

# God Blesses a Life of Brokenness

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of brokenness and humility before God, using examples from the Bible such as Moses, Paul, and Peter. It highlights the significance of being broken before God can use us effectively, illustrating how God's power is manifested through weakness and brokenness. The message stresses the need to have no confidence in our own abilities but to rely completely on God, allowing Him to break us and nullify our pride so that He can be glorified through us.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:3, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 2 Corinthians 13:4, Ephesians 1:4, Matthew 14:19, Genesis 32:24, Acts 7:22, Luke 22:34, Hebrews 4:9

**Topics:** "Brokenness", "Humility before God"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want to share something with you concerning the breaking of bread, which is a symbol of fellowship. We've been talking about fellowship the whole day. In 1 Corinthians in chapter 11, for most people the Lord's table or breaking of bread or communion, whatever you call it, is a ritual.

Like many other rituals, people take part in it without understanding its meaning. Like baptism, I think many people who get baptized don't realize this is a testimony that my old man is dead and buried and I'm raised up with Christ as a new person. It doesn't matter if you don't understand it.

We still obey God in baptism without even understanding the first Christians on the day of Pentecost, the 3,000 who got baptized. They didn't have any understanding of Romans 6 because Romans 6 was not written. And Peter never gave any explanation to them about what baptism meant.

But it's always good to take part in something with understanding. It's better than blind obedience. So same way with the Lord's table, I think, anyway in my case, I took part in the Lord's table for many years just as an act of obedience.

The Lord commanded it so I take part in it. And I said this symbolized the broken body of Jesus on the cross and his shed blood. That was all it meant to me.

But as I studied the scriptures, I discovered there was more. And here's one of those verses, 1 Corinthians and chapter 10 and verse 16 and 17 is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ. Now, the Roman Catholic Church says it is the actual blood of Christ.

It's not the actual blood of Christ, I mean, because it doesn't taste like blood at all. We got to be honest. It tastes like what it is, grape juice.

But it's a fellowship in the blood of Christ, it says here. It's not the blood of Christ, it's a fellowship that I have inwardly with the blood of Christ that cleanses me from sin. And the bread which we break is a fellowship or sharing in the body of Christ.

And then it says in verse 17, since there is one bread, we who are many are one body. We all partake of that one bread. So did you know that when you break bread with other people in a church, you're also testifying not only about the fact that Christ died on the cross, you take part in that bread to say, I want to go that way.

That's the meaning of it. See, many people admire Jesus for dying on the cross, but they don't feel that they also have to walk the way of the cross. So if you only admire Jesus dying on the cross, then when the broken bread comes to you, you should say, wow, this is great and pass it on without taking part in it.

But if you take part in it, you're saying, Lord, I want to go the same way you went. That's the meaning of taking part in the broken body of Christ. In the same way, when we partake with others, it says from one bread, we're all partaking, proving that we are in fellowship with all these different people.

So when we break bread, if I can't have fellowship with somebody sitting over there, I can't really break bread with that person. I'm testifying, I am in fellowship with these people with whom I'm breaking bread. So that's what Jesus was emphasizing in the Last Supper also.

Of course, all of this, the disciples did not understand when they broke bread. They didn't even understand the meaning of baptism till it was explained in Romans chapter 6 by the Apostle Paul much later. So it's perfectly okay to obey, take part in baptism or the breaking bread without understanding.

But it means a lot more when we understand what it means. So I see that this broken bread describes fellowship. With others who also break bread, and I think part of the meaning in it is that I need to be broken if I am to really come into fellowship with others.

Brokenness in the Christian life is one of the most important things. If you understand it, we have understood one of the great secrets of the Christian life. It's part of the way of the cross.

When we speak of the way of the cross, it includes being broken. And there are many parables in nature. For example, the atom.

The atom is one of the smallest particles in nature, which you can't even see with the naked eye. But when it is broken, it releases so much power as to light up enough electricity for a whole city. So that's what's called nuclear power.

And I see there's a message in that parable in nature of brokenness. And you find that many times in scripture. One of the most important things for fellowship is that the people in the church must all be broken people.

Brokenness is what brings fellowship, even between a husband and a wife. See, for example, I don't know whether you've noticed this in John's gospel, chapter six, when there was a large crowd following Jesus and Jesus said, let's give them something to eat. This is described in other passages as well.

