

Power Through Being Broken

by Zac Poonen

The mark of spiritual power is choosing to be weak and dying to ourselves, as Jesus did on the cross.

Duration: 58:02

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:27

Topics: "Brokenness And Humility", "Spiritual Victory"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of brokenness and humility in the Christian walk, contrasting the unbroken, carnal Corinthians with the brokenness of Paul and other biblical figures like Peter and David. It highlights the need to disappear so Christ can be exalted, the willingness to endure correction and persecution, and the ability to bless those who revile us. The message stresses the power of God manifesting through weakness and brokenness, leading to true victory over sin and a life surrendered to God's will.

Transcript

I want to turn to 1 Corinthians and chapter 1. If you have read Paul's letter to the Corinthians, you would have seen that that was perhaps the most carnal, worldly, sinful, and immature church, at least in Paul's time. By the time you come to the end of Revelation, you may discover a few more like Laodicea and Sardis that are worse. But among the churches that Paul established, here was a church that was very, very carnal.

And if you read in Acts, you read that the Apostle Paul spent one and a half years there. Most places the Apostle went, Paul, he never stayed more than a few weeks. In Ephesus, he stayed for three years, and they also didn't really benefit from it, because ultimately you read in Revelation 2, Ephesus also became a pretty backslidden church.

But Corinth was the second, as far as we know. He spent one and a half years there. And Paul was the type of person who would preach every day.

So imagine if you lived in a church where you heard about 500 sermons from the Apostle Paul. You'd think you'd become really spiritual, but they were not. And it's amazing how Paul describes them.

He describes them in chapter 3 as men, verse 1, men of flesh, babies, who can only drink milk. Imagine listening to the Apostle Paul for one and a half years and still be only capable of drinking milk. Milk means

the message of forgiveness of sins.

How to go to heaven to have your sins forgiven. And people who live in an endless cycle of sinning, having your sins forgiven, sinning and having your sins forgiven, sinning and having your sins forgiven, are babies. It's like babies who dirty their diapers and the diapers are changed, and then dirty their diapers and the diapers are changed, and then dirty the diapers and the diapers are changed, and they never grow up.

They're still babies. You know that if you are sinning and asking God to forgive you, and sinning and asking God to forgive you, and sinning and asking God to forgive you, you're really like a baby in diapers. I mean, the mother cleans up the baby, but she also hopes the baby will grow up.

And so does God. And babies can only drink milk. It says you are fleshly, chapter 3, verse 3. There's jealousy, there's strife, many other things.

As we read that letter, we find there was serious sin in their midst. Immorality, and such immorality that even among the heathen it wouldn't be found very often. And the elders were such incapable people that they couldn't do anything about it, or they didn't do anything about it.

Maybe the guy who was living in sin was a rich man, and people are usually afraid to correct a rich man or an influential person. And we also read that they were taking one another to court. But what I want you to notice is, along with all this, they had every single gift of the Holy Spirit.

They could speak in tongues, they could prophesy, they had healings in their midst, they had miracles in their midst, they had word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, casting out demons, all of this going on. At the same time, they were fleshly, jealous, sinful, carnal, babies, always dirtying their diapers. Now if that was possible in the first century, it's possible today.

It's possible that some of the people who are healing the sick and doing miracles are people who dirty their diapers in private, and have to be changed every day. That means they're babies. That means they live in sin.

Now many Christians do not believe that is possible because they haven't read 1 Corinthians carefully. That's why. Or they don't believe it.

You believe that in the first century that people could do all these miracles and still not have an overcoming life and become spiritual? And not only that, they had a tremendous amount of Bible knowledge. That's the other mistake a lot of people make. That people who have a tremendous amount of Bible knowledge, who can answer any question, and who can speak powerfully, they say they must be spiritual.

I'll show you where it says that. Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and see the things that Paul says they had. Now remember, Paul is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

He knew them. He had been there with them one and a half years, and he knew what all they had. He says in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 5, in everything you were enriched in Christ, in speech, that means they had the ability to speak well.

Now the number of Christians who can preach well is very, very small. But these Corinthians were like that. There are some wonderful preachers in their midst.

And they had fantastic Bible knowledge. The number of Christians who have good Bible knowledge is also very small. But these Corinthian Christians had a lot of people with Bible knowledge.

And it says in verse 7, you're not lacking in any gift. I don't know of any church that I have met in my life about whom it can be said, you have every single gift of the Holy Spirit. We don't have it ourselves.

