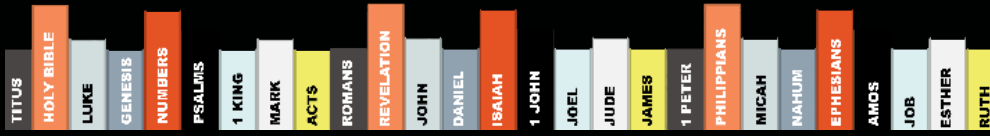


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BROKENNESS

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BROKENNESS: **THE BASIS FOR BLESSINGS**

By Nelson Thomas Mumbai

Brokenness has been one of the prerequisites for divine favor and blessings whether in the Old Testament or in the New. More than external religious rituals, God looks for a broken heart and a contrite spirit before He can graciously forgive and restore us (Psa. 34:18; 147:3; Isa 57:15; 66:2).

Take any godly person whom God used mightily in the past, one unique feature about them is that they were all broken at some point in time. Without this internal spiritual experience, no one can fully enjoy God's presence or be fruitful for the Lord.

THE MEANING

What is brokenness in the biblical point of view?

We can consider at least three different aspects of brokenness.

3 ASPECTS OF BROKENNESS.

1 Man-made brokenness

2 Divinely Allowed brokenness

3 Spirit-Induced brokenness

1 Man-made brokenness

Broken lives and relationships basically are the result of man's sin. Everybody faces such breakdowns in one way or another. It may be due to our own sinful words or deeds (James 1:14, 15).

Of course, even in such circumstances if we approach the Lord God Almighty acknowledging our helplessness, He will help and transform our lives.

2 Divinely Allowed brokenness

God in His sovereign plan permits certain hostile situations in our lives that will break up our dreams and expectations. Such unexpected, sudden turn of events also might cause devastation in our lives.

However, the Lord God Almighty who allows such a state of affairs will never allow those experiences to crush us beyond a limit (1Cori. 10:13). God will cause all such unfavorable circumstances to transform a child of God for the better (Rom. 8:28).

3 Spirit-Induced brokenness

The supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit convicts one of their sins, God's righteous demands and judgment, using the scriptures (John 16:13). Such an internal work of the Holy Spirit will bring about an unusual, often inexplicable burden of one's own sin.

This divine act of God will cause one to see sin in all seriousness, and that sight will leave one crushed under the weight of their sin. It is this aspect of brokenness that God is expecting from us.

Of course, when the Spirit of God breaks the heart of an individual in this manner, and they yield to God for His help, and this brokenness becomes a blessing for them.

Primarily, such a mighty work of God takes place when we come face-to-face with God and His word. No doubt, the above-mentioned two occasions also could lead to this internal spiritual exercise.

EXAMPLES OF BROKENNESS

We have many examples in the scripture that vividly illustrate how God breaks a person before He begins to work in and through them. Let us consider few:

Jacob

It took around twenty years of servitude and a whole night of wrestling, before the Lord could touch and break Jacob. It was at this point that he acknowledged his true state and subsequently got transformed and blessed by the Lord (Genesis 32: 9–32).



Moses

Before the Lord could use Moses for forty years to lead the people of Israel, he needed to be broken. His knowledge of all the wisdom of Egypt and the military training only puffed him up. That only produced arrogance and aggression (Exodus 2:11, 12). This was not needed to be in the service of the Lord to lead His people (Acts 7:22).



The Lord wonderfully brought him to the desert of Midian and began to deal with him for the next forty years. On the last day of this special training program, Moses humbly yielded to the Lord acknowledging his unworthiness and inadequacies (Exodus 3:11ff).

David

David's brokenness is typical. He tried to hide his sin for one year in spite of the pain and burden he suffered under the heavy hand of God (Psalm 32:3, 4). It was only at the convicting words of prophet Nathan, he confessed and yielded to the Lord (2 Samuel 12:13).



Psalm 51 reveals the depth of David's brokenness before the Lord. He realized how ugly and serious was his sin. It was against the Lord that he sinned, not any individual. It was deceptive and destructive. Sin took away his joy and left a lasting scar on his memory!

