

The Beauty of Brokenness

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrender, brokenness, and repentance in revival, highlighting the role of humility and prayer in achieving spiritual awakening.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:3, Matthew 5:3, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 7:10

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

Glenn Meldrum preaches on the three essential facets of the Christian life for revival: surrender, brokenness, and repentance. Surrender involves relinquishing control to God, while brokenness is realizing our need for a Savior and yielding control. Repentance is the action of surrender and brokenness. These traits are crucial for those seeking the Lord and reviving their Christian walk. The sermon delves into the importance of surrender and brokenness in reviving the Christian life, followed by an exploration of the gift of repentance in the next chapter.

Transcript

There are three facets of the Christian life that are essential to revival: surrender, brokenness and repentance. Surrender is relinquishing control of our lives to God. Brokenness is the state of being in which we yield that control. Repentance is brokenness and surrender in action. Surrender, brokenness and repentance are character traits of people desperately desiring the Lord. In this chapter we will look at how surrender and brokenness are integral elements to reviving the Christian life. In the next chapter we will examine the gift of repentance and its importance in the scheme of revival.

SURRENDER

Surrender is a fact of life. It may be voluntary or forced. In one way or another, every person yields control of their lives to someone else no matter their position in society. The question is not if we surrender, but to whom are we surrendering.

In view of God's mercy, humanity has but one acceptable response to the crucified and resurrected Christ--to surrender our lives to Him and live for His glory (Rom. 12:1-2). Anything else is rebellion! Repentance is an ongoing act of surrender, while holiness is the fruit of a surrendered life. Only yielded saints will live vibrant lives of prayer. Furthermore, surrender unlocks the door to the power of God and opens the windows of heaven to flood a land with His holy presence.

To relinquish control of our lives to the One who both created and purchased us is foundational to the Christian faith. Jesus never requested our reckless abandonment, He demanded it. We cannot be loyal to two gods. When we refuse to surrender our lives, wills or wants to Jesus we walk in deliberate disobedience. By not submitting to the Lord people automatically submit to Satan and the principles that govern his kingdom. This may seem to be a hard statement. However, can any serious person believe that a compromise between serving God and serving Satan is possible?

Lack of surrender to God is a result of selfishness deep within our characters. Our selfish characters rob us of intimacy with Christ and the power to touch our family, friends and the lost with the power of the Holy Spirit. Liu Zhenying, known as Brother Yun, is one of the leading pastors in the Chinese house church movement. He recognized that "Multitudes of church members in the West are satisfied with giving their minimum to God, not their maximum. I've watched men and women during offering time . . . open their fat wallets and search for the smallest amount they can give. This type of attitude will never do. Jesus gave his whole life for us, and we give as little of our lives, time and money as we can back to God. What a disgrace! Repent!" (Yun, 297).

There are three primary reasons why we have such a difficult time submitting to God. The first is our obsession with controlling our lives. In our effort to manage our own lives we attempt to manipulate the lives of others. Secondly, we struggle with submission because we love our sin and ourselves more than anything else. For some odd reason, we think that if we love God with all of our being we will be less a person or lose out on life.

Lastly, we resist surrendering to God because we have not been broken. We struggle to retain control of our lives whenever we do not comprehend our real spiritual condition and need. Many think submission to the Savior is weakness rather than a right response of fallen men to a holy God. So He must help us surrender to Him. This means that our pride and self-sufficiency must be broken, our love of sin and self must be broken, our love of pleasure and possessions must be broken. In truth, everything that is not of Christ must be broken. Here is the place where the Lord Jesus can freely live in and through us.

BROKENNESS

Brokenness is never weakness. It is coming to the end of one's self-life. Jesus said that the broken man is truly a blessed man (Mt. 5:3). Through brokenness we comprehend that we are finite people in tremendous need of a Savior. A person will throw himself at the Redeemer's feet only when he grasps the reality that he deserves divine judgment for his sin and that his sole hope is Christ's mercy. This is where a life of brokenness begins. "The broken man," observed William MacDonald "is quick to repent. He does not try to sweep sin under the carpet. He does not try to forget it with the excuse, 'Time heals all things.' He rushes into the presence of God and cries, 'I have sinned'" (MacDonald, 121).

