

The Heart Broken Life
John 12:24-25 & Mark 14:3-9

If anyone had asked Joseph if he wanted to go to Egypt, the answer would have been a resounding, 'no.' Joseph would never have chosen separation from his father and family or the heartache he endured in Egypt.

The same is true of us. There are few occasions we would choose to be heartbroken. We are famous for arranging our lives for comfort and not the cross.

But God always chooses best for us and, as modeled by Jesus and countless other biblical characters, brokenness is often God's chosen path for us.

I want to make one point before we look at our first text. Here is the point.

First: Brokenness is a Divinely Ordained Process for All Christians

a) The rationale for brokenness

Genesis forward proves that every human being has an innate desire to live independent lives, independent even of God.

This means you desire to live independently of God. It may not be total independence but there are particular areas of life each of us tries to reserve for our personal sovereignty.

Like attending church on Sunday, we want to give God some portion of our lives but reserve the most or best for ourselves.

Like Eve, we rationalize God's commands and say we will relax our Christianity in certain areas of our lives, opting for zones of obedience and disobedience.

We build walls around that portion of our lives we want to reserve for ourselves and attempt to maintain secret gardens.

b) God chooses those particular points of nonconformity to Jesus at which to break us

We know that Joseph was proud. We also know that God was going to fulfil the dream in which his brothers bowed down and honored him; not just his brothers but all Egypt and the biblical world would honor him. God could not use a proud Joseph to be "Pharaoh's father" (Gen 45:8).

Understanding the circumstances that created Joseph's pride explains it but it doesn't defend it. The same is true of us. It helps us to understand why we sin but it does not defend why we sin. Sin is indefensible.

c) God arranges the circumstances for us to be broken

God humbled Joseph, even humiliated him. He went from being his father's favorite to being fatherless; from being a favorite to being forgotten in a prison.

He went from being robed in a coat of many colors to being stripped naked in slavery.

God has done and is doing the same thing **for** you. He is stripping you so that he might clothe you in his righteousness

Isaiah 61:10 - *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,*

Let's assume you get to choose what clothes you wear when you meet God. Do you choose something you made or bought or do you choose what God has provided?

PICTURE – *The Priest with Dirty Clothes* by R.C. Sproul

God is choosing those areas of independence or resistance and arranging circumstances to break your heart. Why?

The very things we think will make us independent make us slaves.

The very things we hope will make us happy make us saddest.

The very things we think will lift us up, end up crushing us.

"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

- Francis Thompson (1859-1907)

God is our greatest good

(and He will invest your lifetime proving that to you)

Why?

1 John 2:15 & 17 – Do not love the world or the things in the world....the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides for ever.

The world is daily contesting for your heart. If you give it to the world, you will die little-by-little and then forever.

Your happiness should not be dependent on happenings

SIDE NOTE: Genesis 3:6-7 - ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,^[b] she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

- *Before the fall: mind, will & emotions
- *At and after the fall: emotions, mind & will

- This looks good – *good for food & a delight to the eyes* - emotions
- I'm convinced it is best – *to make one wise* - mind
- I choose it – *she took of it fruit and gave it to her husband* - will

Emotions are intended to express the fullness of a mind that wills to correspondingly emote. Our emotions are not supposed to drive our minds and will. Our minds are supposed to drive our wills and emotions.

Unless your greatest love is for God, everything else will continually disappoint you turning your life into a roller coaster of emotional dependence

- d) God chooses the tools with which to break us

The very thing you have chosen to bring you happiness God will choose to demonstrate its inability to do so. This means we must be careful about creating idols because God deals ruthlessly with any competition for your heart.

God used Joseph's father, brothers, Midianite traders, Potiphar, Potiphar's wife, the prison manager, the baker and butler and even Pharaoh to break and remake Joseph's heart.

God intends to use every person and every circumstance in your life. Nothing is free from God's influence. There are no safe-zones in the world.

- e) God controls the process that breaks us

Isaiah 28:9-10 - *To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message?
¹⁰For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."*

Mark 8:22-25 - *And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking."²⁵Then Jesus^{ful} laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.*

Isaiah 42:3 – *"...a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench"*

Second: Here is the New Testament Principle

This rationale and purpose for Joseph's brokenness is illustrated by Jesus in John 12:24-25 -

- a) Think about the live seed
 - It is alone
 - It produces no fruit
- b) Think about the dead seed
 - It produces fruit
 - It reproduces itself
- c) Think about what this means for Jesus
 - Jesus' life barred us from God
 - Jesus' death gives us life
- d) Think about what this meant for Joseph
 - Joseph stood alone amongst his brothers
 - Broken, Joseph produced fruit for multiple nations
- e) Think about what this means for you

When Jesus told his disciples to take up their crosses and follow him, they didn't fully understand that it meant to death. But the cross was never an instrument of burden but always and only death.

When Jesus was about 10-years old, Judas the Galilean led a raid on the Roman armory at Sophoris, the traditional site of Mary, his mother's birth and only 6 miles from where Jesus lived in Nazareth. In response, the Romans lined the road into and out of Sophoris with 2,000 crucified Jews.

Jesus knew what it meant to carry a cross. The disciples knew this also. They simply avoided the thought just like you and I avoid the reality that sin will not harm us.

You and I were born to be broken in salvation and sanctification.

Third: Here is the application of this verse

- a) The two seeds represent the self-life versus the Christ-life
- b) God intends to produce his life in and through you
- c) God must break you to produce his fruit
- d) Christianity is receiving Christ's life
- e) The Christian life is more of God's fruit than my work
- f) Fruitfulness is dependence on God and not self

Fourth: Here is a Warning

a) Saving your life loses your life

The life I think I can create pales in comparison to what omnipotence can do.

If you'll think about Abraham, Moses, Jacob or the disciples, you'll remember that trusting God is hard and is a process. But you can do it. And you should.

The will of God is something we would choose every time if we only knew better

b) Losing your life saves your life

In what areas of your life are you immediately aware of disobedience?

What aspect of your life is not conformed to Jesus?

Could God call for any part of your life and you would immediately surrender it?

Fifth: One Last Illustration

Mark 14:3-9 - ³ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ^[a] as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴ There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that?" ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹ And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

For days after his crucifixion, the aroma of Jesus was Mary's. Her act depicted Jesus' life being poured out on the world. Her selflessness won her Jesus' aroma.

2 Corinthians 2:15 - *For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,*

Conclusion:

1 Corinthians 1:18 - *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Who would ever think a cross could lead to life? Only God can do that. Who would think that breaking could lead to joy. Only God can do that.

What you may consider haphazard circumstances of sadness is God's way of breaking you of hope in fallen, broken, unsatisfying, unsaving, things. God is breaking you to save you.

Community Groups:

- 1 – Why does God see fit to break us?
- 2 – At what places in our lives does God break us?
- 3 – What circumstances might God use to break us?
- 4 – What tools might God use to break us?
- 5 – How does anything that betrays God, also betray us?
- 6 – Why does God not want us to love the world?
- 7 – Why is it necessary for a seed in the ground to die?
- 8 – How does Jesus' death exemplify his teaching in John 12?
- 9 – How do our lives exemplify the living and the dead seed?
- 10 – How does losing our lives actually save them?
- 11 – How did this principle work for Jesus?
- 12 – Discuss Mary's alabaster box and 2 Corinthians 2:15.
- 14 – What is God's great goal in our brokenness?
- 15 – How has God broken you?
- 16 – How is God breaking you?
- 17 – How might we resist God's breaking?