He now desperately longed for a new beginning, a clean and new heart. He was also conscious that religious rituals could not erase this guilt. It was this awareness of his evil that crushed him (cf. vs. 2-4, 7, 10, 17)

God is looking for such brokenness before He will forgive, cleanse and transform an individual.

Definitely, there are many more such examples in the Old Testament. Isaiah's conversion and call for ministry and the pardon granted to the condemned people of Nineveh were all subsequent to brokenness (Isaiah 6:5-8; Jonah 3:5-10). Even Israel's future restoration and cleansing will be post their brokenness and weeping (cf. Joel 2:12, 13; Zech 12:10-12; 13:1).

FIRST CHRISTIAN CONVERTS

The experience of those who heard the first Christian sermon is noteworthy in this aspect. “Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

According to another translation, the listener’s hearts were pierced as if by a sharp arrow. They were convicted of their sins. Their desperate question discloses the depth of the cut they had felt in their heart. Seeing the seriousness of their guilt they were pleading with the apostles for a way out.

This is the way the Word of God works:

- breaks down the hardened heart as a hammer does,
- pierces and brings out what is hidden just like a two-edged sword,
- burns out the dirt and purifies as fire does, etc. (Jeremiah 23:29; Heb. 4:12)

The following passage in Acts 2 tells us that not only they were cut to the heart, but they also confessed the same and readily repented and yielded to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness (Acts 2:38–42).

Thus, we can conclude that the brokenness that God expects is basically a penitent and sorrowful heart seeing the reality of our inner utter ugliness and unworthiness. This was one of the basic experiences of the early church members. In other words, one who claims to be a member of the Church of Christ and lives with a hardened heart is living a contradiction.

GOD’S WAY OF WORKING

The scripture teaches that there is a vast difference between man’s ways and God’s ways (Isaiah 55:9). That includes God’s method of working also.

i. Worst to Best

People may reject and discard that which is broken thinking it to be waste. But our God makes the best out of the worst. Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the

wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in His presence.” (1Corinthians 1:26–29)

This is true of any believer in Christ. He has graciously dealt with us when we were foolish, weak, despised and even nothing. We were dead and drowned in sin. Our words, works and imagination were wicked, and thus, we were the most unworthy to be God's own people (cf. 1Corinthians 6:9–11; Titus 2:3–5). Anyone who is not conscious of this helpless past cannot enjoy a true Christian life.

No wonder the Lord Jesus said even at the beginning of His public ministry, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be

comforted.” (Matthew 5:3, 4).

The consciousness of one's sheer spiritual poverty and mourning over it is the basic criteria to be a joyful follower of Jesus Christ.

In fact, every person is broken and marred due to the Fall. However, an arrogant person refuses to accept their failure and helplessness. In their rebellion and self-will, man makes every effort to present themselves as righteous before God. It is this haughtiness and self-righteousness God breaks, even if it takes time, before making them new.

ii. Death to Life

Our Lord Jesus Himself is our example. He said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone but if it dies, produces much grain.” (John 12:24). He was broken that we may be healed, slain as an atoning sacrifice that we may be forgiven and revived.

Christ does not offer a different lifestyle for His followers either. He said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily,

and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses for My sake save it” (Luke 9:23, 24 cf. 14:26, 27).

It may look paradoxical, but it's a fact that enjoyment of spiritual life and fruitfulness depends upon the brokenness that we experience. Apostle Paul's words are poignant, “Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also manifested in our body.” (2 Corinthians 4:10).

iii. Weakness to Strength

Notice carefully, Christ's demand is not just a once-in-a-lifetime exercise, but a daily, consistent self-denial. “.. let him deny himself and take up his cross

daily, and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23b). In fact, brokenness is a process. No one is matured or perfected all of a sudden.

As a Master Potter, our Lord is patiently working on us to shape and mould us for the Master's use (Jeremiah 18:4). It is this divine work of constantly reminding us of our inadequacies that makes a believer trust and yield to Christ for help.

Paul's experience is thought-provoking. God in His sovereign wisdom allowed a thorn in the flesh to check his pride and prompt him of God's enabling grace in his weaknesses (2Cori. 12:9). It is in

this context Apostle Paul wrote, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2Cori. 12:10).