So I want to find the passage where it makes it more clear. Yeah, it's clearer. The same thing in Matthew 14.

It's clearer over here. Let me read it to you. Here were these 5,000 men and many women and children.

And Jesus said, let's give them something to eat. Matthew 14, verse 16. And they brought him the five loaves and two fish.

And I want you to notice how they were fed. It says in Matthew 14, verse 19. He made the people sit down.

There were three things he did. He took the loaves and first of all, he looked up to heaven, verse 19, and gave thanks. And then he blessed the food.

And still it remained five loaves. But when he broke it, it all of a sudden became 50,000 loaves. Because there were at least 10,000 people there.

5,000 says in verse 21, 5,000 men, plus women and children, probably 10,000 people. And that those five loaves became 50,000 when he broke it. He gave thanks and he blessed it.

Nothing happened. So God can bless you. And he may still not be able to feed the multitude through you.

But the moment he breaks you, hundreds and thousands can be blessed through you. And I believe that brokenness is the thing that's lacking in many, many Christians, which hinders the power of God from being released in their life. When the loaves were broken, the multitude was fed.

You know, the other place where a woman came with an alabaster bottle of ointment. And when that alabaster alabaster bottle of perfume was broken, then the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. That's in John chapter 12, verse 3. So it's when something is, if it was kept inside the bottle, nobody would have got the, it's there, perfume, but nobody gets that scent of the perfume till it is broken and poured out.

And all these things, there's a message that comes through that the fragrance of Christ is released through us only when we are broken. When the strength of self is broken, when our sense of self-importance is broken, when we are concerned about our own name, and we want people to recognize us, and all that is broken, and we are no longer interested in what people think about us, that self, the importance of self is broken. And I believe that there are many people whom God could use much more if He succeeds in breaking them.

You see this in the Old Testament. I'll give you a couple of examples. Let me show you one example in the book of Genesis.

In Genesis, we read about the two children of Isaac. One was Jacob, and the other was Esau. And the Lord had told them, when they were born, that Esau would serve Jacob.

And Jacob would be the one whom, it says that in Genesis 25, when Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, had twins. And the children struggled together within her in Genesis 25, verse 22. And the Lord said to her in verse 23 of Genesis 25, two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from your body.

One will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger. So Esau came out first, and he was the older. And Jacob came out later.

He was the younger, but the Lord had said, he's going to serve Esau. And it's very interesting to see how Jacob, in verse 26, it says, he came out grabbing his brother's heel. It's a most amazing birth where Esau comes out, and Jacob is almost like pulling him back and saying, I want to go first.

And he's holding his heel. And that's why he was called Jacob, which means grabber. And, you know, God wanted to bless Jacob, but he was a very shrewd, cunning person.

He first, I don't want to go into the whole story, but you know the story how he got the birthright from his brother Esau by just selling him a bowl of soup and saying, you sell me the birthright, I can give you the soup. And later on, how he cheated his father-in-law Laban of the sheep and all that. I don't have time to go into all that.

But he was a grabber. He grabbed the birthright, and he grabbed Laban's daughters. He wanted one, but he got two.

And then he grabbed his sheep and his cattle. God wanted to bless him, but he could not bless him as long as he was grabbing, seeking his own, seeking his own, seeking his own. And finally, we read in Genesis 32 that God broke him.

And it's a very interesting passage to see how God dealt with him. It's the same principle of brokenness that goes right through Scripture, and which we see in the breaking of bread. It speaks of fellowship with God and fellowship with one another.

It's very important to understand it. So, we read in Genesis 32, there was a time when we read verse 24, Jacob was left alone. Genesis 32 verse 24, and God wrestled with him in appearance.

God came appearing like a man and wrestled with Jacob. What he was trying to show through that was, I've been trying to break you, Jacob, all your life. You're always grabbing, grabbing, grabbing, seeking your own, seeking your own.

Grabbing means seeking your own. See, we're all born with a nature to seek our own. And God has to break us from that and free us from it before he can really fulfill his purpose through us.

And finally, when Jacob was left alone, and he wrestled with him and he could not break him, it says here that God touched the socket of his thigh, Genesis 32, 25, and the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated. And from that moment onwards, he was a broken man. He was physically broken because he had to limp for the rest of his life.