Brokenness produces true humility. Until our pride is broken we will not humble ourselves before God or men. Brokenness and humility are the results of a deep consciousness of personal guilt before God over sin, seeing our overwhelming need of a Savior, and then clinging to Christ as a result. People who are in a right relationship with their Creator will grow in brokenness and humility until their dying day. "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8). Humility and brokenness are inseparably interwoven so as to bring a person to surrender, repentance and victory.

Revival is birthed through humble and broken saints who yearn to see the glory of God sweep the land. "In the local assembly, brokenness is the road to revival. It is a fixed law in the spiritual realm that the tears of brokenness are the prelude to shower of blessing. We generally try everything else first--new buildings, new campaigns, new methods, but God is waiting for repentance and humiliation. When we repent the blessings will flow" (MacDonald, 140).

The Christians in Uganda suffered tremendous persecution during Idi Amin's reign of terror (1971-1979). Revival is now sweeping that nation because the persecution helped bring believers to a point of brokenness. After the Christians lost virtually everything, they had no other hope than to desperately seek God's face. They longed for the Lord to rend the heavens and pour mercy upon a demonically battered nation. F. Kefa Sempangi pastored in Kampala during this time. He wrote, "We must be 'broken,' even as Jesus was broken for the world. To be broken is to have no pride, for where there is pride there is no confession and no forgiveness. The broken one is he who is broken to heal a broken relationship. He is the one willing to 'give in,' who doesn't find his identity in always being right" (Sempangi, 39).

Idi Amin was the 1970's African equivalent of Hitler. The cruel bloodbath that he inaugurated was horrifying. The atrocities this Muslim leader inflicted upon his people, and uniquely upon Christians, created a true brokenness in the believers that allowed them to forgive the vilest of offenses. Brokenness heals relationships, pride and unforgiveness destroys them. The splintered American church with her astronomical divorce rate will find healing and anointing when brokenness defines her character. Until that time, our unbroken lives will rob us of revival and continue to destroy our marriages, children, churches and nation.

The Lord took the issue of brokenness very seriously with Pastor Sempangi (actually it is a very serious issue with every person, especially pastors). One day a brother from the Revival Fellowship gave Kefa the irreplaceable gift of a loving reproof. First the brother read Matthew 14:19. Jesus "directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people." Then he shared, "Until God breaks your will, He will never use you. You will remain only a nice loaf of bread."

Kefa said the brother explained that "unless I was broken I would be too proud to lose my life for sinners. I would be too proud to give my life away for people who were not perfect. I would wait for the perfect person and the perfect community, and I would never find them. I would end up like Judas, making only a partial commitment to the body of believers to whom I belonged and finding my identity in my rebellion from them" (Sempangi, 39). This is a lesson the entire church needs to learn. Hopefully, we will not have to pay such a high price in our country in order to learn true brokenness.

COMPREHENDING GOD'S MERCY

The strength of sin is greater than our natural self. A man who is broken before God will have a passion to walk free from the power of sin. The greater the yearning for the Lord, the quicker a man will seek forgiveness and grace to overcome sin and remain in fellowship with his Savior. King David repented of his adultery only when his pride and self-will was finally broken. He then mournfully declared, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Ps. 51:3-4a). David finally laid aside his hurtful pride and rebellion when he was confronted with the ugliness of his sin in light of a holy God. Guilt was a gift from God to bring David back into right relationship with Him.

Guilt has little value if there is no hope for mercy. Only a cruel person or god would inflict guilt without hope. However, guilt that produces hopelessness in self is extremely profitable when there is hope in divine mercy. This mercy is most clearly seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The plan of salvation is based upon a God who desires to save the hopeless and helpless. The only remedy for mankind's hopeless state was for the Father to send the Son to die on the cross.