Praise God for every form of weakness, disappointment and other painful situation that crush us internally, for it will only empower and sharpen us if only we yield to our Lord.

RESULT OF BROKENNESS

When one is broken inside, this will be reflected in various ways. Moreover, these are the distinguishing marks of a broken person.

1. Humility

2. Satisfaction

3. Compassion

4. Gratefulness

5. Godliness

1. Humility

A broken man finds nothing to boast about in himself. Hence, he is naturally

humble and lowly in his attitude and outlook (Isa. 57:15).

2. Satisfaction

A broken person is content with what God has done graciously in their life despite all the unworthiness. The awareness of God's immeasurable grace in their undeserving life teaches them that any complain or grumbling is

irrational and immoral. For the same reasons, they are not hurt by people or circumstances. Remember they are not only broken in their heart but healed and comforted by the Lord (Psa. 147:3).

3. Compassion

A broken person is merciful and sympathetic to their fellow-beings, knowing human weaknesses from experience. (2 Cori. 1:6)

4. Gratefulness

Brokenness also leads one to have a thankful heart. The more they meditate on the unfathomable grace and mercy that was lavished on this wretched sinner, their heart is filled with gratitude, praise and worship (1 Timo. 1:12–17).

5. Godliness

A person with a broken heart and contrite spirit will experience the presence and favor of God in a very special way according to God's unfailing promise (Psa. 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). This in turn will result in the manifestation of a godly life and related characteristics.

Anyone who refuses to be broken and touched by the Lord in this manner will lose all the above blessings. The greatness of their 'self' will make them egoistic. Such ones will naturally be hard-hearted and rigid. They will be hurt from every corner; hence complaint, irritation, and agitation will be part of their lifestyle. Satisfaction and peace of mind will be just an illusion for such.

CONCLUSION

Praise be to God for the way our Lord is working in and through us! Let's never doubt the purpose of God in our life. He breaks us up to heal and to make us whole. Whatever may be the situation, if it crushes us internally of our strength, our pride and selfishness, we need to yield to the Lord; and this is for our own benefit.

Always remember: brokenness is the basis for divine blessings and favor. Our life will be much more fruitful, beautiful, fragrant and valuable as a result of brokenness (Isaiah 61:3; Mark 14:3).

“*The cross is the ultimate symbol of brokenness, but it is also the ultimate symbol of hope.*”

- C.S. Lewis

The Art of Kintsugi

NTK

Kintsugi is a unique Japanese method of joining broken cutlery with precious metals. According to the story, one of the 15th century military rulers sent a tea bowl to China for repair. But when they sent it back after repair, he was not satisfied with the finishing. Then the ruler asked a local craftsman to find a better method to join the



broken cutlery. The result is Kintsugi - using precious metals like gold they bond together broken pieces of pottery. Thus, the cracks in the broken vessel become more visible, yet the vessel becomes stronger and more beautiful! Many find it a powerful metaphor that teaches the beauty of imperfections and brokenness.

“Try Tears”

Source: Unknown

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two Salvation Army officers were sent out to serve in the slums of Los Angeles. Their tireless work for three years brought no fruit other than opposition from the people. Tired and frustrated they wanted to close the mission. In their telegram to General William Booth, they wrote, “It just won’t work. We have tried everything. The gospel is just not being received here.”

General Booth sent back a telegram with just two words on it, “**TRY TEARS**”. They followed the advice and they witnessed a mighty revival. Yes, even now, it’s time to ‘try tears’!

“BROKENNESS AT THE BROOK”

(GENESIS 32)

By Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad

The story of Jacob is very interesting and fascinating. Jacob means ‘deceiver’. **The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?** (Jeremiah 17:9).

In his story we see younger brother deceived elder brother, younger son deceiving his father, a wife deceiving her husband, a mother deceiving her elder son, and later Father-in-law deceiving his Son-in-law, Younger Sister (Rachel) deceived by elder sister (Leah) and later daughter (Rachel) deceived his father and also Son-in-law deceived Father-in-law (Gen. 39:20).

But God’s intention is to change ‘Jacob’ to ‘Israel.’ in order to happen this Jacob must be broken. It happened at the brook of Jabbok. JA’KOB’ AT JA’BOK’.