He was a young man, relatively speaking, and he began to limp from that day onwards. And then God said to him, okay, let me go now, verse Genesis 32, 26, from the dawn is breaking, and now you see Jacob has

changed. He who had spent all his life grabbing money, property, women, birthright, beginning with grabbing his brother's heel, now he starts grabbing God.

That's a great day in your life when you stop grabbing after material things and start grabbing God and saying like Jacob, God, verse 26, I will not let you go until you bless me. Where all the other things you've spent your life grabbing, you've emptied it now, and you laid hold of God and say, Lord, I want you now. You know when it happened? It happened when Jacob was broken.

That's why I say brokenness is so important. God could not succeed with Jacob until he had broken him, the strength. There's a strength in all of us that needs to be broken before God can accomplish his purpose through us.

And you see that in Jacob here. And he asks him, what is your name? And remember, Jacob means grabber. And he said, my name is grabber.

I've been grabbing all my life. That's the other thing we see here, that God wanted this man to be honest with him, to be honest and say, Lord, I've been grabbing things for myself all my life. It's a great day when we can see ourselves as God sees us, as one who's seeking our own, seeking our own.

And the little things we do and say we're seeking our own, we come to the church and we can still be seeking our own in different things. And we're honest about it. Lord, that's my name.

I'm one who seeks my own. And God says, okay. He breaks him.

And when he sees his honesty, he says, I'm going to change your name. You're going to be a prince now. You have striven with God and with men, verse 28, and you have prevailed.

Now, when did Jacob prevail? Not when he was strong, but when he was broken. It's when we are broken that we succeed in our dealings with God. Until then, we don't get anywhere.

The moment Jacob was broken and humbled and weak, that's the time God said, now your name is Israel. Now you're a prince. Now you've got power with God and men.

See, this is not something worldly people can understand. God's power is manifested maximum in those who are broken in their life. Broken by God, the strength of self when it is broken.

Paul says there's something like this in 2 Corinthians in chapter 12. 2 Corinthians 12. Paul was a man who had amazing revelations and amazing miracles done through him.

And there was a great danger of him becoming proud, puffed up. And so God broke him by giving him a sickness from which he could not be healed. There are many different ways God breaks the strength of self in us.

In Jacob's case, it was by dislocating his hip and making him walk with a staff for the rest of his life. You know, those days people lived to long years. They lived up to 120, 130 and also.

Relatively speaking, Jacob was a young man when his thigh was broken. And when he starts walking with a stick, it's like a young 30-year-old man walking with a stick. It's pretty humiliating for a young 30-year-old to walk with a stick, a cane like an old man.

And that's what God did with Jacob. He broke him as a young man and he was humiliated and broken. And the same with Paul.

Paul was in danger of getting puffed up. And he says in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 7, God had to break this mighty apostle Paul. And the way he broke him was by giving him a sickness.

He said, to keep me from exalting myself that was given me a thorn in the flesh. Now, I'm sure you've probably read this many times and heard about it as well. But it's very interesting to see here that that which is a messenger of Satan, something that Satan does, did or sent into Paul's life was used by God to humble him.

He calls it a messenger of Satan. And God could use even that in verse 7 to keep Paul from exalting himself. And when Paul didn't understand the reason for it, he said, Lord, heal me of this, heal me, heal me, heal me.

And he never got healing and he gave up. He said, Lord, okay, I'll submit to you. And the Lord said, my grace is enough for you because my power, verse 9, is perfected in weakness.

This is a principle in the Christian life that God's power can be released through us only if we recognize our weakness. All the time, God doesn't make us feel powerful, he makes us feel weak. Then he releases his power through us.

So that is God's way and that's how he released his power through Paul. And Paul recognized that and therefore he said, verse 9, I'm going to boast about my weaknesses. I'm not going to boast about what I accomplished, I boast about my weaknesses.

And if you find some situation in your life where God is making you weak and breaking you and making you small in the eyes of others, just rejoice because that may be the very means by which he's trying to release his power through you because his power, the living Bible paraphrases that like this, my power shows up best in weak people. We're all weak really, but very few realize their weakness. Many Christians are so full of themselves and so aware of how much they know and how capable they are that God can do very little through them.

God can do most through those who recognize their weakness, who are broken. That is what is symbolized in the breaking of bread. As Jesus was broken, I want to be broken all my life.