In 2 Corinthians 7:8-9 Paul said he did not regret hurting the church by preaching to them repentance, even though it broke his heart to do so. Though the message brought guilt, the church was broken and turned from their sin as they drew closer to the Lord. Paul stated, "For you became sorrowful as God intended." It was God's will for them to be broken through the knowledge of their sin. This healthy knowledge of sin produced godly sorrow that moved them to a deeper surrender to the Master.

Godly Sorrow

Godly sorrow is a fruit of God's mercy that is necessary to salvation and revival. This Spirit inspired emotion is exceedingly healthy. Godly sorrow can bring about a change of character that could never be produced through teaching, therapy or self-help principles. When the Spirit convicts a person of sin He always offers the remedy. As Paul wrote, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death" (2 Cor. 7:10).

Worldly sorrow is a very cruel thing. It is guilt without hope. A man may possess a sincere remorse for hurting God, himself and others, but not to the point of changing his life. Quite often a person is only sorry that he got caught at his sin. Repentance is not taking place in any soul who is not actively turning from his sin. Prayer for forgiveness is worthless if the person does not want to be radically transformed by the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for worldly sorrow to produce genuine repentance that transforms the character because the person is not willing to surrender his entire being to Christ. Worldly sorrow produces death: eternal death, spiritual death, relational death and emotional death. It is hopeless because it is Christless.

For a person to know godly sorrow he must see himself entirely lost and undone without God. "A man must feel himself in misery, before he will go about to find a remedy; be sick before he will seek a physician; be in prison before he will seek a pardon. A sinner must be weary of his former wicked ways before he will have recourse to Jesus Christ for refreshing. He must be sensible of his spiritual poverty, beggary, and slavery under the devil, before he thirsts kindly for heavenly righteousness, and willingly take up Christ's sweet and easy yoke. He must be cast down, confounded, condemned, a cast away, and lost in himself, before he will look about for a Saviour" (Iain Murray, 128). Godly sorrow goes to the root of the problem. It generates a righteous zeal to change the character of a person rather than just being sorrowful about the consequences of sin.

Godly sorrow produces action. After Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their sin he wrote on the holy aggression they had to get the sinful practices out of their lives. He penned, "For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!" (2 Cor. 7:11; NKJV). The verbs (or verb phrases) of the above verse are, diligence; clearing of yourselves; indignation; fear; vehement desire; zeal and vindication. All of these passionate verbs relate to the actions of a person to right the wrongs he has done and to see his character transformed no matter the cost. Indignation and vindication are not acts of violence against a person, just against the sin and personal character traits that are the source of the sin. Indifference is crushed under the fervent desire to walk upright with God.

BROKENNESS BRINGS REVIVAL

John the Baptist was accredited as the greatest of all prophets even though he never raised the dead, made the blind to see or the lame to walk. He didn't part the Red Sea like Moses, or call down fire from heaven like Elijah. Why did Jesus call John the greatest prophet? Because he prepared the way for the Messiah. What was the message that prepared the way? "Repent" (Mt. 3:2). John was a broken and surrendered man who knew he was not worthy to untie Christ's shoes (Lk. 3:16). Humbly and boldly he prepared for the coming of Messiah. The spiritual authority he possessed came through his brokenness and surrender to God.

John's message will accomplish the same thing today that it did in his day-the transformation of society through the salvation of men. The 1859 Ulster Revival, which swept Northern Ireland, is an example of conviction that brought the people to a place of brokenness and repentance. The strongest of men staggered and fell down "under the wounds of their conscience." They trembled and grew physically weak under the tremendous conviction of the Holy Spirit. The minister proclaimed, "Oh! It is a heartrending sight to witness. With wringing of hands, streams of tears, and a look of unutterable anguish, they confess their sins in tones of unmistakable sincerity, and appeal to the Lord for mercy with a cry of piercing earnestness. I have seen the strong frame convulsed; I have witnesses every joint trembling; I have heard the cry as I have never heard it before, 'Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my sinful soul; Lord Jesus, come to my burning heart; Lord, pardon my sins; oh, come and lift me from these flames of hell!'" (Gibson, 25).

