

The Lord Is Near Unto Those Who Are of a Broken Heart

by Octavius Winslow

God delights in and accepts the broken and contrite heart, healing it and making it His abode.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Brokenness", "God's Compassion"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes that the Lord is close to those with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, as expressed in Psalms 34:18. He explains that while the world and even some religious figures may despise a broken heart, God delights in it, seeing it as a precious sacrifice. Winslow highlights that God heals the brokenhearted and makes their hearts His dwelling place, showcasing His love and compassion. The sermon reassures the penitent that their contrition is valued by God, who responds with healing and presence. Ultimately, it is through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus that our brokenness becomes a fragrant offering to God.

Transcript

The Lord is near unto those who are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalm 34:18

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17

THERE are those by whom a broken heart is despised. Satan despises it--though he trembles at it. The world despises it--though it stands in awe of it. The Pharisee despises it--though he attempts its counterfeit. But there is one who despises it not. "you will not despise it," exclaims the penitent child, with his eye upon the loving heart of his God and Father. But why does God not only not despise it, but delights in and accepts it? Because He sees in it a holy and a fragrant sacrifice. It is a sacrifice, because it is offered to God, and not to man. It is an oblation laid upon His altar. Moses never presented such an oblation--Aaron never offered such a sacrifice in all the gifts which he offered, in all the victims which he slew. And while some have cast their rich and splendid gifts into the treasury, or have laid them ostentatiously upon the altar of Christian benevolence, God has stood by the spot to which some poor penitent has brought his broken heart for sin, the incense of which has gone up before Him as a most precious and fragrant sacrifice. Upon that oblation, upon that gift, His eye has been fixed, as if one object, and one only, had arrested and absorbed His gaze--it was a poor broken heart that lay bleeding and

quivering upon His altar. It is a sacrifice, too, offered upon the basis of the atoning sacrifice of His dear Son--the only sacrifice that satisfies Divine justice--and this makes it precious to God. So infinitely glorious is the atonement of Jesus, so divine, so complete, and so honoring to every claim of His moral government, that He accepts each sacrifice of prayer, of praise, of penitence, and of personal consecration, laid in faith by the side and upon that one infinite sacrifice for sin. He recognizes in it, too, the work of His own Spirit. When the Spirit of God moved upon the face of unformed nature, and a new world sprang into life, light, and beauty, He pronounced it very good. But what must be His estimate of that new creation which His Spirit has wrought in the soul, whose moral chaos He has reduced to life, light, and order!

But in what way does God evince His satisfaction with, and His delight in, the broken and contrite heart? We answer--first by the manifestation of His power in healing it. "He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds." "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted." Never did a physician more delight to display his skill, or exercise the benevolent feelings of his nature in the alleviation of suffering, than does Jesus in His work of binding up and healing the heart broken for sin, by speaking a sense of pardon, and applying to it the balsam of His own most precious blood. But our Lord not only heals the contrite heart, but, as if heaven had not sufficient attraction as His dwelling-place, He comes down to earth, and makes that heart His abode. "Thus says the high and lofty One, that inhabits Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." What, dear, humble penitent, could give you such a view of the interest which Christ takes in your case--the delight with which He contemplates your contrition, and the welcome and the blessing which He is prepared to bestow upon you, on your casting yourself down at His feet, as this fact, that He waits to make that sorrow-stricken heart of yours His chief and loved abode--reviving it, healing it, and enshrining Himself forever within its renewed and sanctified affections.

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