As Jacob was broken, as Paul was broken. All the great servants of God was like that. You know the story of Moses.

When he was a mighty prince of Egypt at the age of 40, the Bible says he was an eloquent speaker and very strong man. You read that he once hit an Egyptian with one blow, he killed him. He must have been really strong to give one blow to an Egyptian and kill him.

But incapable of serving God because why? He was too strong. He was too full of himself. There are many people like that when they are young.

They're so full of themselves that God cannot use them until he succeeds in breaking them. So the way God broke Moses was by taking him into the wilderness for 40 years and humbling him and making him dependent on his father-in-law. For 40 years he broke Moses so thoroughly that Moses finally says, Lord,

I'm not the one.

When God says, now I've chosen you, I want you to go and lead my people out of Egypt. And Moses says, no, not me. Please send somebody else.

And God says, no, you're the one. He says, no, not me. How did this man who at the age of 40 felt definitely, I'm going to be the leader of God's people.

Suddenly come to the place, not suddenly, finally come to the place where he said, I'm not capable. If you turn to Acts of the Apostles in chapter 7, you see what I'm saying that when Moses was 40 years old and he killed one Egyptian, Acts chapter 7 verse 24, Stephen is describing the history of Israel and he says, Moses was educated, verse 22, in all the learning of the Egyptians. He was a man of power, Acts 7.22, in words and in deeds, meaning he was a very eloquent speaker and he was a very strong man.

And one day when he was 40 years old, verse 23, he visited his brethren and verse 24, he saw one of them treated unjustly. He took vengeance by striking down the Egyptian and by striking down the Egyptian, verse 25, he thought that his brothers would understand that God had made him their deliverer. Do you see, fellas? I am the one whom God has chosen to deliver you from Egypt.

But they didn't understand and he was not ready. And he had to run away. God arranged circumstances where he had to run away from Egypt for 40 years and at the age of 80, God calls him and he tells him in Exodus chapter 4, he says, I want to send you to deliver my people.

And look what Moses says to the Lord in Exodus 4, verse 10, Lord, I have never been eloquent. How is that? At the age of 40, he was the most eloquent person of all. He read that in Acts 7. He's completely forgotten it.

He said, Lord, I can't speak. I'm slow of speech. And the Lord says, go, verse 12, I'll be with your mouth.

And he says, please, Lord, don't send me. I'm not the one. It's really amazing.

I've seen through the years that it's the one who recognizes that I'm completely unfit to serve God. He's the one whom God uses. If any of you think you're very qualified to serve God, I'll tell you, you've got to probably wait a few years before God will ever use you effectively.

Because you're too full of yourself. You're so confident and you know the Bible so much. You've got an upright life.

You know the Lord. You're faithful. You're faithful.

You've surrendered everything. I'll tell you, you are useless to God. One day, hopefully not after 40 years, sooner than that, sometime when God succeeds in breaking you, then you'll be ready.

And this is the one of the main reasons why so many people who know the Bible so much, who are yielded, surrendered, everything yielded to God and very faithful, their life is upright. They are useless to God because one thing is missing. They're not broken.

It's like the loaves, you know, fully surrendered, blessed, anointed, but still five loaves. But the moment it's broken, it becomes 50,000. It's the same principle that's taught in symbol and actuality in these lives.

So then Moses is used by God to, and I often see how this, the difference, the contrast between what he was at 40 and when he was at 80. That when he was 40, he struck an Egyptian and killed him and he thought the Israelites would recognize, I'm going to deliver you, man. But how long would he have taken to deliver the Israelites if he went killing the Egyptians one by one by striking them all down? But when he was 80 years old and weak and helpless, he didn't have to do anything like that.

After they crossed the Red Sea, God told Moses, just lift up your rod. And the entire Egyptian army was buried in a moment. That's the result of brokenness.

When he was unbroken, he could kill one man with a blow. When he was broken, he didn't have to do anything. The power of God was released from the entire Egyptian army was knocked out.

And just by raising his hand, there's a lesson in this for all of us. I'm not talking about human things. I'm talking about our service for God and our overcoming evil, overcoming sin, fighting the devil, binding the powers of darkness.

God does it through weak people. Whether it is Jacob or Moses, they have to be broken first. Why do you think God allowed Peter to deny him? Same reason.