You have every single gift of the Holy Spirit? Boy, if you went into such a church, you'd think that is a really spiritual church, and you'd be thoroughly wrong. That's what I want to say. You know, if some of today's Christians walked into the church in Corinth, they would join it.

They'd say, this is where God is moving. God wasn't moving there at all. The devil was moving there.

They didn't know it. Even because most Christians would be so impressed by going to a church, I mean, there were 2,000 people there, and there were healings, and miracles, and casting out demons, and fellows speaking in tongues, and somebody interpreting. And I said, boy, this is wonderful.

This is the place we want to be. And then at the end of it all, you have this powerful message and Bible study, and I said, this is the place we want to be. And what's the result? These 2,000 people were carnal, having to change their diapers every day, dirty, getting dirty every day, no overcoming sin, going to court against one another, fighting, jealousy, strife, all going on at the same time.

Exactly like a lot of churches today. And I'm sure that even in that day, believers had as little discernment about these things as believers today. I'm sure a lot of believers there thought they were all spiritual.

The Corinthians certainly thought that. But there were few men like Paul who could see through the whole thing. He said, I'm not fooled by all your preaching and all your gifts.

You'd say, well, Paul, isn't that a manifestation of power? No. No, it isn't. See later on what he says in 1 Corinthians chapter 4. He says in verse 20, 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 20, the kingdom of God does not consist in words.

I mean, you can preach powerfully and you can preach in a very eloquent manner. You can have a lot of knowledge, but the kingdom of God, that is a picture of the true church. See, Jesus said the kingdom of God would come in power on the day of Pentecost.

The kingdom of God, he says, does not consist in words. It's not in doctrine. It's not in how well you can speak.

It's not in how much knowledge you have. It is in power. And when many people read that, they say, hey, the Corinthians had power.

You know what all was going on there? They were doing miracles. They were healing the sick. They had words of knowledge and words of wisdom and tongues and interpretation, casting out demons.

Isn't that power? And Paul would have said, no. But 90% of Christians today would say yes. That's why I say most of today's Christians are without discernment.

They're without discernment because of one reason, which I've kept on stressing for a long time. They don't read the Bible carefully. They don't read the Bible slowly, carefully, and meditate on it.

That's why they are without discernment. And like I've often said, if you don't read the Bible, which you have with you, you deserve to be deceived. It's unfortunate, but I think you deserve to be deceived thoroughly.

Because if God says, if I gave you my word, and you neglected it, and you spent your time reading the newspaper and other books and watching the Internet and watching television, then God says you deserve to be deceived. You had the one book in your home that would have given you light about what is spirituality and what is not. And you didn't carefully study it.

What to do? So that's the situation. That's why we really need to look at these passages of Scripture carefully to see what is the mark of real power. I mean, if healing and miracles and all the gifts which the Corinthians had was not power, Paul says it isn't.

He says, I don't see that power in your midst. He says in verse 19 of 1 Corinthians 4, I will come to you soon. And if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power.

And none of these things would impress Paul. None of the gifts of the Holy Spirit would impress Paul. And then he says, this is so serious, because you're my children.

What do you desire? Verse 21, shall I come to you with a rod or with a love and a spirit of gentleness? He corrects them pretty strongly. I mean, if you heard some preacher say to you today, shall I come to you with a rod? You'd think he's unchristlike or not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Wouldn't you think so? If somebody came to you and said, I mean, someone who, not some stranger, but someone who's same wise, somebody you respected as an elder came to you and said, shall I come to you with a rod, brother? What do you want? You want me to come to you with a rod? Wow, this guy is so unchristlike.

He's not inspired by the Holy Spirit. You know what you're saying? You're saying 1 Corinthians 4, verse 21 is not inspired by the Holy Spirit. See, that's another example of how little discernment we have as to what is Holy Spirit and what is human gentleness.

And I believe this is the reason for the shallowness of so much of Christianity empty today. We are influenced by the teachings of psychology that tell us to be positive and gentle and never say anything negative. Do you know that if I removed everything negative from the scriptures, you'd probably have a Bible this big.

The Bible doesn't follow psychology. The Bible teaches us what is good for you. It's like telling a doctor, don't use a knife on anybody here in this hospital.

Imagine a hospital where they never use a knife on anyone. Hundreds will die in that hospital who could be saved by surgery. And unfortunately, we have a Christendom today where preachers are afraid to use the knife.

Either because they want money or they don't want to offend anybody or they want to increase the size of their congregation or they want a reputation themselves. Paul was free from all that. He was concerned that God's people should be prepared to be the bride of Jesus Christ.

