

Fellowship Notes

“Experiencing Continuous Revival” – Part 2

Sunday, December 15th, 2019



Brokenness is... (Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 66:2; James 4:8-10)

- being contrite, over my sin against God and others
- a choice; an act of my will
- an ongoing, continual lifestyle
- agreeing with God (especially about sin)
- a lifestyle of saying, “Yes, Lord, not my will, but yours be done.”
- the shattering of my self-will
- my response of humility and obedience to the conviction of the Spirit and God’s Word

Two Dimensions of Brokenness... (1 John 1:7)

1. The Vertical Dimension – a lifestyle of being transparent and humble with God (like a house with the roof off – open to things above)
2. The Horizontal Dimension – a lifestyle of being transparent and humble with others (like a house with the walls down – open to others around you)

The Blessings of Brokenness...

1. God promises the blessing that He will be near to us, enriching us, uplifting us, sustaining us and comforting us by His grace (James 4:6,8,10).
2. God promises the blessing of new life and spiritual fruit being produced in and through us by His resurrection power (John 12:24-25).
3. God promises the blessing of new freedom, passion and increased capacity for love and worship (Luke 7:36-48).
4. God promises the blessing of being used by Him in spiritual fruitfulness (Jacob, Gideon, Mary, Jesus).

Beginning the Journey to Brokenness...

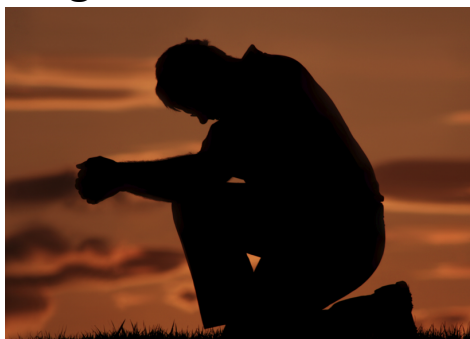
1. Get a fresh view of God.
2. Don’t wait for God to break you – choose to be broken.
3. Acknowledge spiritual need – to God and others.
4. Do whatever you know God wants you to do.



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The video, audio, as well as a printable manuscript of the message and this handout are available online.

“Experiencing Continuous Revival” – Part 2



This morning I want to share with you something from the Bible that is extremely challenging. It’s not something you’ve probably heard very many, if any, messages on, and something quite frankly that is difficult. It’s difficult for me and I believe you’ll find it difficult for you.

But in my study and research on revival through the years and especially these last few months, what I want to show you from the Word of God is ALWAYS linked with true, spiritual revival.

Of this topic it has been said that,

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“A return to this is the starting place for experiencing the revival that we so desperately need in our lives, our homes, and our churches.” ~ N.L. De Moss

“[This] is the beginning of revival. It is painful, it is humiliating, but it is the only way.” ~Roy Hession

“[This] is God’s requirement for maximum usefulness.”

Charles Stanley

“Only when we practice this can we experience continuous revival in our daily walk with Christ.”

So before we begin with prayer, I want to show you in advance what God says will happen in your life if you'll respond to Him and His Word and determine to apply this ingredient for revival to your life.

These are the spiritual blessings God desires to give you and me. And they're not blessing we can only hope for, no, they're promises and guarantees from God IF we will employ this ingredient for continuous revival in our lives.

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1. God promises the blessing that He will be near to us, enriching us, uplifting us, sustaining us and comforting us by His grace.
2. God promises the blessing of new life and spiritual fruit being produced in and through us by His resurrection power.
3. God promises the blessing of new freedom, passion and increased capacity for love and worship.
4. God promises the blessing of being used by Him in spiritual fruitfulness.

For all of us who know and love Jesus as our Lord and Savior, surely these are blessings that any follower of Christ would love to experience to the fullest. Amen?!

Let's ask God to teach us how to experience these amazing blessings as we study His Word this morning.

PRAY

- What is the starting place for experiencing the revival that we so desperately need in our lives, our homes, and our churches?
- What is the beginning of revival that is so painful and humiliating, but is the only way?
- What is God's requirement for maximum usefulness?
- And HOW can we experience revival in a continuous way in our daily walk with Christ?

Listen now to what God tells us the answer is...

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“For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy, says this, ‘I live in a high and holy place, and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the oppressed.

Isaiah 57:15

“The Lord is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.”