Peter was too strong. He was unfit to be the leader of the apostles. He was too full of himself.

He was sure he was so dedicated, consecrated. He said to the Lord, even if everybody denies you, I'll not deny you. Just like Peter, Moses felt he was going to be the leader.

And you see the Lord speaks to him in Luke chapter 22. Luke's Gospel chapter 22. The Lord says to him, Peter, you're going to deny me three times tonight before the cock crows.

Luke chapter 22 verse 34. I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today, that's in the morning, until you've denied me three times. Now, if you know that somebody is going to sin and denying the Lord is a pretty serious sin, won't you pray for him? Lord, please help him that he doesn't deny the Lord.

And Jesus should have prayed for Peter. You would think that. Father, please help him when he's tempted to deny me, that he won't deny me.

You would think that Jesus should pray like that, but he did not. He did not pray for him at all. He said, you're going to deny me.

And I'm not going to pray for you that you won't deny me. I'm not going to pray that you should not sin. You will sin.

And I will not pray that you should not. Do you believe the Lord can pray like that for you? Yeah. He will not stop you.

He'll say, I'll allow you to fall into sin because you're such a strong person. But I'll tell you something else. He said, I'll pray for you.

Verse 32, Luke 22. I will pray this for you, that after you have fallen into sin, that your faith will not fail. That when you have fallen and denied me three times and hit rock bottom, you will still believe that I love you and my father loves you.

And then you'll be broken. And when you turn again, verse 32, you can go and strengthen your brothers. He could not be a strength to his brothers until God had taken away that strength in him, which felt even if all people deny you, I will not deny you.

I've met young people like this who are so aware that they are so dedicated. They are so consecrated. They're so yielded.

They're so filled with the spirit and they're going to serve God. And I can see there, this guy's going to be useless. Until God breaks him one day, he will be useless.

And if he continues in this arrogance, he'll be useless all his life. But if God can succeed in breaking him one day, God will be able to accomplish great things through him. Please remember this principle, dear brothers, consecration and total surrender is not enough.

It's good to be consecrated, totally surrendered, everything given to the Lord. There's one more thing needed. In other words, the five loaves, the boy gave the five loaves, total surrender.

That's the first step. Definitely you need total surrender. Don't give three loaves, give all five.

He gave all five. And then the blessing of the Lord, anointing. Okay, the Lord prayed for the five loaves.

It's still five loaves. Totally surrendered, still five loaves. Blessing of the Lord, the anointing, still five loaves.

But when it was broken, then it became 50,000. It's the same principle that we need to understand here, that Peter needed to be broken because he's the guy who said, even if everybody denies you, I will not deny you. You're too strong, Peter.

You're unfit to serve me. You're too full of yourself. You need to be broken.

And so he denies the Lord three times. And you know, denying the Lord is a very serious sin. I don't know whether you realize that it's worse than murder and adultery, because the Lord did not say, if you commit murder, I'll deny you before my father.

No, you can be forgiven. If you commit adultery, I'll deny you before my father. He didn't say that.

You can be forgiven. But he said, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father. That's what he said in Matthew chapter 10.

So which is more serious, murder, adultery, or denying the Lord? Peter committed the worst possible sin. He denied the Lord three times. And that's why he was convinced that he could never be an apostle again.

He was absolutely convinced that he could never be an apostle. And he read finally later on in John chapter 21. He says, folks, I'm going back to my fishing.

I finished with being an apostle. I tried to be an apostle, but I failed miserably. And he tells his fellow disciples in John 21.

You know that story where he called all of them and said to them, John 21 and verse 3, I'm going fishing. What he meant was, I'm going back permanently to fishing. He'd given it all up when the Lord called him.

He was not going out for a small outing. He was going back to his old profession. Why was he going back to his old profession when the Lord called him to be an apostle? Because he said, I'm a failure as an apostle.

I tried and I did the worst possible thing anybody could do. I denied the Lord three times. See, there's something we have to learn there.

There are many ways in which God tries to break us through circumstances. And in Jacob's case, through giving him a dislocated hip. In Paul's case, by sickness.

In Moses' case, by making him stay with his father-in-law for 40 years. I mean, one year with your father-in-law would be more than enough. But 40 years, imagine what it did to him.