And he didn't care less what they thought about it. He was a prophet. He was not a manager or an emcee or someone who was just running the show there.

He was a prophet of God. So when Paul tries to deal with the serious problem of these Corinthian Christians, how does he deal with them? I want to show you in 2 Corinthians chapter 13. You see, the second letter to the Corinthians was written by Paul some years perhaps after the first one.

Maybe one or two years at least, I think. And they had got the first letter and a lot of them were very offended. Because, you know, you read 1 Corinthians and you see that Paul writes pretty strongly there, like I just showed you.

And many of those Corinthian Christians were offended. And you see, they didn't even respect Paul after that. And when you read 2 Corinthians, maybe I should show you some of those passages before we go to chapter 13.

Then you'll understand. Chapter 6, you know, this is, you got to see this as the result of the strong rebuke that Paul gave in the first letter. He says here in verse 2 Corinthians 6 and verse 11.

He says, O Corinthians, my mouth has spoken freely to you. That is pretty clear in that first letter. But that's because my heart has opened wide to you, fellas.

I love you folks. But you are restrained. Now he says, I speak to you as to children, verse 13.

Open your heart wide to me as well. You know, guys, it becomes so narrow just because you've got some strong correction in the first letter. And then you see in chapter 10, you see what the reaction of the Corinthians to that first letter of Paul.

He says here in 1 Corinthians in chapter 10, he speaks about these Corinthians who look at things outwardly. Verse 9, I don't wish to seem as I would terrify you by my letters. See, they, who is Paul? Does he think he can terrify me by his letters? He heard that.

That these guys say Paul can't terrify us by his letters? He says, I don't want to do that. But they say, his letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, his speech contemptible. He said, this guy writes such strong letters, but look at him.

He's so ugly to look at. You know, Paul wasn't a very handsome person to look at. He was pretty short.

He was bald. He had a hooked nose. And tradition says he was only 4 feet 11 inches high.

He was shorter than any grown man here. This is the man whom God used as the greatest apostle of his time to show the world that it is not a question of good looks or height or personality. And not only that, his speech, there was something, his speech was not all that impressive.

But he was an apostle. They say his letters are so strong, his words are so strong, but he's not impressive. So this was how they looked at Paul.

And in fact, Paul had to say a number of things to prove that he was an apostle. Because they wouldn't even consider him that, even though he planted that church. And to these people, he says, in chapter 13, he says, I'm going to come a third time to you.

And by the way, that's the reason why he never took any money from the Corinthian church. Paul did receive gifts from the church in Philippi. But from Corinth, he would not receive a cent.

Paul was wise. He says, if people don't appreciate me, I don't want their money. It's a great privilege and honor to support a servant of God.

But I will not give them that privilege and honor because they are so carnal. He says, I'm sorry, Corinthians, you will not have the privilege of supporting me. I refuse it.

I will not take one cent from you. See, his attitude was so different from the attitude of many preachers today. And he says, I'm going to come a third time to you.

First of all, in chapter 12, verse 14, I'm coming a third time, chapter 12, verse 14, and I will not be a burden to you. You can be pretty sure of that because I'm not seeking anything that is yours. I'm not seeking any gifts from you.

Dear brothers and sisters in Corinth, I'm seeking you. I want fellowship with you. I want you fellows to grow spiritually.

I don't want your money. I don't want your gifts. I don't want you to invite me to your homes and give me grand meals.

I want you. I want you to grow spiritually because I'm your parent. You're a child.

And listen to this. Children don't have to save up for their parents. Have you ever heard of children saving money for their parents? No.

Parents save money for their children. That's the right way. And so he says, I'm your parent, so I'm going to serve you.

And he goes on to explain, now I'm coming to the main point, what is the mark of spiritual power that he had to explain to these Corinthians who had all the knowledge and all the gifts and everything else. Chapter 13, verse 3, now this is the most important passage here, verse 3 and 4. Since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, you are seeking for proof that Christ is speaking in me. And this Christ is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

I mean, you fellows have got some of those gifts of the Holy Spirit and you wonder whether Christ is speaking in me. Okay, I'll explain to you. Verse 4, I believe this is a great secret in verse 4, which again, the vast majority of Christians haven't understood.

Jesus Christ was crucified because of weakness, yet he lives by the power of God. Now you've got to read that slowly. He was crucified because of the weakness, not because he was weak, but because he chose to be weak.