Psalms 34:8

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“This is the Lord’s declaration. I will look favorably on this kind of person: one who is humble, submissive in spirit, and trembles at my word.”

Isaiah 66:2b

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.”

Matthew 5:3-5

And this next one is our memory verse for this week, so let’s say it out loud together...

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“You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; you are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.”

Psalms 51:17

Christian, how can you experience revival in your walk with Christ and in your relationships with others and experience that revival on a continuous basis day-in and day-out? The answer is by having a broken, contrite and humble heart before God and others.

Brokenness is the starting place and the continual heart condition of someone who experiences revival. Brokenness is a painful and humiliating path, but it’s the only path that leads to the feet of Jesus.

Brokenness is the ingredient God looks to find in you and me so He can use us to the fullest for His glory. In the kingdom of God, the way up is the downward path of brokenness.

The history of revival in the church of Jesus Christ since the days of the book of Acts 2,000 years ago reveals that we will never meet God in revival until we first meet him in brokenness. James reminds us in his epistle..

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“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

James 4:8-10

Since this is such a critical necessity in our lives, let me clarify for you what biblical brokenness is and what it isn't.

Many times today brokenness is used to describe terrible circumstances or suffering that people experience and coming out of those circumstances “broken”, meaning beaten down, or desperate for God.

While there is validity to these concepts, this is not what God is talking about in the verses we've already looked at this morning.

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Brokenness is not...

- having gone through horrific circumstances or suffering and being left marked or scarred for life
- being sinned against by someone else and experiencing the results of that sin
- experiencing the consequences of our own sinful choices
- a feeling or an emotion (like sadness)
- morbid introspection during hard or difficult times
- false humility
- being deeply hurt
- the shedding of tears (people can passionately shed tears and not be broken)

- a one-time experience or crisis in life (though this can be part of a heart of brokenness)

(NOTES) Brokenness is...

- being contrite, over my sin against God and others
- a choice; an act of my will
- an ongoing, continual lifestyle
- agreeing with God (especially about sin)
- a lifestyle of saying, “Yes, Lord, not my will, but yours be done.”
- the shattering of my self-will
- my response of humility and obedience to the conviction of the Spirit and God’s Word

There are two Dimensions of Brokenness...

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1. The Vertical Dimension – a lifestyle of being transparent and humble with God (like a house with the roof off – open to things above)
2. The Horizontal Dimension – a lifestyle of being transparent and humble with others (like a house with the walls down – open to others around you)

In 1 John we’re shown these two dimensions...

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“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

1 John 1:7

Someone who lives a transparent and humble life with the Lord is someone who “walks in the light”. Our lives are open and exposed before the eyes of God and we’re not trying to hide anything from Him – as if we could. Walking in the light means there’s nothing between my soul and my Savior.

But it’s not enough that we be humble and broken before God, but also that we live humble and transparent other believers. A person who has been broken before God will also be humble and broken before others.

That's what it means in 1 John when it says... "and we have fellowship with one another."

For our hearts to be revived, in brokenness we have to take the roof of our lives, exposing our hearts, our motives, our desires, everything to God, being honest and transparent with Him, and coming clean and staying clean with Him in every way.

AND we have to take the walls down. And be honest and transparent with others and coming clean and staying clean in our relationships with others.

These 2 dimensions of brokenness are difficult and can be a source of embarrassment at some point, but they provide the path to true revival in our hearts and lives.

I watched this kind of brokenness and transparency take place as the vertical and horizontal walls came down at our 3 day prayer summit last month as person after person confessed to God and to one another things that were standing in their way of loving God first and foremost, and confessing those things as sin.

And I watched as each person finished sharing, others came around them and prayed for them and expressed their love for them. It was the most beautiful thing that you can experience.

Was it hard? Yes. Was it even embarrassing? Yes. But it was also liberating. It was freeing and most of all it was God-honoring and the blessings of that time together in brokenness are still being experienced today by those who were there.

So, what are some of the characteristics or the evidences of someone who is broken vs. someone who is the opposite, which is proud? I want to show these to you and as we consider each one, ask yourself which one you are, a broken person or a proud person? (SEE NOTES)

Let me tell you about Brian and Melanie Adams. The Adams were followers of Christ. They had a good marriage and God had blessed them with 8 beautiful children.