This is a turning point, transition and transforming experience in his life. After a 20-year-long stay at Paddanaram, he is coming back to Canaan full of material blessings. But before entering into a spiritual blessing, he must be broken. He was broken at the brook and was later blessed.

We can outline this experience from Genesis chapter 32 as follows:

1. **Bothered Man** vv. 2-8; *he was intimidated*
2. **Bowed Man** vv. 9-12; *he was dependent on God. A ‘supplanter’ became ‘suppliant’*
3. **Bribed Man** vv.13-18; *he was crafty*
4. **Bitter Man** vv. 19,20; *he was left alone*
5. **Boundary Man** v.22; *he alone crossed the brook. He was isolated.*
6. **Broken Man** vv.24-28; *he was incapacitated; God is interested not in his bones, but his self-will*
7. **Better Man** vv. 29; *he was interrogated and repented*
8. **Blessed Man** v.29; *he got the true blessing*
9. **Bright Man** v.32; *the sun of righteousness illuminated him.*

Even today, God is using the same principles. No one likes broken pieces. But, Our Lord transforms brokenness into blessedness. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** (Psalm 51:17).

Whenever in the scripture brokenness happens, we see blessings such as ‘Cleft Rock’ (Exo. 33), ‘Broken pots’ (Judges 7), ‘Broken heart’ (Psalm 51), ‘Broken bread’ (John 6), ‘Broken Spikenard’ (John 12), ‘Broken seals’ (Rev. 5).

Exhortation: VALUE AND DESIRE BROKENNESS

By Tom Jacob, Mumbai

Brokenness – the word in itself does not sound very comfortable. Usually, when things in our houses break, we no longer value them. We throw away the broken pieces and replace the broken item with a new one.

Even in the corporate world, whenever there is a job vacancy, the lookout is for the brightest among the candidates who apply. No one generally prefers to hire someone less than the best even though we all agree that nobody is perfect.

In most situations, we tend to obtain and acquire what is perfect and flawless, though we live in a very imperfect world. But, praise be to our God! He specializes in treasuring broken people, Psalms 34:18; 51:17.

WHY DOES GOD VALUE BROKENNESS SO MUCH?

God had created us perfect, but when mankind rebelled against God, we all became sinners (Rom. 5:19), and with sin came all the imperfections in us. Because of sin, even our righteous works are like filthy rags in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6). We became unusable for God.

Nevertheless, when we trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and on His finished work for our salvation, we were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11) to become useful

for God. God began a new work in us, in making us a new creation (Eph. 2:10).

However, even after our salvation, we continue to have the old nature within us, which always is in strife with our new nature (Gal. 5:17). Whenever we allow our old nature to have victory, we cannot be used by God. This is where we need brokenness in our lives; consequently, God's purpose of saving us will then be fulfilled in us.

BROKENNESS ILLUSTRATED

Even the Lord Jesus Christ talked about an aspect of brokenness required in believers, giving an example from His mission on earth. In John chapter 12 we read that few Greeks came to meet Him, and the Lord told them: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the

ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain", v24. He says that a grain of wheat first needs to die, so that the life within becomes effective to produce much grain. Until the grain of wheat does not die, it remains alone; in other words, it does not serve its purpose

as long as it is not planted in the soil.

Here the Lord was using the analogy of a grain of wheat to explain His purpose of coming to the earth – it was not to be crowned as a king and reign over people then, but to give His life as a ransom.

To emphasize on the need of brokenness in those who wished to serve Him, He goes on to say in verses 25 and 26, “He

who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me ...”

Therefore, if God so values brokenness, how much more should we, who seek to follow and serve Him, be valuing and desiring it in our lives? Let us look at several ways how brokenness can occur in our lives.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

We can experience brokenness in our lives when we practice self-denial and self-discipline. Apostle Paul practiced this in his own life, which he talks about in 1 Cor. chapter 9. Toward the end of the chapter he says in verse 27, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” Self-denial and self-discipline are two things our flesh hates

the most. Very easily we often overlook these as it would not be a comfortable experience for us. Nevertheless, remember that this is imperative if we wish not to be disqualified, rather be approved to God. Let’s search and find in our individual lives where we can practice self-denial and self-discipline by the help of the Spirit, allowing Him to bring brokenness in our lives so that we become profitable for God.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

In the life of a believer, there are instances when God allows situations to bring brokenness in us. The Psalmist says in 119:68 – “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.” When God allowed affliction in the psalmist’s life, he corrected his life that was earlier without God’s direction, and He began obeying God’s Word. This uncomfortable situation proved beneficial in the spiritual life of the psalmist.

