to the Holy Spirit, so that the fruit of the Holy Spirit will be expressed in our attitudes and behavior.

Rom. 12:1-2 – “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (NLT)

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John 5:24-26 – “I am telling you the truth: those who hear my words and believe in him who sent me have eternal life. They will not be judged, but have already passed from death to life. I am telling you the truth: the time is coming—the time has already come—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear it will come to life. Just as the Father is himself the source of life, in the same way he has made his Son to be the source of life.” (TEV)

1 John 5:11-12 – “The testimony is this: God has given us eternal life, and this life has its source in his Son. Whoever has the Son has this life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (TEV)

The **key question** here is: “To what source do we look for understanding reality?” Do we look to **worldly knowledge** gained from our American educational system or do we look to God to receive **revelation knowledge** from His Word in order to properly understand reality?

1 Peter 1:8-9, 21-22 – “You have not seen Christ, but still you love him. You cannot see him now, but you believe in him. So you are filled with a joy that cannot be explained, a joy full of glory. And you are receiving the goal of your faith—**the salvation of your souls**. Through Christ you believe in God, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory. So your faith and your hope are in God. Now that you have made your souls pure by obeying the truth, you can have true love for your Christian brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply with all your heart.” (NCV)

What’s the present day goal of our faith in Christ? The goal is the salvation of our souls. God is not interested in a partial salvation for mankind. When Jesus died on the cross, He purchased a full and complete salvation for mankind: spirit, soul, and body. God didn’t want to simply regenerate your spirit; He also wants to save your soul.

So, for the believer, his **spirit** has been regenerated, his **soul** is being saved, and his **body** will be saved in the resurrection.

The soul of man must be broken, mastered, and renewed by the Word of God in order for the life of Christ dwelling in the human spirit to find expression.

The Cross was the means for tearing apart the curtain in the Temple allowing priests to enter the Holy of Holies and allowing God to fill the Holy Place with His glorious presence.

We need to understand that the soul finds its greatest value in service, not in ruling. So, until it is broken, the soul wants to be master. But when a person identifies with the Cross of Christ (where Jesus died to his own will) and picks up their own cross daily (dying to their own will), the soul can become a very useful servant.

Anyone who wants to serve the Lord will find that their greatest hindrance to ministry is not circumstances or other people, but himself. He will discover that his soul and his spirit are not in harmony; but instead, they are moving in opposite directions. He will sense an inability for his soul to submit to the spirit’s control, thus rendering him unable to obey God’s commands.

This is the struggle the Apostle Paul experienced and described in Romans 7. Ordinarily, he should be enabled, by the exercise of his spirit, to know God’s Word and to receive God’s revelations. Yet due to the hindrances of the soul, his spirit does not seem to function properly.

Until the soul of man has been dealt with by God the striving for spiritual manifestations and revival is a waste of time. The reality is there is only one basic work of the Holy Spirit which can enable a person to be useful before God and that is brokenness.

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It’s not that the Lord can’t bless the Church, but that the Lord’s life is so confined within us that there is limited flowing forth of His life. If the soul remains unbroken, we limit the blessing that God can pour forth through us.

The apostle Paul sent a disciplinary letter to the church at Corinth that grieved them greatly by confronting their human rationale and accepted cultural tradition, which was contrary to God’s will. But the truth they received from Paul enabled them to cast down their previous thinking and experience newness of life.

2 Cor. 7:10 – “For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.” (NLT)

Each disciplinary working of the Holy Spirit has but one purpose: to break our outward man (the soul) so that our inward man (the life of Christ) may come through.

Mark 14:3 – “And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.” (ESV)

The point here is that it wasn’t until the flask was broken that the wonderful fragrance of the pure nard was released to fill the whole house. Paul tells us that the Treasure is placed in earthen vessels, but if the earthen vessel is not broken, who can see the Treasure within?

2 Cor. 4:7-12 – “We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.” (NLT)

God didn’t spare the apostles from the adversities of life, but instead used them to perfect His servants and enable His life to be released through them; thus, ministering God’s saving life to others.

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John 12:24-25 – “Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.” (MSG)

I believe there is no one more beautiful than the person who is broken and contrite in heart. Stubbornness, pride, and self-love mar the beauty in a person. That’s why the Scripture admonishes us to adorn the inner man rather than trying to adorn the outer man with jewelry, fancy clothes, and expensive hairdos.

We see Jacob in the Old Testament, how even in his mother’s womb he struggled with his brother. He was sly, cunning, and deceitful. And his life was full of sorrows and grief. As a very young man he had to flee from his home and live with distant relatives, where he was cheated by Laban for twenty years. The love of his life, Rachel, died prematurely. The son of his love, Joseph, was sold into slavery and thought to be dead for many years. Years later Benjamin, Rachel’s other son, was detained in Egypt and Jacob thought he would never see him again. Yet, through all this, Jacob was successfully dealt with by God. He was dealt with by God over and over again until finally, Jacob was transformed and his name changed to Israel (prince with God).

What a beautiful end to his life as he worshipped God leaning upon his staff. How clear were the blessings he pronounced over his descendents!

It took several decades of God's dealing with Jacob's soul life and he ended up with a permanent limp to remind him that he had died to the old when he wrestled with God.

In fact, every man or woman in the Bible whom God used greatly, He humbled first. Moses is a prime example. He tried to liberate the Israelites on his own and ended up running for his life. It took forty years of herding sheep in the desert for Moses to come to the place where he was ready to hear from God and die to his independence.

2 Cor. 1:8-9 – “We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.” (NLT)

It was toward the end of the Apostle Paul's life that he said, “I bear on my body the scars that show I belong to Jesus.” Those scars were the marks that indicated that Paul had gone through the dealings of God, which enabled the power of Christ to be released.

As Paul said, “We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.” 2 Cor. 4:10-12 (NIV)

Jesus gives us a double warning: those who fall on that stone, speaking of Himself, will be broken to pieces; while those “on whom it falls” will be crushed. God offers a choice for the way in which we are broken. Those who cast themselves on Jesus, submitting their wills and all that they are to Him, will be broken by him of arrogance, hard-heartedness, and self-centeredness.

It is not a pleasant process but an absolutely necessary one. And for those who do not submit to Him, He will ultimately “fall on them,” and they will be crushed or ground to powder. The choice is ours: broken before Him, or crushed to powder by Him (Luke 20:17-18).

What's the use of having a mental knowledge of the Bible **if** the outer man (our soul life) remains unbroken? The Greeks said to Philip, “We would see Jesus.”

It's only when we are embracing the cross and dying to self that we begin to experience the release of God's life. It is only then that other people begin to see more of Jesus in us. He is the treasure, we are the earthen vessels. The power and the glory come from Him and do not originate with us.

PowerPoint presentation Slides (11-12)

As our **mind** is renewed by the Word of God, which is quickened to us by the Holy Spirit; and our **will** is brought into submission to the revealed will of God; and our **emotional responses** are prompted by the Holy Spirit instead of our flesh; then the expression of our life will be an ever-increasing expression of the love, joy, and peace of Jesus Christ.

God's intent is to flood our entire being with His presence. The fulfillment of that intent will result in a greater blessing than we could ever possibly imagine.

If you have never before intellectually and wholly consecrated yourself to the Lord, I would like to invite you to do so now.

Romans 12:1-2 – “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, with a heart full of thankfulness for your mercy, I present my whole being to you now. I offer myself without conditions and without reservation, into your hands. Have your way in me and conform me to the image of your Son, Jesus. Help me to not resist your dealings in my life, but instead help me to learn that when I am weak, that’s when you can shine through me the best. In Jesus’ name I pray!