You know when people taunted him on the cross saying, come down. Do you think it is more difficult, I mean you ask yourself, is it more difficult to come down from a cross when you're alive or more difficult to come up from the grave after you're dead? Which is more difficult? I mean, I've heard of some of these magicians like Houdini and all who would get tied up and lured into some water in a box and they would escape from that. You can't escape from that if you're dead.

Jesus who could come out from death. Do you think it was difficult for him to come down from the cross? Why didn't he come down from the cross? He chose to be weak. Do you know that Jesus never raised himself from the dead? There's not a single verse in the Bible that says Jesus raised himself from the dead.

It says in John chapter 10 he had the ability to do it. Yeah, he says I have the ability to raise myself from the dead but he didn't do it. Everywhere in Scripture, notice this whenever you read it, God raised up Jesus from the dead.

Never do you read that Jesus raised himself. Jesus said in John 10, I have power to be crucified and I have power to raise myself up. But he did only the first.

He gave himself to death but he wouldn't raise himself up. God raised him from the dead. It's very important to understand that.

That's what we see here. He was crucified because of weakness means he refused to use the power to call 72,000 angels to fight for him. He had the power.

You and I may not have the power to call 72,000 angels but he had it. He chose to be weak. He chose not to curse people.

He chose not to threaten people. It says when he suffered, he did not threaten. When people called him Bilzebug, he could have turned around and said wait one day fellas till I come back and I'll teach you all a lesson.

I mean you and I may be tempted to say that but Jesus was tempted like us but he never yielded to that temptation. He said no. I'm not gonna say that.

He said have you spoken a word against an ordinary man like me, you're forgiven. He chose to be weak. He was crucified because of weakness because he refused to call the 72,000 angels.

He refused to use his supernatural power to come down from the cross. He chose to die and because of that he lives by the power of God. He says that is the way to experience the power of God if you really want it.

You've got to choose to be weak. You've got to choose to die to yourself, to your reputation, to your getting hurt, to all types of things. It says here and we what about us? Paul says as far as I'm concerned I've just chosen to be weak in him myself.

I know this is the secret of power. It's not a question of casting out demons and healing the sick and doing miracles. No.

Does it say here that Jesus manifested the power of God when he cast out demons and he healed the sick? No, it says through weakness he manifested God's power. And he says we have decided to be weak in him and because of that we also will live by the power of God directed towards you. And he could go on to say it's because of that power that I don't live carnal lives like you.

That's why I don't lose my temper like you do. You know that it's not it's because of people are not willing to be weak that they don't have power to overcome their anger. Many people say I'm so weak I can't overcome my anger.

No sir, you're too strong. That's why you can't overcome your anger. You need to become weak.

I mean you've heard the illustration I've used of a patient who is sick in hospital and he's yelling at the nurses and cursing them and angry with everybody and angry with his wife and angry with everyone. The next day he's a little more sick and the volume of his sound comes a little lower. The next day he's more sick and after a few days with the tubes in his nose and everything he's silent.

When was he angry? Tell me when he was strong or when he was weak? When he was strong. The moment he became weak all his anger disappeared and your anger will disappear when you become weak also. The trouble is you're too strong.

Don't ever say again I'm so weak I can't overcome my anger. Say it differently from today on. Lord I'm so strong.

That's why I'm angry. Please help me to overcome it. We are weak in him.

Therefore we live by the power of God. The power of God. Is there any sin that the power of God cannot overcome? You think there's some sin in you which you've done for 50 years which the power of God cannot overcome? That's what the Israelites said when they came to Canaan.

Oh these giants have ruled here for so long. We can't overcome them. Joshua and Caleb said we can but God can.

And he'll do it. And they proved it. By their life at the age of 85 Caleb goes and conquers those giants.

He was much weaker humanly speaking but the power of God was the same. I want to say to you this is what Paul was trying to tell these Corinthians. This is all these manifestations.

Don't be fooled by all that. Why is it you're still a fleshly? Why is it you're still jealous? Why is it you still lose your temper? Why is it you're still lusting after women? What type of manifestation of power is that? Even the devil can do miracles and magic. Go to all these non-christian witches and wizards and Satan worshipers.

They do a lot of black magic. I tell you there's tremendous power they can do. Amazing things.

Yeah. But that's not the power of God. There are many things that can be duplicated by the devil but not this type of power of God.

Every miracle almost the devil can duplicate but not the power that helps you to overcome sin. The devil can never give you power to overcome sin. He can even enable you to speak in tongues, in other tongues but he can't give you the power to control your mother tongue.

That's the difference. So if you can speak in other tongues but you can't control your mother tongue something is wrong. The power of the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to speak in other tongues and also to control our mother tongue.