Moreover, Apostle Paul mentions the time

when God gave him a thorn in the flesh to check his pride. Though he prayed thrice to the Lord to remove it, His reply to Paul was, “My grace is sufficient for you; for [My] power is being perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness.” Consequently, Paul tells this further, “Therefore, I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ [may completely enfold me and] may dwell in me.” (2 Cor. 12:9 AMP).

God intervenes in the life of His children; He chastises us that we may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:3-11). If we get trained by His intervention as the psalmist and Apostle Paul, it will yield in us the peaceful fruit of righteousness [right

standing with God and a lifestyle and attitude that seeks conformity to God's will and purpose]. (v11b AMP). Also, remember that every chastisement in the life of a child of God is a visible proof of His immense love for us (Prov. 3:11,12).

OUR CHOICE

A word of caution here: when God intervenes in our lives, we can choose either to grow bitter and be hard-hearted or to understand that His loving correction is for our profit and yield to Him in humble obedience to be more fruitful.

Therefore, may the Lord enable us to value and desire for brokenness, thereby reaping

its benefits in our lives so that we are always a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Tim. 2:21b).

The choice is ours, whether to be outwardly perfect (unbroken) and remain unprofitable for God or to be broken and useful for Him.

“

“What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.”

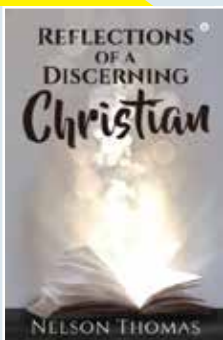
-Robert Murray McCheyne.”

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Study: WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT...

By Aby Kuruvilla, Mumbai

The crux of the message which Lord Jesus preached is, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). What does it mean to repent? A word so familiar, yet so often misunderstood! Sometimes, the easier way to understand certain things is when they are explained to us in the negative.

1. Repentance is - not living in rebellion
2. Repentance is - not living in refusal
3. Repentance is - not living in resemblance
4. Repentance is - not living in religiosity
5. Repentance is - not living in relativity
6. Repentance is - not living in ritualism
7. Repentance is - not living in regret



1. Repentance is - not living in rebellion

Cain murdered his own brother (Gen. 4:1-16). When God asked about the whereabouts of his brother, Cain replied, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Instead of repenting of his sin, he “went out from the presence of the Lord.” He knew his sin, but didn’t want to deal with it. Instead, he

wanted to live outside the sphere of where his sin would be judged. He permanently lived his life in rebellion against God. To such obstinate hearts, the scriptures warn, “Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain” (Jude 11).

2. Repentance is - not living in refusal

Esau disregarded his birth right (Gen. 27:30-38; Heb. 12:16-17). He traded it for one morsel of bread. But when the birthright was eventually given to his brother, he started demanding for what he

traded away. He shed tears for it, but not for his sin! He refused to accept his failure, but would rather want amends to be made for him. He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

3. Repentance is - not living in resemblance

Prior to the Lord's ministry, we read of John the Baptist who came preaching the very same message of repentance (Matt. 3:1-10). As a result of his preaching, many of the common people repented of their sins. But some of the priestly class tried to join that crowd in pretence.

They were in resemblance seekers, but in heart, a self-righteous group of people who never felt the need of repentance. John reprimanded them saying, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance."

4. Repentance is - not living in religiosity

Lord Jesus contrasted the prayers of two people – a Pharisee and a publican (Luke 18:9-14). The former, from the priestly class, and the latter, a despicable sinner. The Pharisee in his prayer said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

The Lord would contrast this resume of self-righteousness and religious adherence, to the publican's heartbroken cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Thus, He made it evident that God does not delight in a religious man as He does in a repentant sinner.

