

Brokenness (Part 5) - The Promise

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Introduction:

A. Brokenness is God's method of dealing with the self-life that hinders God's purposes.

1. He arranges circumstances.
2. He chooses the tools.
3. He controls the pressure.

B. This is painful because he deals with us on a deep emotional level.

1. He is after what we don't want to give up.
2. He is after control of our lives.

I. The apostle Paul is our example for this message. (2 Corinthians 11-12)

A. Because of the great revelations given to Paul the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him from exalting himself.

1. Paul was Saul of Tarsus when he persecuted Christians.
2. God spoke to him on the Damascus road.
3. Paul was strong in his will and personality.
4. When Jesus saved him he had a jewel in the rough and the Lord had to break him.
5. Paul spent time in the desert before beginning to minister. (Galatians 1)
6. He thought he knew God and the Law yet he opposed God.
7. Paul came to know Jesus like no other.
8. Paul was harassed through his whole ministry, beaten and jailed, and shipwrecked often.
9. Judaisers followed him to harass him everywhere he went.
10. Why would Jesus allow Paul to be so harassed in his ministry?
11. Even the other apostles doubted his conversion at first.
12. God had to break Paul in two areas.

a. Paul had to be convinced that he could not live the Christian life in his own strength. (Romans 7:15)

1. He had to surrender his own determination.

2. He had to see his failure to live for Christ.

b. Paul had to be kept from exalting himself. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

1. Paul had to learn on rely on Christ in his weakness.

2. In Paul's weakness Christ was strong.

B. Every Christian needs to learn that human strength is incapable of living the Christian life.

1. As Paul cried out in desperation so each Christian needs to cry out.

2. We must depend on nothing but Christ.

C. God has two objectives:

1. To shatter the self-life that we might know Him intimately.

2. That we might serve Him effectively.

II. How does God break a man or women?

A. God only breaks us in love.

1. God did not break Paul because of his sin what was forgiven the day he believed in Christ.

2. God broke Paul so that he could know Christ and serve Christ.

3. Our work needs to be effective and our lives need to be holy.

4. Brokenness is God's discipline in the believer in which he is dealing with attitudes that he must change so that our future service is effective.

a. Chastisement causes immediate change for holiness now.

b. Brokenness has future service in mind.

c. Punishment is not for believers but for unbelievers who reject Christ the sin bearer.

1. Though the outer man is decaying the inner man is producing an eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

2. When God takes us through a breaking process we should not focus on now but ask what God is up to for future service.

B. God sets limitations on our periods of brokenness.

1. God limits the time.
2. God limits the intensity of the pain and hurt in a believer's experience.
3. God's process of breaking believers ceases when we surrender the will.
4. God will never break the spirit so that a believer loses his or her zest for life.
5. God only breaks the will so that we can surrender to him.
6. God will not damage his purpose for your life.
7. God targets the area, arranges the circumstances and the tools and limits the time necessary to break a believer.
 - a. Paul was beaten with rods.
 - b. Paul was stoned and thrown in jail.
 - c. Paul was shipwrecked at sea.
 - d. Paul was harassed by opponents.
 - e. In all these experiences God limited the intensity.
 - f. In our weakest periods we experience God's strength.

C. God will deepen our understanding in three directions.

1. We get a different perspective on who God is.
 - a. His ways are higher than our ways.
 - b. His thoughts are higher than ours.
 - c. We learn the ways of God.
 - d. We begin to understand God's patience and love for us.
2. We begin to understand ourselves.
 - a. We trace our thought patterns.
 - b. Our parents and teachers and friends formed us in some unhealthy ways.
 - c. We see why we are intense in some areas yet negligent in others.
 - d. We become more intimate with God.

- e. We marvel at the love and patience of God who loves us as we are.
3. We begin to see other people differently.
- a. Our critical spirit fades away.
 - b. We become more compassionate.
 - c. We understand other's faults.
 - d. Instead of being critical we express the love of God.
 - e. We see how upbringing shapes us, and we express compassion toward others.
 - f. The power of sin begins to break in our lives.
 - g. God breaks, shatters, sifts, prunes and we come out better.
4. God never deserts us in our seasons of brokenness.
- a. We might feel abandoned by God but he is still there. (Hebrews 13:5)
 - b. In our minds we hold on to the truth yet in our emotions we feel abandoned.
 - c. All of us are attached to things and people so God removes those props from us so that we depend only on God.
 - d. This scares us and we feel alone and fearful yet God is up to something good.
 - e. When we can't depend on anything except God we must draw near to him.
 - f. God wants us to live in intimacy with him so that everyone else and everything else will take a second place to him.
 - g. Only in this way can these other relationships be healthy.
 - 1. We can't get our needs met in other people.
 - 2. We can only get our needs met in God.
 - 3. We become free to love others in a healthy way.
 - 4. When we have been dependent on others for years and God begins to break us away from others we hurt, wondering what God is up to.
 - 5. A marriage is good only when two people are emotionally free.
 - 6. Are you willing to get free?

5. God is patient with us.

- a. He knows how long we have been thinking wrongly.
- b. He sees the future, however, and keeps putting the pressure on us to surrender.
- c. Paul had to surrender to the thorn in his flesh.
- d. We need to surrender to God's breaking process in our lives.

D. How long will it take for God to break us?

- 1. It depends on how long we have been thinking erroneously.
- 2. It depends on how willing we are to be broken.
- 3. God is willing to wait upon you but God will eventually set you on the shelf if you refuse to submit to his breaking process.
- 4. God put awesome pressure on Paul because the greater the potential the greater the pressure required.
- 5. God will lead you to victory through brokenness if you are willing to submit to his will.
 - a. When we rebel we delay God's blessings.
 - b. There is always a price to pay in resisting God.
 - c. God's brokenness is an expression of love. (Philippians 1:6)
 - d. Paul got his victory in Christ. (Romans 7:24-25)
 - e. Paul became content with weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:10)
 - f. Do you want your Christian life to be characterized by intimacy with Christ in love and blessing, with effective service?
 - g. Brokenness is God's way to make this a reality.
 - h. Is your desire to walk with God and to serve him strong enough to pray this prayer:

“Lord more than anything in life I want to know you and be used of you effectively. Therefore, Lord Jesus, would you target the area of sin my life that needs to be broken that oneness and service might be pleasing to you.”
 - i. Whatever God does he only does in love.