There are different ways God does it. But if all those methods fail, that God tries to break you, then the last method God will try is to make you fall into sin. God allowing you to fall into sin? Yes.

And he will not pray that you don't sin. He'll allow you to fall three times because he tried every other way to break you. And he did not succeed.

He was still proud and haughty. And then Lord says, okay, there's only one way now. Allow you to fall.

And publicly, everybody knows you, the great believer, fell into some terrible sin. And then you're really broken. You can't lift up your head anymore.

You say, I can't serve the Lord. No, I'll go back to do something else. And that's when the Lord comes back to him and recommissions him.

And he says, Peter, I haven't given up on you. You're still going to be my apostle. Not only my apostle, you're going to be the leader of the apostles.

After he was broken, after he had given up all hope of ever being what he wanted to be. There's a message that comes through all these examples. I quoted all these examples to show you how God's dealings with these great men of his, Moses, Peter, and all the others.

Joseph imprisoned for 10 years in a jail. David chased around cave after cave by Saul. It's all to break these men before he gives them a ministry.

Now I've discovered through the years that if God does not succeed in breaking a man and he gives him authority, he'll become a tyrant. He'll become a dictator. I've seen preachers and pastors who are like dictators.

They're boss around everybody else and it's pathetic. They're not servants of God. But if God can succeed in breaking a person, then that man will never be a dictator in his life.

He will be able to exercise authority in the way God wants him to exercise it. And I believe God wants to use every one of us every single one of you. I want you to know that God has a plan for your life which was determined before you were born in your mother's womb.

You've got to believe this. It's true because the Bible says that. You know the verse in Ephesians 1 verse 4 which says, he chose you before the foundation of the world.

Before the worlds were created, he knew that one day you would accept Christ as God looked into the future and he saw that one day you would accept Christ. And so when you were conceived in your mother's womb, God could see and say, this is the person who I know he's going to wander around and be a worldly unconverted person for so many years. But I know that one day he will accept me and I'm going to keep my eye on him.

He's got a purpose for you, but that purpose will not be accomplished if God does not succeed in breaking you and humbling you and making you realize that you are a zero. Making you realize that without him, you can do nothing of eternal value. That is brokenness.

As long as we see, even if everybody denies you, I will not deny you God. I believe that you're going to use me more than everybody else. I've seen young people like this who feel that they're so dedicated and consecrated.

God will use them more than everybody else who compare themselves with other people in that church and think that I'm the one whom God is going to use and I'm the one who's fit to be an elder here or something like that. It's scary because I know that nothing will come of their life. They live up to the age of 80 and waste their life.

But if God can succeed in breaking them early in life when they are young, what tremendous usefulness can come through their life. And that's why I say to those of you who are young, let God break you. And then the Lord commissions him to serve him.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians in chapter 13 and you see a very interesting statement there. Paul says, 2 Corinthians in chapter 13, Paul is saying, you want to seek a proof of Christ speaking in me. Today people say, well here are the miracles and here are the people I raised from the dead.

That is the proof that Christ is speaking through me. But look what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13 verse 3, you are seeking for proof of Christ speaking in me. Well, you see it in my weakness.

Verse 4, Jesus was crucified because of weakness, but he lives by the fire of God. We also are weak in him. We are weak.

We are broken. That's the proof of Christ speaking through me. Not the miracles I did, not the great sermons I preach.

We will live with him by the power of God. See, there we see the reason why God breaks us. Until we are broken, what we think is the power of God is just our own human soul power, our determination, which you can use in business or in some other professional field.

You bring it to the Lord's work. You succeed in some business because you got determination, you got ability. You bring that power into God's work and you think you can do it the same way in God's word.

And God says, no. In my work, you need to become weak. You need to become broken.

And Paul understood that. He didn't understand that in the beginning, but he understood that when he got a thorn in the flesh. And he says, we live by the power of God, we are weak in him.

And I want to say to you through the years I've discovered, I mean, I've now come because I've had many years of experience. When I meet a brother and speak to him, even for a short while, I can make out

whether he's a broken person or not. And it's very easy to fellowship with a broken person.

Very, very easy. I know it'll go well with him. I know we can have wonderful fellowship because we are both broken.