5. Repentance is - not living in relativity

The priestly class were not all to blame for their self-righteousness. There were some common people who died a heinous death and some others, an untimely death (Luke 13:1-5). Those who escaped judged that those who perished were sinners above the rest and therefore were met with divine judgment.

However, the Lord rebuked this thought by saying, "Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The judgment of God upon sin doesn't discriminate based on one's goodness. The scriptures say, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Considering ourselves being better than the rest does not exclude us from judgment or from the need of repentance.

6. Repentance is - not living in ritualism

There was a certain sorcerer named Simon (Acts 8:9-24). When he heard the preaching of the gospel, he believed and got baptized. He adhered ritualistically to the faith. But his main motive was to gain a new power, which he couldn't have got otherwise. When he saw that power working wonderfully through Peter, he offered him money in exchange for that power.

Peter rebuked him saying, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money... Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." A faith without repentance is not a genuine faith.

7. Repentance is - not living in regret

Judas Iscariot is infamously known as the one who betrayed the Lord. He, after committing the very act of betrayal, later pondered on his actions and realised he had committed a terrible mistake (Matt. 27:3-10). He regretted his actions and sought to undo them. Having got no success, he threw the blood money and went and hanged himself. His regret only lead him to end his life, but not to repentance. He didn't seek to have his sin forgiven. The guilt of his actions consumed him to death.

All these examples solemnly point to us of the wickedness in our heart and its deceivableness. Sin needs to be dealt with and repented of; not cloaked or brushed under the carpet. The Lord came to this earth to heal our heart from the plague of sin. In his death and resurrection, He is able to take away the guilt of our sin and

forgive us. But unless we come humbly to Him in faith and repentance, we cannot truly appropriate the work He has done for us, nor enjoy the forgiveness of sins.

David, in his psalm, said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:7). The heart is where matters pertaining to sin and repentance have to be dealt with.

Let us examine our hearts, and say like David, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Ps. 51:1-3).

Meditation:

GOD WOUNDS AND BINDS UP

“He breaks, but He binds; He wounds, but His hands heal.” (Job 5:18)

By Bro. Paulson Joshua, Kochi

God’s people have always been bruised and wounded; for His desire is to transform them into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. Paul says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” (Romans 8:28,29).

1. Job - To prove that he is a servant of God.

2. Elijah - To prove that Jehovah is the only living God.

3. Jesus Christ - To prove God’s love and save sinners.

4. Servants of God whom God wants to use.

1. Job - To prove that he is a servant of God.

God Himself testified about Job, “There is no man on the earth, like my servant Job, blameless and upright, who fears God and shuns evil.” (Job 1:8).

But all his possessions and his ten children were destroyed by Satan with the permission of God. Again, God allowed Satan to strike Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Even his wife did not come to

comfort him in this situation. His close friends came to see him, but they never comforted him but only blamed him.

Broken, Job said, “My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, Even the thoughts of my heart.” (Job 17:1,11).

Nevertheless, after proving Job’s innocence to Satan, God gave Job double all his losses. In the eternity to come, God will give him a great place to be a king in a glorious body.

2. Elijah - To prove that Jehovah is the only living God.

Prophet Elijah had just defeated the prophets of Baal on the Mount of Carmel. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, telling him that he too would be killed. When he heard that, he got up and ran for his life. (1 Kings 19:1–3).

He forgot all the mighty works of God in the past by the brook Cherith, at Zarephath and Mt. Carmel. Elijah went a day's journey into the desert, sat under a broom tree heartbroken, and prayed, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4).

After performing many miracles to prove that God lives, he was broken down physically and mentally. God graciously dealt with him in his helplessness, provided for him and protected him. (1 Kings 19:5ff).

After proving that he stood before God to all Israel, God used Elijah to anoint the next king of Israel and also Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:16). Then the Lord took Elijah to heaven without allowing death (2 Kings 2:1,11).

3. Jesus Christ - To prove God's love and save sinners.

Through the stripes and wounds of Jesus Christ, God saved all the sinners in the world. When His heart was broken, He said, "Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for

someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none." (Psalms 69:20). "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death." (Matthew 26:38).

