

## BROKENNESS

### **TEXT: PSALM 34**

#### **Introduction:**

1. I would like to speak this morning about brokenness (cf. Psalm 34:18).
2. The apostle Paul said, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” (II Cor. 4:8-10).
3. Paul was broken. In fact, right after Paul was saved, the Lord told Ananias to go look for Saul of Tarsus. Ananias knew of Saul’s terrible reputation as a persecutor, and the Lord told Ananias, “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).
4. Usually when something is broken, its value declines or disappears altogether. Broken dishes, broken bottles, broken mirrors are generally thrown away.
5. Just drive around the neighborhood and you will find broken things sitting by the curb waiting to be picked up by the trash collectors.
6. But things are much different in the spiritual realm. God puts a premium on broken things—especially on broken people.
7. “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18).
8. Psalm 51:17 says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”
9. This process of brokenness begins before we are saved. The Holy Spirit gets our attention in various ways, and He begins convicting us of sin.
10. The Holy Spirit must get us to the place where we are willing to confess we are lost and undone, and deserving only of hell. The flesh hates this convicting work of the Holy Spirit and fights it every step of the way.
11. One preacher put it this way: He said the Lord “continues to wrestle with us until our pride is shattered, our boasting tongue is silenced and all resistance gone. Lying at the foot of the cross, we finally whisper, ‘Lord Jesus, save me!’ The shrew has been tamed, the sinner has been mastered, the colt has been broken” (William MacDonald).
12. After we are converted, the Lord continues working in us. Our wills must be subdued and yielded before we can grow in grace. We must become like Jesus, and to do that we must be broken.

## **I. REPENTANCE**

1. There has to be a readiness to confess sin to God and to those we have wronged. The broken man is quick to repent. He does not try to sweep sin under the carpet. He confesses his sin to God, and then he goes to whoever has been hurt by his actions and says, "I was wrong. I am sorry. I want you to forgive me."
2. Some people never apologize. They are too proud and too stiff-necked.
3. However, one cannot expect the blessings of God until there is first genuine repentance. There is a tremendous blessing in having a clear conscience and being reconciled to God and man.
4. I often hear people say, "If I have done anything wrong, I am willing to apologize and make things right." But there are no "ifs" in genuine repentance.
5. When the prodigal son climbed out of the hogpen, he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:18).
6. There are no "ifs" there.
7. Remember when King David sinned with Bath-sheba and had her husband killed? For quite some time David refused to repent, and he suffered spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and even physically (cf. Psalm 32:3, 4).
8. Nothing went right for David until he finally repented. David was broken. He confessed his sin and God forgave.
9. After David repented he wrote Psalm 32 and Psalm 51.
10. David said in Psalm 32:9, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle."
11. I have known many church members that are like wild horses and stubborn mules. They seem to have no spiritual understanding, and some times you have to wonder if they are even born again.

## **II. RESTITUTION**

1. Restitution is closely connected to repentance. They are both essential elements of brokenness.
2. There must always be prompt restitution, wherever it is called for. If we have lied, or stolen, or not paid our bills, or if someone else has suffered loss because of our misbehavior, it is not enough to apologize. The next step must be taken, and that is restitution.
3. Justice demands that the loss be repaid. Even secular governments recognize the law of restitution.