But when I meet a person who's very capable and gifted and who's pretty sure that he's consecrated and yielded and spirit filled and everything else, I'm scared. I know nothing will come of his life. And you just drift along imagining that he's a great man of God, a great woman of God and waste his life.

So, dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you from many years of serving the Lord and having observed many types of believers in many parts of the world, I wish with all my heart that you will learn brokenness very early in life. That which is symbolized in the breaking of bread, which you take part of when you break a bread and take part in it. You're saying, Lord, I want to be broken too in my life.

The strength of self, the strong self-confidence must be broken. The Old Testament example of this is circumcision. Everything in the Old Testament had a meaning.

You know, the Passover lamb was a picture of Jesus being crucified. The children of Israel going through the Red Sea is a picture of water baptism, going into the water and coming out. And the pillar of cloud coming from heaven upon the Israelites is a picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that came from above.

Everything in the Old Testament was a picture. The brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness is a picture of Christ crucified. Jesus himself said that.

The Sabbath that, you know, the Lord had created Adam on the sixth day and the seventh day he rested, not because God was tired, but teaching man that before you go out to serve me on the eighth day, the eighth day he had to go out into the garden to serve. Adam had to serve. But the Lord told him, before you go out to the garden to serve me, learn to rest in me.

Come to a life of rest. That's the meaning of the Sabbath. And that's explained in Hebrews chapter four, that you have to come to a life of rest in you before you serve.

And always an inner rest. I've told people this, for example, that whenever you're agitated in your spirit due to anything, don't speak because you'll mess up things. Whenever you're agitated, I mean, I followed that rule myself.

I remember once years ago in our local church, it was a Wednesday meeting and some brother who was supposed to do something and get something ready in the church, it was not done. And I was really agitated in my spirit because his brother hadn't done this and something that needed to be done in the church. And I was supposed to speak in the meeting that evening.

And we were kneeling down in prayer. We usually pray for 10 minutes or so before the meeting. I was still agitated in my spirit.

And I said, I'm not going to speak today. I'm not going to speak until I come to rest because I know I'll mess up things. So I said, OK.

I was leading the meeting so I could extend the prayer meeting to any length as I liked. So instead of 10 minutes, it went on and on and on and on. People wondering why we're having a long prayer meeting.

The reason was brother Zak has not come to rest yet because he's agitated about somebody else not having done his job. And I think he went on for about half an hour or more. Finally I came to rest.

I said, OK, Lord, I finished. It doesn't bother me now anymore. I'm at rest.

Then I got up and spoke. But I followed that principle always that when I'm, I would advise you, husbands and wives, you know, something can happen at home and you're agitated in your spirit. Bless your home by keeping your mouth shut.

Yes, because you open your mouth, you'll say something stupid that you'll regret. When you're agitated in your spirit, keep your mouth shut. I follow that rule for many years now.

Because I know it can happen, you know, something can happen that somebody else does or does not do and agitates you. We must come to rest. That's the meaning of the Sabbath.

OK, circumcision, that also must mean something. You know what circumcision means? In fact, it was such an important law in Israel that the Lord said, if you're not circumcised, you're not a part of Israel. You cannot be considered a part of Israel if you're not circumcised.

And the meaning is explained to us. All these wonderful things in the New Testament is explained. Philippians chapter 3. What is the meaning of circumcision? Here it is.

Circumcision physically is a cutting off of the flesh. That's what it is. That's the physical act.

In Philippians 3.3, it says, it symbolizes that we are the true circumcision. Verse 3, the last part of verse 3, we have no confidence in the flesh. That's the meaning.

That cutting off of the flesh in the Old Testament was a symbol of, I have no confidence in my flesh, in myself. I'm broken. I can't do anything.

Like Moses says, Lord, not me. I'm not fit to serve you. Like Paul with a stone in the flesh, something that makes me small, something that reduces me to zero.

God is in the business of reducing us down, down, down, down, down until we come to zero. Then he begins to use us. And if you haven't come there, if you want God to use you, better hurry and get there.

So this is how the Lord was trying to teach Israel. They didn't understand it then. But the meaning is this.

God has to cut away from us all our confidence in our own ability. I'll show you one more verse and then we'll close. 1 Corinthians 1. I mean, this is true even in our day.

1 Corinthians 1.26. When you look around at the people in your local church, in your local church, it is really an expression of the body of Christ. You see what is written here. There are not many wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.