As the Lord Jesus Christ experienced all the infirmities of man except sin, He is the only person who can heal the broken-hearted. The wounds in His body and the pain in His heart made Him the perfect Savior.

4. Servants of God whom God wants to use.

Today anyone whom God appoints for unique ministries also go through such heart-breaking experiences. Those believers who are undergoing such tribulations in their body and heart must look only to our Lord Jesus Christ for help.

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart." (Psalm 34:18). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." (Psalm 51:17).

A broken heart is like a sacrifice unto God, which we have to experience in our life. If our body is broken as a living sacrifice to God, we are benefitted to understand the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1,2). If our heart is broken as a sacrifice to God, God will use us to do many new things to glorify our Lord.

Those who undergo this situation of a broken heart, must look unto our Lord who has undergone a similar situation. Look unto Him. He is with you to help

BROKENNESS VS REBELLIOUSNESS

By Dr. Joel Albert, Aurangabad

As believers in Christ, we need to understand that our attitude toward God and His word plays a very important part in our spiritual growth. As we read in Psalm 34:18, “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” A broken heart is what the Lord wants, since it is tender, malleable and receptive to the will of God!

However, on the other hand, Proverbs 28:13-14 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” A hardened heart is stony, rebellious, and filled with pride and haughtiness. We, as believers, have to understand the importance of being broken-hearted. Usually, in the world, being broken signifies uselessness, but praise be to our great God for He, in his marvelous grace and His abundant mercy has used broken vessels to be molded and made fit for the Master’s use!



BROKENNESS



REBELLIOUSNESS

As we consider the two words Brokenness and Rebelliousness, let us look at the following:

1 *An example to peek into*

THE EXAMPLE:

When we consider the history of the children of Israel, we notice a series of situations across generations where the hard-hearted, rebellious attitude of the children of Israel is evident. They were so obsessed with their lineage and history that they never believed the repeated messages and warnings of judgement by multiple prophets across the history of Israel, down to the divided-kingdom stage. Even after their return from Babylon, the Jews were

2 *The effects to ponder upon*

not only hard-hearted and rebellious but also had the audacity to question God by repeatedly replying, “Wherein?” whenever the Lord pointed out their sins.

When we turn to Jeremiah chapters 18 and 19, we see two very distinct illustrations given by the Lord. In chapter 18 we see the soft clay that is being crafted by the potter into a vessel. And when the potter sees impurities, he ‘breaks’ the soft vessel down into a lump of clay again, removes the impurities and remakes the vessel! (18:4).

On the other hand, in Ch. 19 Jeremiah is asked to carry a hard earthen vessel which is no longer malleable and soft but is broken into pieces in the valley of Hinnom, never to be priced back together again!

To know the literal interpretation of both the passages for the nation, we must read both the chapters mentioned above. However, the application is very important for us to carefully look into and understand.

The two vessels speak to us about the two opposing attitudes that we are considering here. One of the major issues with the modern-day Christians is the abundance of knowledge of the Scriptures they possess with little to no application in practical living. We have an abundance of preachers, but practicing Christians are hard to find! We have abundance of ministries, but marred testimonies!

The reason for all of this is the fact that we are not ready to accept correction in our lives. We rest on past laurels and on the great work of faith done by previous generations; but we are left with minds that are saturated with the knowledge of the scriptures and hearts that are hardened to the core. We point fingers at preachers and go against the words of the oversight, all for what? The fact that our ego, our self, our pride is hurt by the words of the men of God!

May we not make a mistake like the Israelites did, but let's rather be like Jacob, David and Isaiah, whose brokenness was a channel leading them to be used for God's glory.

THE EFFECTS

One of the most apt contrasts in terms of brokenness and rebelliousness can be seen in the lives of Peter and Judas Iscariot, respectively. They both denied the Lord in their own different ways, but the way each of them responded after being convicted of their sins is something that we should pay careful attention to.

Peter:

When he saw the Lord, and their eyes met, this dear man of God was convicted of his sins. When the caring eyes of the Lord pierced through his soft, malleable heart, he responded with tears of repentance. His life turned around, he was restored, and not just that, he was instrumental in the evangelistic sphere and in the oversight, as the Lord directed him in Matthew 16 and John 21, respectively. The keyword here is repentance, which involves confession of sins and submission to the will of God, resulting in a complete turnaround in life!

