

Fill in the missing word... When you run out of money, you say, "I'm _____." When a relationship ends, you say, "My heart is _____." When you lose your capacity to cope, you say, "I think I'm having a nervous _____ down." Have you noticed, the world is broken world. And in this broken world, there is not much use for broken things. That which is broken is without value.

That is how CROSSWAYS the kingdom of this world is with the Kingdom of God. In this kingdom, broken things are useless, tossed aside. In God's kingdom broken things have great value. "God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength." Mary of Bethany demonstrated her devotion to Jesus by breaking open an alabaster box full of costly perfume. And the house was filled with the fragrance of her deep love for Jesus.

If you don't see this world as broken right now, you're either in denial or you're not paying attention. When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, God ordained that everything He created, including our physical bodies, would experience corruption and futility, and that all living things would die. So, according to Romans 8, we groan, sharing in the corruption and disease and disasters and death, as we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

In Isaiah 52 there are three verses that reveal a divine principle hidden in plain sight. This principle often goes unnoticed. It shouldn't. God uses the shattered and the broken to heal, restore and transform us. *God delights in using the broken and the disfigured to deliver hope and healing to a broken and disfigured world.* Like a mosaic artist, God will take the shattered pieces of your broken life and form them into a priceless work of art just like He did with Jesus. Let's look at Is. 52:13-15. These verses provide an introduction to the Suffering Servant of Is. 53 who will repair what is broken and save what has been lost.

God's ultimate plan will succeed. The promise of a successful Savior...v. 13
My servant shall "act wisely." Other versions say "prosper" or "succeed." The word used here has a semantic range that can be translated all three ways. The point is that this servant will take action that brings about the desired result. He will both know and do the right things in order to accomplish the purpose for which he was called. Whoever this servant is, He will not fail.

The verse also contains an important clue as to the identity of this servant. He will be "raised, lifted up and highly exalted." These words were used in 6:1 when Isaiah says he saw the Lord in His temple, "high and lifted up." Isaiah has no idea who this exalted servant will be but Peter, after the resurrection, says,

"The prophets sought to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." 1 Pe. 1:11. As Augustine said, "The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed." Jesus is the suffering servant who died to save us in fulfillment of explicit prophecy so that we could know more surely that we are saved.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." Jn. 3:14-15. Jesus, the suffering servant, was lifted up on a cross, raised up in the resurrection and exalted at the right hand of the Father. He WILL succeed but in a surprising way.

God's ultimate plan will surprise. The surprise of a cruel cross...v. 14

Jesus' hands and feet were pierced with nails. His bare and broken body put on public display. His lungs slowly collapsing as He took one excruciating breath at a time. His enemies laughing, mocking, taking great delight in his suffering. "He saved others; he *cannot* save himself." The soldiers joined the fun by offering to quench his thirst by sticking a vinegar-soaked sponge up to His mouth. The sponge was used as toilet paper in those days... They could have killed him quietly, but they wanted the whole world to see the weakness of Jesus. Nothing could be weaker than hanging from the cross. Even His friends, all but one, abandoned Him. They couldn't bear to watch. But when *men were most horrified God was most glorified*. "For he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God." 2 Cor. 13:4

Jesus was pierced and crushed in our place. The righteous in the place of the unrighteous. The Shepherd in the place of His lost sheep. The glorious king in the place of the rebel subjects. Jesus took our place upon the cross where justice could be done but in a way that would not require our punishment.

Even in His darkest hour, Jesus revealed His confidence in the Father's plan. Remember His strange question? "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The most common explanation of this question is that because He bore the sin of the world, the Father turned away from Him. But how can the Father and Son be separated? If Jesus is God, how can Jesus be separated from God? The tension may be resolved by the Jewish practice of REMEZ. A remez is a portion of scripture, usually the very first few words of a passage, that is used to direct people's attention to the message of that particular portion of scripture. Eg. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."...Ps. 23. So, when Jesus said, "My God,

My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” He was quoting from Ps. 22, a Messianic psalm. He was saying to those who heard Him, “This was foretold by David. This is what I came to do. This is necessary for your salvation.”

But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

- 7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
8 “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

- 16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

- 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!
May your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.
- 28 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.
- 30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
- 31 **they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,**
that he has done it.

And that is exactly what Isaiah says in 52:15.

God's ultimate plan will be known to all. The good news of divine

disclosure...v. 15. The gospel according to Isaiah is good news not only because the heart of it is God's rejected Servant dying as a ransoming substitute for rebel subjects, the kings of the earth will see and understand. Their eyes will be opened. Their sight will be restored. As the truth begins to dawn on the Kings of the earth of who this "despised one" truly is and what He did, they are awestruck. They could never have conceived of the actual truth that reconciles the horror, suffering and disfigurement of the Servant, with his exaltation, ascension and glory, unless God had shown them something that had never entered into their thoughts.

The kings will be silent because the suffering servant is the sovereign of the universe. He is high and lifted up and greatly exalted. This is what God grants them the eyes to see—the majesty of Jesus. The despised and rejected servant is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

God is attracted to brokenness. Brokenness makes us useful to God. It is only when we are weak that we become strong. "God's power is made perfect in our weakness." God delights in using the broken and the disfigured to deliver the promise of hope and healing to a broken and disfigured world.

God's desire is to make you a showcase for Jesus's power not by getting rid of all your weaknesses; but by giving strength to endure and even rejoice in tribulation. The ultimate purpose of God in our weakness is to glorify the kind of power that kept Christ on the cross until the work of love was done.

It is in our weakness and failure that we cling to the cross. Success never drove anyone to the cross. I was reminded of that this week when I read the words of the late Chuck Colson who went from being the right hand man of Richard Nixon to being just another inmate in a federal prison. It was when he was at his weakest point that God transformed his life. When he got out, he started Prison Fellowship, taking the gospel to prisons all over the world. In his autobiography he reflected on his experience, "All at once I realized that it was not my success God had used to enable me to help those in this prison, or in hundreds of others just like it. My life of success was not what made this morning so glorious -- all my achievements meant nothing in God's economy. No, the real legacy of my life was my biggest failure -- that I was an ex-convict. My greatest humiliation -- being sent to prison --

was the beginning of God's greatest use of my life; He chose the one thing in which I could not glory for His glory.” Chuck Colson

The contradiction of the cross is the beauty of our salvation in contrast to the beastly disfigurement of the Savior.

God uses the broken and disfigured to deliver hope and healing to a broken and disfigured world. Who better to speak to a broken world than those who have been broken? Who better to offer the promise of healing than those who have been healed? God uses broken people because that’s the only kind there are.

1. Cast all your fears and failures at the foot of the cross. Let the Lord take those broken pieces and form them into a beautiful mosaic.

2. Look beyond this present suffering to the glory that is to be revealed. These are difficult times, but we don’t need to exaggerate the novelty of our situation. There have always been plagues and pestilence. In fact, there is a deadly virus that has been passed from one human to another since the fall of Adam and Eve. But God has provided the cure – a suffering Savior who took our sin upon Him so that we could live forever.

3. Tell the story. Commit to being a good steward of the message of the cross. The good news of God’s healing power is communicated best by His broken and disfigured servants. I believe with all my heart that there are people all over the world who are full of despair. We can give them hope.

God will use the broken and disfigured of this world to showcase His power and His glory. As the Lord said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Cor. 12:9-10