You don't have billionaires in your church. You don't have the world's top scientists in your church. No, the world's richest men are not Christians.

God has chosen the foolish things, verse 27, to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things to shame that which is strong. The base things, the despised things, God has chosen the things that are nothing, the things that are zero, so that he might nullify the things that are.

Why does God do it like this? So that no one can boast that God used me. See, when Moses buried the Egyptian army under the sea, he couldn't boast like the way he boasted when he killed one Egyptian with one blow, because this was not him. When he killed the Egyptian with one blow, it was him.

This is my strength. But when he buried the Egyptian army, he said that was God. Whenever you do something for the Lord and you feel at the end of it, boy, that was a great word that I shared today in the meeting.

I could see that many people were blessed through it. Well, brother, I hope God will break you one day, that you'll come down to a zero and say, Lord, there's nothing I can, because God is determined that no man can boast before him. It's very easy for you to look down on some other people in your church who are not so gifted, not so capable, not so smart as you are.

You're like Moses, you know, with one blow you can knock somebody down. You've got a long way to go. Maybe you've got to be put with your father-in-law for a few years before God accomplishes his purpose.

You know, that was something. God does different different ways in different people. But if you're really determined to have God's best, I really believe he will deal with you strongly and bring you to the place where he really accomplishes his purpose through you, but you'll have to be broken.

No man may boast in his presence. It's a very important principle. That's why God uses the weak, the foolish, those who are nothing.

That's why you see in Christendom, most of Christendom, I mean, I've traveled in many, many places. The really godly people are not millionaires and billionaires and the cleverest people. No, the people whom God uses the most are sometimes very weak, or there are people who were capable, but God has crushed them and broken them.

Paul, for example, I'm not saying you have to be like Peter, an uneducated fisherman. No, you can be a very qualified. I think a person like Paul, if Paul was living today, he would have excelled in any profession.

If he had gone into business, he'd have been a top businessman. If he had gone into the computer science field, he'd have been a brilliant computer scientist, or an inventor or something like that. He had such a brilliant mind.

I think he had one of the most brilliant minds that anybody had. I see that when I read his letters. But he could not be used by God until he was broken, so that he could not glory or boast.

So, as I said earlier, you're not disqualified because you're clever. You're disqualified because you're not broken. I'm not saying God will use stupid people.

The stupid people also God cannot use if they're not broken, because some stupid people can be proud too. They can hear a message like this and say, oh, great, I'm stupid, so God can use me. No, God can't use you because you're stupid.

God can use you if you're broken. It doesn't matter whether you're stupid or proud. That's clever.

That's the point. So, it's a very important principle. And how does this relate to fellowship? Because I'll tell you, because I've seen through the years, it's very easy for broken people to fellowship together.

It's like the difference between hard potatoes and mashed potatoes. You put a whole lot of potatoes together and there's no fellowship between them, but you mash them all and there's no potatoes trying to show I'm this potato number so and so. You disappear in that mashed potato plate.

You don't know which is potato number one and which potato number 10. That's all when you remain as a single potato. You put numbers on it.

I'm number 10 and I'm bigger than the others. But what happens when you're mashed? Nothing. That's a simple principle.

That's how God works with us, so that no one will glory in his presence. Now, apply this in your own life before we close. See if in past years in your church, wherever you are, where you had a feeling that God can use you more than the others because you are gifted or some other thing you're proud of.

No. And I'll tell you something. You can even be proud of your brokenness.

That's another type of pride, you know, like pride in your humility. It's very deceptive. When you're broken, you're not thinking of yourself.

You're thinking, God, I want you to be glorified here. In all your work for God, at the end of it all, you say, God, if you are glorified, that's all that matters. I'm not thinking of what people are thinking about me or any such thing.

Ask God to bring you to that place where your only desire is, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in this church as it is done in heaven.

And let them forget about me. Make that your aim, my brothers and sisters. You'll be the most valuable brother in God's church and you'll be a blessing and it'll be very easy to fellowship and you will be a person who will help make God's family beautiful.

Because in God's eyes, the real beauty is in brokenness. Okay, let's pray. Heavenly Father, please help us to understand your ways, which are so different from our ways.

Your thoughts that are so different from ours. Though we may have heard many of these things before, yet we need to be gripped by them. Help us to be gripped, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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