Very important to understand and that's what the Corinthians couldn't understand. It's weakness. So when we speak about being broken, this is brokenness to be crucified.

That is the ultimate end of being broken. That's why when Jesus broke the bread he was referring to a cross that was true in his life all through and that is finally going to be manifested outwardly a few hours later on Calvary. Brokenness.

I've often thought of that you know when you take the bread and break it. You know when you do it yourself and you take you break it. Isn't it good that that bread is not hard like rock? Many times I've thought of that.

Lord it's so easy. So easy. It doesn't even take a second to break a little piece from that and eat it.

And many a time when I've broken bread I've said Lord I want to be like that. I want you to make me like that that when you touch me I heal. Broke it.

Immediately. That is the secret of spiritual power. If you die with him you shall live with him.

And it is because the Christian world has not understood this thing, the word of the cross. That's why the Christian world is so shallow. That's why the Christian world runs after money.

And that's why there's so much worldliness and so much jealousy and so much strife. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 it says here that the word of the cross is foolishness and a stumbling block. 1 Corinthians 1.23. 1 Corinthians 1.23. We preach the cross.

Christ crucified. We crucified with him. To the Jews a stumbling block.

To the Gentiles foolishness. To some people a stumbling block, a cross. You mean God Almighty hanging on a cross? Huh.

That can't be God. To some people it's foolishness. What a stupid type of way God thought of to save humanity.

Foolishness. But to us who are called it is the power of God. Christ crucified.

The power of God. And it says here the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. I don't know how many of you brothers and sisters are seeking for the supernatural power to heal the sick and do miracles or experience them in your life.

And how many of you are seeking for this real power? I want to tell you you can seek those other gifts of the Holy Spirit and be as carnal as the Corinthians. And be so carnal that the Lord may have to say like Paul told the Corinthians, don't you know, 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9, that such people will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Those who are fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, do you hear that? It's the Bible. Thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now people in the world don't believe that.

There are moves in Christendom to make sure that all these people can become members of a church and be elders in a church, whether you're fornicators or idolaters or adulterers or effeminate or homosexuals or thieves or covetous or drunkards or swindlers or cheated people, doesn't matter. Of course you can be in the church. Well I just want to say that's not the church of Jesus Christ.

No it isn't. Either that or this Bible is not God's Word. I prefer to say the Bible is God's Word.

So we're living in a time of tremendous compromise where the world is coming right into the church and that all these manifestations of healing and miracles and all doesn't solve the problem because the people who do these things allow such people to sit in the church. But it is when we have this, when we are willing to die with Jesus, that the power of God is manifested in the church and we will see the real manifestation of power which overcomes sin. But Jesus came into the world to save his people from their sins.

So let's look a little more at this matter of what being broken means. I want you to turn first of all to the first sin outside the Garden of Eden. That is after man was thrown out in Genesis 4. We can learn something from Cain because Cain was like these Corinthians.

Paul told the Corinthians you're jealous and the first person mentioned in the Bible who was jealous was Cain. Dear brother, sister, if you're jealous of somebody, that's one of the clearest proofs you're not a broken person. Let me tell you in Jesus' name, a broken person is not jealous of anybody in the world.

But if somebody has more than him, is better than him, has more gifts than him, has got a better job than him, or a better car than him, or a better house than him, or better children than him, or a better church than him, or anything, jealousy is zero in a broken man. You've got to be careful of jealousy in your heart. And sometimes you may think it is not there and it is there.

And when some situation comes up in your contact with somebody else and immediately you find, if you're honest, jealousy. And that's the sin of Cain. That's the sin that sent Cain to hell.

It'll send you to hell. Be careful. Learn to rejoice when it goes well with somebody.

Learn to rejoice when somebody has, somebody is better than you, has more than you spiritually or materially or anyways. Take the low position. Say, Lord, it's pleased you to give me this.

It's pleased you to give them all this. I'm quite happy. Particularly this can be in a family also, you know, where one brother does better than the other.

There can be jealousy or one sister is better than the other in some way. There's jealousy. Whether it's a broken person, there's no problem.

And God can take you through circumstances to break you. And one way he does it is by letting other people be better than you. Maybe your own physical brothers and sisters.

Yeah, I know God took me that way. I only have one brother and sister. They were way better than me in terms of the world, in terms of money and job and everything.

But I can say in Jesus' name, I never wanted to be like that. There are lots of Christians, bigger churches, all types of things. I can say in Jesus' name, I've never been jealous of any single one of them for a single moment.

