

28 THE BLESSEDNESS OF BROKENNESS

Psalms 34:18 The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

What does it mean to be broken? In *Psalms 34*, David speaks of a broken heart, not a broken spirit. When Jesus died on the cross, His bones and His spirit were not broken, but His body and His heart were, for our sins. Gethsemane preceded and prepared the way to Calvary. Jesus laid down His will for the Father's will at Gethsemane before He laid down His life at Calvary for the sins of the world. This speaks of the principle of brokenness as the key to burden-bearing and cross-bearing. The way to Calvary's love is through Gethsemane's surrender.

Brokenness means an utter relinquishing of ourselves to God – our wills, our rights, our burdens, our entire self. When we are thus broken, God can begin to work through us unimpaired and uncontaminated by self. In denying self, we are saying to the Lord that He can have His way with us and through us – *“not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42)*. Brokenness is the only channel through which the love of God can flow vicariously and victoriously.

All the spiritually outstanding characters in the bible have been broken people. David acknowledged *“I am like a broken vessel” (Psalms 31:12)*. Jeremiah likewise confessed that *“my heart within me is broken” (Jeremiah 23:9)*. At the end of his extended period of affliction, Job said *“I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6)*. Peter was heart-broken when he wept after denying Jesus thrice, but it also helped him learn later how to love with God's love and feed His lambs. Those who have known brokenness are better placed to minister to the broken-hearted.

In the gospels, we find two occasions when Jesus wept, one for a beloved friend, Lazarus (*John 11:35-36*), and the other for the beloved city, Jerusalem (*Luke 19:41*). The tears tell of His love and broken heart over the death of the former, and the coming destruction of the latter. This was He who *“offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears” (Hebrews 5:7)* in the days of His flesh. The ministry of *“the love of God poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 5:5)* is a ministry of tears. How much of our ministry is watered with tears? The psalmist stated this principle of fruitfulness out of brokenness thus: *“Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalms 126:5-6)*. There is much blessedness in brokenness that we are missing out on. Instead, we feverishly look elsewhere in futility, and wonder why.