

## Brokenness

A common saying in our culture is, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” meaning basically, “If it’s still tolerably functional, leave it alone.”

Many people live their lives that way as well. Their motto is, “My life is functioning just fine, so I don’t need ‘fixing’ – I don’t have any problems right now that need outside help.”

What they don’t realize is, “**IF IT AIN’T BROKE, GOD WON’T FIX IT!**” In other words, until you admit you’ve got a problem, God won’t help you with that problem!

Because of sin, human beings are fundamentally “broken.” The Psalmist David discovered this principle during his life ...

- **Psalm 34:18** The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a **broken** heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
- **Psalm 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a **broken** and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Because of our cultural expressions, we primarily think of a “broken heart” or a “broken spirit” as a “weeping heart” or “sad spirit,” but the primary meaning of David’s Hebrew expression was what we normally think of when we think of the word BROKEN:

**BROKEN:** violently separated into parts, shattered, damaged, fractured, violated, disrupted, made weak or infirm, subdued, crushed, bankrupt, reduced in rank, cut off, disconnected, not complete or full.

David realized two very powerful truths: FIRST, that his heart was “broken” – not merely that it was sad, but that something was fundamentally wrong with it; SECOND, that **GOD IS ATTRACTED TO BROKENNESS!** (“nigh unto them,” “thou wilt not despise”) He knew that “if it ain’t broke, God won’t fix it,” and that’s why David didn’t mind admitting his problem ...

- **Psalm 31:12** I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: **I am like a broken vessel.**

In fact, the whole purpose of the Old Testament law was to show man that he was fundamentally BROKEN, and that he needed God’s help!

- **Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

- **Galatians 3:24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The Law of Moses contains many illustrations concerning brokenness:

- Any earthen vessel contaminated by an unclean object, animal or person was to be BROKEN.
- When leprosy had BROKEN through the skin, a person was unclean and had to be separated from everyone else.
- When leprosy had BROKEN out in the walls of a house, the house was to be broken down.

No sacrifice that was imperfect was allowed to be offered to God, and no man who was “broken” or even “blemished” was permitted to enter the presence of God as a priest, further illustrating the fact that our brokenness separates us from God ...

- **Leviticus 21:17-19, 21** <sup>17</sup>Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. <sup>18</sup>For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, <sup>19</sup>Or a man that is **brokenfooted**, or **brokenhanded** ... <sup>21</sup>No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.

The Old Testament is really an ongoing contest between God and the devil’s false gods for the affections of Israel. Altars to Jehovah and many false deities were alternately built and **broken**, depending on the character of the man who occupied Israel’s throne at the time.

The implication throughout all these illustrations is clear: Humanity is BROKEN by sin, and until sin’s power (its “altar”) is BROKEN in our lives, we live under the certain threat of eternal destruction. **EITHER YOU BREAK SIN, OR SIN BREAKS YOU!**

People can become broken by many things ... sometimes other people break us, sometimes our circumstances break us, sometimes even God breaks us, but most of the time WE BREAK OURSELVES. Our stubborn insistence of doing things our own way is our own worst enemy!

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT, **NO MATTER HOW YOU GOT BROKEN, GOD IS WILLING TO FIX YOU, IF YOU’LL CRY TO HIM FOR HELP!**

- **Psalm 147:3** He healeth the **broken** in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.
- **Luke 4:18** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; **he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted**, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

The only thing God asks is that we break our PRIDE and admit our need for His help – then He steps in and breaks the power of SIN. What a great trade! BUT YOU MUST TAKE THE FIRST STEP ...

- **Hosea 10:12** Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; **break up your fallow ground**: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.
- **Matthew 21:44** And **whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken**: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.
- **1 Peter 5:5b-7** <sup>5</sup>... **God resisteth the proud**, and giveth grace to the humble. <sup>6</sup>**Humble yourselves** therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: <sup>7</sup>Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

**Contrary to popular belief, pride is not thinking too much OF oneself, but simply thinking too much ABOUT oneself (whether good or bad). Pride makes ME the center, instead of God.**

**These are the two reactions that keep us from breaking our pride – and a Scripture for each of them:**

#### 1. I'M NOT BROKEN (the “up-and-out” person)

**Revelation 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup>So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

#### 2. I'M TOO BROKEN (the “down-and-out” person)

**Jeremiah 33:20-21a** <sup>20</sup>Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; <sup>21</sup>Then may also my covenant be broken ... (**GOD'S PROMISE WILL ALWAYS WORK!**)

Jesus met up with **TWO PROUD PEOPLE** in the city of Jericho ...

The “up-and-outer” was the short tax collector named Zacchaeus (Luke 19), who had to humble himself and climb up a tree in order to see Jesus. (**We also “fall short” and need to humble ourselves and just get to “the tree”!**) In spite of his outward success, Zacchaeus finally realized that he was inwardly broken. God planted the sycamore tree (He made the opportunity), but Zacchaeus had to climb it!

The “down-and-outer” was a blind beggar named Bartimaeus (Mark 10), who had to humble himself and cry out – even when he couldn't see for himself that Jesus was there! And when his friends told him to be quiet, he said, “You're not the one who realizes how broken he is! Somebody told me God is here, and there's no way I'm going to let Him get this close and pass me by, because God doesn't stop for the proud!” **Only the blind man in that crowd of seeing people actually “saw” Jesus!**

You don't come to an altar to “add” God to your life, you come to an altar to **BREAK DOWN** the altars to sin that have broken you, and **BUILD** an altar to God. Every human being has an altar to something or someone in their life – but you need to “replace” every other altar with an altar to God!