I say that before God. He's my witness. Because these things don't mean anything to me.

If somebody has a gift better than me, or can preach better than me, or can do something better than me. If you're broken, it won't touch you. Now, you may not understand that because you're not broken.

You say, how can that be? Brother, when you're broken, some miracles take place in your life. When you become weak, the power of God becomes manifest in your life. And the power of God can overcome all these things.

Otherwise, you're gone. Otherwise, it's impossible. So that's the first thing you see about Cain.

That when he saw the fire of God fall upon Abel's sacrifice, he couldn't bear it. Do you ever wish that the fire would decrease in somebody? So that you could feel a little more comfortable? You're an evil person. Imagine wanting the fire of God to become less in somebody.

Just to satisfy your ego. Because you can't bear it. Because you don't have that fire.

You're an evil person. No matter what type of Christian you call yourself. You're like Cain, who couldn't bear to see the fire of God fall upon his younger brother.

I tell you there are older people like that, who when they see a younger person on fire from God who is zealous, devoted, it disturbs them. I mean, if that person is older than them, okay. But when he's younger than them, they can't bear it.

That's sad. But it's never true of a broken person. A broken person can say, Lord, I'm so delighted.

What I can't do, this guy can do. And he's only half my age. That's wonderful.

What I couldn't accomplish in my life in so many years, this guy's accomplished in a few years. Because he's broken. He was surrendered.

He's yielded. Praise the Lord. So whenever you see such things in your life, brother, sister, take them as indications of a lack of brokenness in your life.

And say, Lord, I know what's lacking. I'm not walking the way of the crucified Jesus. Self is trying to rise up.

You know, in baptism, baptism is a picture of death and burial. And I remember when I was seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I've said this often, way back in 1963. That's 36 years ago.

I was seeking God earnestly for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was born again, baptized. I didn't have power in my life.

And that's the time the Lord revealed to me the way of the cross, the way of brokenness, which I, it's never left me since I understood it then. And the thing is, I was not seeking for that. I was seeking for baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And the Lord showed me how Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit when he went into the waters of baptism. And what did that mean? Jesus was submitting to death and burial when John the Baptist put him into the water. And what the Lord said to me, and then as he came up, the spirit came upon him, and what the Lord said to me there was, if you choose that way of death and burial to yourself, let other people crucify you and go down, and be willing to go down all the time, my power will rest upon you till the end of your life.

But if a day comes in your life when you don't want to go that way anymore, my power will depart. I have shared that testimony many, many, many places, many times. But I don't know how many people have understood it themselves.

For me, it came by revelation. I didn't read that in any book or hear that in any message. I was seeking for the power of God, and the Lord, the Father showed me how Jesus received it.

Oh, I wish all of you would see this. What does it mean for Jesus to go under the water? What, think of the time when you were baptized. When you went under the water for a moment, nobody saw you.

You had disappeared. Are you willing to disappear? And somebody else came up out of the water. It's no longer I, but Christ.

I hope so. That was your testimony, whether you knew it or not. I go into the water, Christ comes out.

This is baptism. I go into the water, Christ comes out. I don't come out.

If I come out, brother, you need to be baptized again then. You didn't really die. I mean, when you put a man into the grave, and the guy comes out of it, then he probably wasn't really dead.

I mean, if he was really dead, he wouldn't come out of that grave. And if you really died with Christ, and you meant what you said in baptism, you say, Lord, I want to disappear. That's why I believe this sprinkling, pouring water on a people's head is a deception.

That's not baptism. The baby doesn't disappear, does it, when somebody's bringing water on his head? No. In baptism, you're supposed to disappear completely, like a man who was buried.

See how the devil has counterfeited this, this tremendous testimony that Jesus established. It's a very simple thing. Oh, baptism, what does it matter whether you do it like this or do it like this? I tell you, it matters the world which way you do it.

Because in one, the person doesn't disappear. In the other, the person disappears completely. That's why it's an important testimony.

Jesus was buried, and I was buried with him. And Jesus wasn't buried with some sand thrown on his head when he was alive. No.

He's completely hidden. He disappeared and is hidden. Do you want to be like that? Do you want to say, put your name there, Lord, I want to disappear.

I don't want people to speak highly of Zach Toonin or know me or anything. I want to disappear. Put your name there.

I want to disappear. I don't want, I don't want to sit back and meditate on the wonderful things people are thinking about me or saying about me. If you are like that, you'll be tempted.

All of you will be tempted. All of you will be tempted. You don't have to be as well known as me to be, to think like that.