4. This law applies to what happened before we were saved, as well as to what happens after we are saved (cf. Luke 19:1-10).
5. When Zacchaeus met the Lord Jesus Christ, he remembered some of the crooked deals he had pulled as a tax collector. He became convicted and immediately he knew that these wrongs must be made right.
6. So Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "...if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). The "if" here does not express any doubt or indecision. The idea is "in every case where I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will restore it fourfold." He wanted to make things right.
7. Zacchaeus' determination to make restitution was evidence that he was genuinely born again. His determination to make things right was fruit of his conversion. His willingness to restore "fourfold," demonstrates how the Holy Spirit was working in his heart.
8. A few years ago, after nine years, our church had to close down our Christian school. Our biggest problem was finances. Quite a few Christian parents were not paying their bills. Some of them have never made restitution. One woman finally did after I called her pastor and told him about it. Some of the deadbeats were members of our church.
9. Charles Finney said, "The thief has not repented who keeps the money he stole. He may have conviction, but no repentance. If he had repentance, he would go and give back the money. If you have cheated anyone, and do not restore what you have taken unjustly; or if you have injured anyone, and do not set about to undo the wrong you have done, as far as in you lies, you have not truly repented."
10. Some one stole some money one time and felt guilty over it. He sent the money to George Muller with an explanation. George Muller returned the money with a note explaining that the thief had to give the money back to the man he stole it from.
11. DL Moody said, "If I have at any time taken what does not belong to me, and am not willing to make restitution, my prayers will not go very far toward heaven. It is a singular thing, but I have never touched on this subject in my addresses, without hearing of immediate results. A man once told me that I would not need to dwell on this point at a meeting I was about to address, as probably there would be no one present that would need to make restitution. But I think if the Spirit of God searches our hearts, we shall most of us find a good many things have to be done that we never thought of before."
12. DL Moody also said this, "I am getting so tired and sick of your mere sentimentalism, that does not straighten out a man's life. We may sing

our hymns and psalms, and offer prayers, but they will be an abomination to God, unless we are willing to be thoroughly straightforward in our daily life. Nothing will give Christianity such a hold upon the world as to have God's believing people begin to act in this way. Zaccheus had probably more influence in Jericho after he made restitution than any other man in it."

### III. ENDURING WRONG WITHOUT RETALIATING

1. Our great example is the Lord Himself (I Peter 2:19-23).
2. Thirty years after Andrew Murray wrote his book *Abide in Christ*, he said: "I would like you to know that a minister or Christian author may often be led to say more than he has experienced. I had not then (when he wrote *Abide in Christ*) experienced all that I wrote of. I cannot say that I have experienced it all perfectly now."
3. All preachers can relate to what Andrew Murray said. We can preach about brokenness but have we ever been broken like Job? Or the prophet Jeremiah? Or what about our Lord Himself?
4. The way of brokenness is to remember that God is in control and that He is overruling all the circumstances of life for His purposes.
5. Being broken does not mean being weak and wishy-washy. Brokenness demonstrates strong Christian character. It doesn't take any discipline to be unbroken, but it can be very difficult to be broken.
6. It takes godly self-control to be Christ-like when our flesh rebels against it.
7. David was a great soldier. He wrote in Psalm 18:34, "He (the LORD) teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."
8. Then in the very next verse, David says, "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great."
9. In Numbers 12:3 we read these words: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."
10. Moses was very meek, but not meek. When he came down from the mount, and Aaron was having a rock-and-roll party with nakedness and dancing and a golden calf, "Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (Ex. 32:19).
11. Broken people are capable of anger when occasion demands it. Our Lord drove the moneychangers out of the Temple with a scourge of small cords.
12. His anger flared not because of any wrong that was done to Him personally, but because His Father's house had been dishonored.

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. God wants us all to be broken in all areas of our life. Just like he wrestled with Jacob at Peniel, the Lord will wrestle with us. He will try to break us of pride, of self-will, of an unforgiving spirit, of stubbornness, of gossip, of backbiting, of worldliness, of impurity, of a bad temper, and of every work of the flesh.
2. AT Pierson said, “Self-denial is not cutting off an indulgence here and there, but laying the axe at the root of the tree of self, of which all indulgences are only greater or smaller branches. Self-righteousness and self-trust, self-seeking and self-pleasing, self-will, self-defense, self-glory – these are a few of the myriad branches of that deeply rooted tree... We speak of our ‘crosses’ – but the word of God never uses that word in the plural, for there is but *one* cross – the cross on which the self-life is crucified, the cross of voluntary self-renunciation” (*George Muller of Bristol*).

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