

The Blessings of a Broken Heart

Isaiah 57:1-21

Is. 57:1-2 The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity; he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness.

Is. 57:3-5 But you, draw near, sons of the sorceress, offspring of the adulterer and the loose woman. Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit, you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks?

Is. 57:6-8 Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a grain offering. Shall I relent for these things? On a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and there you went up to offer sacrifice. Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your memorial; for, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide; and you have made a covenant for yourself with them, you have loved their bed, you have looked on nakedness.

Is. 57:12-13 I will declare your righteousness and your deeds, but they will not profit you. When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain.

Is. 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Contrition has more to do with recognizing our own unworthiness, sinfulness, weakness, and utter helplessness apart from God.

Humility emphasizes acknowledging God's supremacy and accepting our proper place before Him.

I. What Does It Mean to Have a Contrite Heart?

Ps. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Prov. 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.

Mat. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

James 4:6 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

1 Pet. 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

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A. Proper Understanding of Reality

Is. 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

High – transcendent, not confined to the material universe, and infinitely superior to it in His very being.¹

The transcendence of God is an attribute of God's nature that means He infinitely surpasses everything He has created, exists independently of creation, and is not limited by the space, time, or laws of the created world.

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B. Proper Response to Reality

Rom. 9:20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

Rom. 1:21-22 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

¹ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 475

II. What Are the Blessings of a Contrite Heart?

A. The Presence of God

Is. 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

God's Immanence is an attribute of His nature that means that although God is infinite and independent of the created world, He is also continually present within it, sustaining its existence and actively working in it to accomplish His eternal purposes.

B. The Life of God

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- **God Heals the Brokenhearted**

Ps. 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

- **God Gives Grace to the Humble**

1 Pet. 5:5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- **God Exalts the Humble**

1 Pet. 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Phil. 2:6-9 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

Rom. 8:16-17 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

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III. How Can We Develop a Contrite Heart?

The power of your Christianity is directly proportional to your humility.

A. A True Union with Christ

Phil. 2:5-9 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

Humility is not simply having a low opinion of ourselves. Rather, it is a proper understanding of our position before God, our complete dependence on Him, and our need for His grace, expressed through obedience to Him.

B. Regular Meditation on God

Christians who consistently meditate on the greatness of God cannot remain proud and unbroken before Him.

Is. 6:5 Then I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Job 42:5-6 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

C. Wholehearted Worship of God

Luke 18:13-14 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Rev. 5:8-9 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,"

Rev. 5:10-12 "and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

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Is. 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."