Judas:

Judas also was convicted of his sins. He knew he did wrong, but instead of repentance we see him being stuck at regret! His heart was too hard and haughty to repent of his sins. Someone rightly said, Judas was a man who spent years with the 'Door of heaven' but went to hell! He stored up wrath for himself because of his hard and impenitent heart (Romans 2:5). If only had he repented, if only would he have gone to the cross instead

of the chief priests and elders, the outcome of his life would have been so different! Mind you, he too spent a lot of time with the Lord; however, a study of his life shows us his rebellious and haughty attitude, which ultimately caused his downfall.

How are we today? Dear believers, our attitude toward God matters. Many

unconfessed sins and hardened hearts are the reason why ministries and work today are abundant but the fruit is scant. Will we make the right decision in our lives, like the Psalmist in Psalm 51 and Peter in Luke 22? May we truly live a life of repentance, and with renewed hearts, let us be useful for the Lord and His glory, as broken vessels, shaped by the Master for His use.

Gospel: **THE HEART OF MAN**

By Joy Murickal Issac, Kerala

Each animal can communicate within its own category - dogs communicate with dogs, elephants with elephants. Man is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26,27), allowing him to communicate with God by their conscience. This conscience makes man precious, accountable, and free.

Further, this reveals that man is not the product of evolution but God's special creation. The Bible clearly talks about the heart of man in many instances, revealing its utmost importance.

Importance

A normal understanding of the human heart is that it is the blood pumping organ of the human body. The Bible gives no special significance to this biological heart than any other organ in the human body. Whereas, in the Bible, the heart represents the totality of the mind - the centre of our thoughts, imaginations and will (Proverbs 4:23).

Intangible qualities such as love, kindness, hope, faith, and courage are associated with

the heart. Its quality and quantity make everyone special and precious. The Bible describes God as intangible. Thus, the most valuable gift we possess is our heart.

From this perspective, the heart of man is the most powerful, revolutionary, complicated, and unseen organ. When we dig into the Word of God, we see how significant the heart of man is. Everything begins from there.



Evaluation

Starting with the first sin and then Cain and Abel, God asks questions to reveal man's conscience. In Genesis 6:5, we see man's heart becomes so corrupted, leading to complete degradation. Such worse heart condition leads mankind to judgement. God always

pays attention to the inner heart of man.

When selecting the next king over Israel, God instructed Samuel not to consider height or physical appearance. “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” (1 Samuel 16:7).

We should never forget; God evaluates our hearts and accordingly deals with us. More than anything else, we need to make sure the condition of our heart is right before God. For from the heart originates all evil (Matthew 15:18–20).

We must seriously examine, if Almighty God scans our hearts today what would be the outcome? Take time to reflect. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is clear in His teachings. God is concerned about our hearts and thoughts. Consider Luke 5:22, “But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning in your hearts?’”

Transformation

Salvation begins from the heart. We must set our hearts right first. Paul writes, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10). Conviction, confession, repentance, etc., all originate

from the heart.

When one is born again, the Lord begins to dwell in their heart. It is the Lord’s desire and pleasure to enter and reside in the hearts of His disciples (Reve. 3:20; John 14:23).

Saturation

Furthermore, we ought to study and memorize the scripture regularly to saturate our hearts with the Word of God (Colo. 3:16). It is the heart that is filled with the word of God which protects one from temptations (Psa. 119:11).

Remember, God has revealed precious and valuable things through His Word. We ought to keep those things in our hearts as seeds planted in a fertile ground. However, before those good seeds can grow and bring fruit, hearts need to be broken and prepared, as we do with a fallow ground before cultivation (Jeremiah 4:3; Luke 8:15).

Caution

Any spiritual service without our whole heart in it is a waste. God will not accept it. “These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:8-9). Never forget, He reads our hearts and even our emotions (Luke 7:38,39).

Let’s strive to keep our hearts obedient to God. Forget not that the Holy Spirit dwells within our hearts to lead, equip and sanctify us completely. Cultivate a gentle, noble heart. May the Lord find delight in its beauty. May His name be glorified forever.

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