You can think like that too. Sure. But the moment you begin to think like that, you know for yourself anyway that you haven't died.

You don't want to disappear. You want to be, you want to be up there, to be seen, to be known, to be heard. That's the reason why the mighty power of God doesn't manifest itself in your life to deliver you from sin.

Cain wanted to be prominent. That's why. And particularly if other people are watching, I want to be prominent.

The great secret of John the Baptist's life was, he said he must increase and I must decrease. I mean long before the truth of crucifixion with Christ was revealed, John the Baptist understood the principle. If I have to exalt Christ, I have to disappear.

I mean I can't exalt Christ and me get exalted at the same time. Not at all. You know we sing he is exalted, he is exalted.

But a lot of people who sing that, they want to be exalted themselves. You ask yourself brother sister, the Corinthians wanted to be exalted. That's why they didn't have power.

Let me show you this verse in 1 Corinthians 4 where Paul writes to the Corinthians. And you see the contrast between the unbroken Corinthians and the broken Apostle Paul. Many of us would like to be Apostles.

Isn't it wonderful to be known as an Apostle of Christ? Go around planning churches, anointed by the Spirit. But listen to this. Here's what an Apostle is in God's eyes, in man's eyes.

1 Corinthians 4 and verse 9. For I think God has exhibited us Apostles last of all. In the eyes of the world we are right at the bottom of the list. We have become, as men condemned to death, that means these criminals were on their way to be hanged.

You see those days you see these fellows carrying the cross and you know that guy is a criminal, he's going to be crucified. We have become a spectacle, a laughingstock. That's the right word.

We become a laughingstock to the world, to angels and to men. Angels means the evil spirits laugh at us when they see us humiliated, when they see us you know going down in some way. We are fools in the eyes of the world, but it's for Christ's sake.

But what about you Corinthians? Oh you are so wise. We are weak, but you are strong. You are distinguished, but we don't have any honor.

We are hungry and thirsty and poorly clothed. That means he didn't take advantage of others. He said we are roughly treated and we are homeless.

We toil working with our own hands and preaching the gospel. When people revile us, speak evil of us, we bless them. Do you know that a broken man can always bless somebody who curses him? An unbroken man at the most may keep quiet.

He may keep quiet because he's unbroken. When he's broken, he will bless. You know the difference between keeping quiet when somebody reviles you and blessing somebody who reviles you? There's a difference between heaven and earth.

To revile somebody who reviles you is hell. To keep quiet when somebody reviles you is earth. To bless somebody who reviles you is heaven.

It's a question of where you want to live. When people revile us, we bless. When people persecute us, we endure.

When we are slandered, we try to conciliate. We have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things until now. Let me read that to you in the Message Bible.

People stand around and stare at us like they stare at an accident on the street, and we are misfits in the eyes of the world. You fellows, you seem to be pretty sure of yourselves, but we live in the midst of frailty, uncertainty. You fellows are well thought of by others, but we are mostly kicked around, and much of the time we don't even have enough to eat.

I think it was true. The Apostle Paul, because he was traveling to places where the Gospel was not preached, very often he had to struggle to earn a living. We wear patched clothes.

We get doors slammed in our faces when we try to preach the Gospel. We pick up odd jobs wherever we can so that we can earn our living in order to preach the Gospel. And when they call us names, we say, God bless you.

When they spread rumors about us, tell false stories about us, we put in a good word about them. Can you do that? We are treated like garbage, like the potato peelings from a kitchen, and it's not getting any better. This is an apostle in those days, not like these guys who call themselves apostles these days who stand on big platforms and pass the bag around to collect money for themselves.

So my point is this. God used all these methods because he had a mighty ministry for Paul. It wasn't just that Paul could do miracles.

The fact is he had to go through all this to be broken to manifest the real power of God. Paul was willing to disappear from the eyes of men so that Christ would be seen. Cain was not willing for that.

And the interesting thing you see there is that when God corrects Cain, he gets offended. Just like the Corinthians. When Paul corrected them for their own good, they got offended.

And that's another mark of an unbroken person. When Jesus corrected Judas Iscariot saying, why do you trouble this woman? I mean, she's done a good deed. Why do you want to criticize her saying we shouldn't have wasted this money on a perfume? You should have given it to the poor.

You know what it says in the very next verse? Very next verse. In Matthew 26, Judas went to the chief priest, next verse, and said, tell me, how much will you give me to betray him? He got offended with a small correction like, why do you trouble this woman? She's done a good deed pouring out the perfume. He doesn't have to give the money to the poor.