But as time wore on and with the busy pace of life that is so common in families today, Brian and Melanie slowly grew farther and farther apart in their relationship.

One weekend they attended a marriage conference where the speaker brought a message about brokenness and humility, especially in regards to a husband and wife's relationship.

That night after the session as they headed back to their room, Melanie began preparing her lecture points that she intended to share with Brian and HIS need for brokenness.

But before she could do that, God stopped Melanie in her tracks. She said that God began to peel back the layers of her heart and what He revealed to her wasn't pretty: bitterness toward her husband, hardness of heart, hatred, rebellion and most of ALL, pride and a dependence on her own righteousness.

As Melanie and Brian sat down to talk Melanie began to cry over what God was showing her. In brokenness she began to confess to Brian what was in her heart. Like an infection being drained from a wound, her pride and self-righteousness was purged from her heart and spirit.

Melanie cried out to God to take away her sin, and to soften her hard heart. She said that at that moment of brokenness God in His mercy swept through her heart in cleansing and forgiveness and her tears of anguish were transformed into tears of joy and freedom. By the grace of God, Melanie has never been the same again and neither has Brian and their marriage.

So why would anyone choose to be broken? Well, let me ask you this: if a person were sick and needed surgery, why would they check into a hospital and allow a surgeon to start cutting into them? Is it because they love to be in pain? Of course not!

It's because they know that surgery is the way to experience healing and physical restoration. And the same is true spiritually. Being broken before God and others can be painful. But brokenness acts like spiritual surgery in our hearts.

And when brokenness is allowed to take its full course in our lives, it ALWAYS leads to God's blessing. Brokenness is the pathway to blessing. There are no shortcuts or alternate spiritual routes.

The very thing we dread and are tempted to resist is actually the means to God's greatest blessings in our lives. What kind of blessings? The kind we saw when we started this study. Let's look at them a little more closely.

The Blessings of Brokenness:

(Slide) 1. God promises the blessing that He will be near to us, enriching us, uplifting us, sustaining us and comforting us by His grace.

"But he gives greater grace. Therefore, he says, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.'"

James 4:6, 8, 10

Brokenhearted people draw the attention of God. They draw the blessing of God. They draw the grace of God. They draw unto themselves His comfort, His strength, His power.

Every once in a while when I'm in my office here I'll hear a siren racing up North Avenue headed west. When there is an emergency anywhere west of here, especially along I-35, this is the road the emergency vehicles, especially an ambulance takes to get there. (I try to stop and pray for them)

And just like an ambulance racing to the scene in response to a call for help, so God races to the scene of where you are when you humble yourself acknowledge your need for Him; acknowledge sin; acknowledge a broken spirit.

Charles Spurgeon said,

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“He that humbles himself under the hand of God shall not fail to be enriched, uplifted, sustained, and comforted by the ever-gracious One. It is a habit of Jehovah to cast down the proud and lift up the lowly.”

Charles Spurgeon

If you wonder why God might seem so far away from you, could it be that He has withdrawn His presence and is resisting you because of lingering pride in your heart?

The beautiful thing about brokenness is that it brings God near to us in all His glory, all His power, all His grace, and all His comfort at our point of need.

(Slide) 2. God promises the blessing of new life and spiritual fruit being produced in and through us by His resurrection power.

Look at John 12 in your Bible (READ vs. 24).

One of the mysteries in the spiritual realm of following Christ is that death brings life and that there can be no real life apart from our willingness to die.

Here in John 12, Jesus explained this principle with an illustration from the world of farming. You can take a grain of wheat and clean it up and set it on your counter at home and shine light on it and drop some drops of water on it every day, and you can even pray over that grain of wheat every morning before you leave for work. And what will happen? NOTHING!

For that wheat to do what it has the capacity and the ability to do, it has to be go down into the soil and there in that place of darkness it has to die. IF

that grain of wheat had feelings, it might say, “Hey, what’s going on? It’s darn down here. It’s cold down here. It’s lonely down here.”

But in that rich environment that grain of wheat will shed it’s outer husk so that the life within it can be released. The – after that grain of wheat has “died”, it will grow and put down roots deep into the soil and eventually it will shoot upwards out of the ground and spring forth into new life and life-giving fruit.

And in the same way, the path to spiritual fruit being produced in us and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit begins when in brokenness we die to ourselves, die to sin, die to our pride, die to our self interests, our reputation, and lay our lives down in humility before God.