The conviction of sin produces brokenness when godly sorrow is present. Brokenness over sin brings repentance, which in turn yields the gift of salvation. These are some of the fruits of revival and how God heals individuals, families and nations.

the covenant promise

The covenant promise for revival found in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is based upon brokenness. It reads, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." This revival covenant contains four conditions for the people of God to fulfill and three responses from the Lord in answer to their obedience.

If My People

The covenant begins with "If my people..." Notice that revival is contingent upon the people of God, not the world. The church is either the obstacle to revival or the means by which it occurs. Billy Graham stated, "I believe that we can have revival anytime we meet God's conditions. I believe that God is true to His Word and that He will rain righteousness upon us if we meet His conditions" (Graham, 76-77).

Revival is the responsibility of every pastor and church leader. A primary part of the pastoral call entails leading the congregation and the community that God has entrusted to his care, towards a spiritual awakening. A revived pastor will produce a revived church, and a spiritually dead preacher can only build a spiritually dead congregation.

Humility

The first condition for revival is humility. As stated earlier, brokenness and humility are inseparable. Without these two character traits none of the other conditions in 2 Chronicles 7:14 can be fulfilled. This is

why brokenness is so vitally important in the scheme of revival

James and Peter instructed Christians that, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jam. 4:6b; 1 Pe. 5:5). The Greek word for resists presents the idea that God actively opposes the proud. Pride literally puts us at odds with Him so we are found fighting against the Almighty. William Gurnall revealed the destructiveness of pride when he wrote: "Pride was the sin that turned Satan, a blessed angel, into a cursed devil. Satan knows better than anyone the damning power of pride. Is it any wonder, then, that he so often uses it to poison the saints? His design is made easier in that man's heart shows a natural fondness for it. Pride, like liquor, is intoxicating. A swallow or two usually leaves a man worthless to God" (Gallagher, 47). Through brokenness and humility we find freedom from pride's destructiveness.

Jehovah announced that He dwells with those who are lowly (humble) and contrite (broken). "For this is what the high and lofty One says-he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (Isa. 57:15). Pride is thoroughly repulsive to a holy God who walked this earth as the meek and lowly Jesus. Pride stops men from repenting, surrendering their lives to Jesus and impedes Christians from compassionately touching a world in rebellion against their Creator.

Revival is kept from the land because pride is so thoroughly evil that it grieves the Holy Spirit. The Australian Renewal Fellowship in Brisbane organized a conference on revival during the 1992 Pentecost weekend. They decided to invite some of the aboriginal leaders of the Elcho Islands who were experiencing a powerful revival. The Aborigines ministered with the authority of the Holy Spirit and in the meekness characteristic of them. After the conference was over, the Aborigines were asked why the Spirit was sweeping through their people, but passing by the white churches. They humbly replied, "You are too proud" (Waugh, 88-89). Our self-exaltation is so ugly it literally keeps God from rending the heavens.

Pride is actually the belief in a lie! The lies of pride are exhibited in countless ways. From those who think they are better than others, to those who do not consider themselves sinners. The painful truth is that Jesus will not come in mercy to the arrogant. Pride and self-will are the fruits of rebellion that damns the unsaved to hell and makes Christians ineffective in the purposes of God. Only the broken and humble will know the Lord's reviving power.

Prayer

Prayer is the next condition for revival. Without impassioned prayer there can be no spiritual awakening. True prayer flows out of brokenness. This is not the recitation of cold, formal prayers, but those that come from hearts ablaze for the Savior. "We cannot live in the flesh and pray in the Spirit" (Maxwell, 119). Pride has no place in true prayer because God resists the prayers of the proud. Tozer declared, "Unless we intend to reform we may as well not pray. Unless praying men have the insight and the faith to amend their whole way of life to conform to the New Testament pattern there can be no true revival" (Tozer, Keys, 23).