The poor you always have with you, but I'm not here around always. That was too much of a humiliation for Judas because he talked so much about himself. He was not one of those who disappeared.

But think of the rebuke that Jesus gave to Peter on the other hand. When Peter said some simple thing like, Lord, you're not going to go to the cross. I won't let you go to the cross.

Get behind me, Satan. You know what Peter said? And later on the Lord says to him, do you want to go? Lord, to whom shall we go? These are the words of eternal life. Which words? Get behind me, Satan.

You're interested in things concerning yourself. I really say, Lord, it's so wonderful. You are willing to lose your greatest, closest co-worker, but you would not let him seek his own.

You're willing to rebuke anybody, lose anybody, because you cared only for the glory of God. Yeah, it's something to call. I don't know how many Christian workers would turn around to their closest co-worker and say, get away.

You are seeking your own and risk losing him. I don't know that I've met people like that. But Peter didn't get offended.

He said, that's what made him the leading Apostle on the day of Pentecost and not Judas. Judas and Peter had equal chance to be the great Apostle opening the door on the day of Pentecost. Why do you think Judas missed it? Peter got it.

Peter was willing to be broken. Peter wasn't perfect. He said wrong things.

We know that three times he denied Jesus. But when he realized it, he was so broken, he went out and wept bitterly. I want to ask you, brothers and sisters, you can say that Peter's sin was great, but I want to ask you, when was the last time you wept bitterly for some sin? Has there ever been a time? I don't mean one or two tears.

When was the time you went and wept bitterly before God? Oh God, I let you down so badly when you lusted after a woman or you lost your temper or you did something unrighteous or you hurt somebody in some way. Have you ever gone before God and wept bitterly? That's a broken man. Unbroken people don't do that.

Unbroken people say, yeah Lord, I'm sorry, slipped up. Okay, we're back in fellowship, right? Maybe you are. I hope you are.

I don't know. You'll never be like Peter, not in a hundred years. We got to learn to weep bitter for our sin.

He was a broken man, and there are many examples like that in Scripture, people who were broken. When David fell into sin, he was under the Old Covenant, he got so broken that he said, Lord, it's only me. I'm the only one guilty of this.

You can do what you like with me, Lord, just don't take your Holy Spirit from me, but I deserve whatever punishment you give me. See, a broken person, God doesn't use people who have never failed, no. I mean David and Peter and Paul are examples.

God doesn't use people who have never failed. He uses people who have failed, but who are broken by their failure. So broken and humbled that they're not so quick to reappear above the waters after their baptism, say, let God raise me up.

I've seen people, for example, who have messed up their life, and they don't let God raise them up. They come up, yeah, I messed it up a little while ago, but I'm okay now. And I've seen what happens to such people.

It never goes well with them. Because, and they are very hard on others. I'm surprised sometimes how people have messed up their own life, can ever be hard on any other human being for the rest of their lives.

I've seen critical of this, critical of that, critical of something in the church, critical of this brother, critical of the elders. And who are these people who are critical? People who have absolutely messed up their life. God tried to break them by sin.

He still didn't succeed. And I'll tell you something. He tries to break us in many ways.

The last step is he tries to break us by allowing us to mess up our life. And if even that doesn't break you, I want to say, you'll probably be a legalist for the rest of your life. Some legalists that I know, where people have messed up their life terribly in their olden days, but God's forgiven them.

And they have conveniently forgotten all that happened in the past. And they are some of the biggest legalists in the world today. Christians.

Brokenness is a wonderful thing. And all the methods God uses to break you, my brother and sister, take it. And whenever you see some situation where you find you're jealous, or you can't accept correction, or you want to appear before others instead of disappear, you're not satisfied that Christ be seen, you must be seen.

And you don't see yourself in those situations. There you know the reason why you're still defeated by sin, even though you sat in a church where you heard about victory over sin for 25 years. Now you know the reason.

I hope it won't continue like that. I hope you will choose the way of brokenness. There are others who came long after you, who are not in diapers anymore.

There are others who came long after you, who are not in diapers. They've learned to keep themselves clean. May God help us.

Let's bow before the Lord. Dear brothers and sisters, please take seriously the word of the Lord. He seeks to break us because he wants to give us his power.

No other reason. He cannot give his power to an unbroken man. Heavenly Father, help us to learn that which you have tried for so many years to teach us, that Jesus himself is crucified in weakness and lives by the power of God.

Help us to walk that way. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/43vK8yfWUHo.mp4>

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