Look what Jesus said to His disciples in verse 25 (READ).

What was Jesus saying? The only way to gain your life is to give it up. The only way to win in God’s kingdom is to lose your dreams for your own kingdom.

When we choose the pathway to brokenness and humility, we are choosing to receive new life – His supernatural life flowing in us and through us. Death to self brings life. Brokenness ushers us into new life.

(Slide) 3. God promises the blessing of new freedom, passion and increased capacity for love and worship.

I told you a moment ago what happened to Brian and Melanie Adams. Here’s the rest of the story in Melanie’s own word...

“Since I surrendered in brokenness to the Lord I have fallen in love with my husband more deeply than ever. It was quite a rude awakening to realize the chasm in our marriage was my fault, born of an unforgiving heart. My husband has forgiven me and I smile at the future.

I have developed the somewhat frustrating habit of crying all the time – not a normal response for me. In church, a song of worship or a meaningful message finds me needing my husband's handkerchief.

God's Word jumps off the page every time I open His Holy book – it is personal now. I enjoy a sweet communion with the Lord and have heartfelt gratitude for His love and sacrifice that I never knew before. I have peace and joy, and He has given me a new song."

Turn over to Luke 7. READ Luke 7:36-48.

Why did this woman love Jesus so much and desire to unashamedly worship Him in such an unorthodox fashion? Because she had been forgiven much! We see in this unnamed woman a freedom and an abandon that many believers have never experienced.

She was oblivious to the rejection or the disapproval of anyone around her. All that mattered to her was Jesus and expressing her love and worship to Him.

How many of us right here in the service have never experienced this kind of freedom in worship and renewed love for Jesus that comes from a spirit of brokenness? Why do you suppose it is so hard for so many of us to express our love and worship to the Lord?

Could it be that we really don't feel that close to the Lord and we aren't close because God has put distance between ourselves and Him due to our pride? Or our self-reliance? Or a heart that's hard and instead of broken and contrite to Him and others?

Are we really that concerned with what others think that we're afraid to show any emotion in loving and worshiping Jesus? Not this woman! She didn't care what others thought.

All she knew was that she had an open heart, exposed completely to God, and He was forgiving her and giving her peace and joy like she'd never had before.

“O but Rob you don't understand, I'm shy, expressing worship to God is just not my personality.” Is it really a matter of being shy or a personality trait, or is really a matter of unconfessed pride keeping you from what God wants for you?

A spirit of loving worship for the Lord begins with brokenness and humility over whatever God reveals to us in His Word. A broken spirit and a godly sorrow over our sin leads to genuine repentance, which in turns leads to forgiveness.

Forgiveness will produce freedom – freedom from guilt and bondage. When we have freedom, we will have a greater capacity for love – to love God completely and to worship Him with abandon, and to love others – even those who are unlovable.

(Slide) 4. God promises the blessing of being used by Him in spiritual fruitfulness.

When you read God's activity in the Bible you see that He repeatedly uses people things and people that are broken...

- God used Jacob after he wrestled with God's angel and finally said “Uncle” to God in surrender
- God used Gideon when he finally surrendered to God's call on his life and when his puny little 300-man army broke their pitchers and declared victory against an enemy army of over 100,000 soldiers
- God used Mary when she sat at the feet of Jesus and broke a very expensive alabaster jar of perfume in worship of Jesus and He forgave her sin and washer her clean
- Jesus Himself allowed Himself to be broken and die and then He came to live again and is our risen Savior who gives eternal life to all through his brokenness

God uses things and people who are broken. Revival in our hearts and lives is released as God's Spirit flows through our brokenness. If you want to be used by God, allow yourself to be broken before God and others.

Beginning the Journey to Brokenness... (NOT ON SLIDES)

5. Get a fresh view of God. (Example: Isaiah – “Woe is me”)

6. Don't wait for God to break you – choose to be broken.

Choose to surrender your pride, your rights, your demands, your very life to the Lord.

7. Acknowledge spiritual need – to God and others.

Live with the roof off towards God, and the walls down toward others. If you have a spiritual need, swallow your pride and take it to the Lord. Talk to a fellow believer about it.

8. Do whatever you know God wants you to do.

Whatever God is calling you to do to become a broken person, say, “Yes, Lord.”

What is God saying to you this morning?