When we understand the depth of our neediness, and of those around us, we will passionately petition God to pour out His mercy. Christians will move heaven to shake earth when they comprehend the terrifying truth that the world is at war with their Creator and much of the church is estranged from God. Broken saints have come to understand their helplessness to change themselves or a perishing world. However, they are convinced that the Almighty super-abounds with the power and desire to transform lives and nations, so they live lives of prayer.

Seek His Face

The third condition of revival listed in our selected text is to seek the face of God. Prayer and seeking God's face are two distinctly different things. A Christian may pray and never know what it means to seek God's face. Seeking His face comes out of a burning desire to know the Lord in intimate fellowship. This is the result of an intense hungering after the Lord Himself, not after His blessings. As the psalmist wrote, "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Ps. 84:2).

Prayer is necessary for a Christian's survival and maturity, but seeking God's face is the prize. Saints who have been broken of their self-centeredness become people who passionately pursue this greatest of treasures. They are driven to know their Savior. This is far more than seeking greater Bible knowledge; it is a quest for God Himself, for His heart.

People who seek God's face love Jesus more than they love themselves, family or friends. With reckless abandon they seek to know Christ in an ever-increasing manner. They have tasted of His glory and refuse to return to the mediocrity of nominal Christianity or the vanity of worldly pursuits. Here is the place of holy desperation where one experiences an aching for God so deep and beautiful that they cry out as Moses did, "Show me your glory" (Ex. 33:18). This is the heart and passion that births revival.

Repentance has no place in heaven because wickedness is absent from its borders. Pride will never be found there since humility clothes its residents. There is no need of prayer as we understand it, for the redeemed speak face to face with Jesus. But to seek God's face is an eternal act, a privilege beyond comprehension that we can begin right now. This is what we were created for.

Turn

The final condition for revival as outlined in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is to turn from our wicked ways. To turn from our wicked ways is another term for repentance. A man will not turn from his sin until he has first humbled himself before God. And a man will not humble himself before God until he has been broken, until he has been brought to the end of his self-life.

The scribes and Pharisees attempted to turn from their wicked ways without first surrendering and humbling themselves before Jehovah. They concentrated upon being morally correct with God rather than being relationally right with Him. They failed on both accounts.

The most powerful motivating force to turn from our wicked ways is a passionate love for Jesus. Prayer and seeking God's face is the means by which we receive all the power and desire needed to walk holy before the Lord. This is God's established plan for victory.

God's Response

When the church has fulfilled her responsibility to this covenant promise God will freely carry out His part. First of all, He will hear our prayers when they are offered out of brokenness. He is moved when people wholeheartedly seek His face. Secondly, when we turn from our sin to draw near to God He will forgive our sins. Finally, the Lord promised that He would heal the land. God's plan for healing a land is through saving individuals. Revival accomplishes this in mass. Jesus heals the sin sick soul and sets the heart ablaze with a new love. Then He heals broken families which in turn transforms cities and then nations; all through the power of His presence.

God has not healed our land because we have broken covenant with Him. We have not changed the world, the world has changed us. All the while Jesus stands outside of the church, knocking at her door, calling her to wholeheartedly return to Him and fulfill her covenant vows (Rev. 3:20). The Lord will withhold His manifest presence until we meet the conditions of revival.

The prize to be won is Jesus Himself and the revelation of His glory among men. Nothing in all of creation compares to the boundless wealth of knowing how "wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:18). Jesus longs for us to know the gift of brokenness so that "times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). He "is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him" (Cymbala, 19).

Every issue that follows in this book begins and ends with surrendered wills that know the beauty of brokenness. Revival flows out of brokenness and surrendered lives. Repentance is an act of surrender, while salvation is the gift of God to those who have become living sacrifices. Holiness is the result of Christians yielding to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. And only surrendered saints will rescue a perishing world.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/glenn-meldrum/the-beauty-of-brokenness/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net