
Brokenness

By David Wilkerson

April 26, 2010 Dearly Beloved:

A few months ago, I sent our readers a reminder that our Bible school is now taking applications for the upcoming school year, which begins next fall. I want to speak from my heart about why we started this school sixteen years ago. This is not a promotional appeal; it is my description of how and why God raised up Mount Zion International School of Ministry.

This generation has fallen into immorality and spiritual blindness. In many high schools a majority of students drink alcohol regularly. They are getting stoned on all kinds of drugs. More and more teenagers are being bombarded with sexual images through the internet and through all kinds of media.

We now see churches tolerating same-sex marriages and other compromises. We face a society that grows more fearful and angry by the day. But we believe what Jesus said: "The fields are ripe for harvest. Pray for workers for the harvest."

We believe the Holy Spirit is going to do amazing things in these perilous times. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and then explained why: "You did not recognize your day of visitation." We started the Mount Zion school to raise up workers for God's last-day visitation.

We pray the Lord sends us young people willing to be broken in spirit, learning how to commune with Jesus. We are looking for students who are sick of the emptiness of materialism...students willing to reach out for lost souls...students willing to spend three years learning how to be light in a dark world. Our graduates are now ministering in areas of need throughout the world.

For sixteen years God has sent us these kinds of students. Please give this letter to someone you know who has such a heart for God. Applications are available now. Visit our website, www.mzisom.org, or call 717-865-2000.

Mount Zion International School of Ministry is one reason why World Challenge® has so many missions to the needy throughout the world. For more information on these ministries go to: www.worldchallenge.org/mission. Thank you for your support of our many outreaches to the poor, hungry, widowed and fatherless. God bless you.

In Christ,
DAVID WILKERSON

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Newsletter: Brokenness

April 26, 2010 David wrote about brokenness often in his Psalms. He spoke of God's nearness to those who are broken: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). "The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (34:18).

God also spoke through his prophet Isaiah to express his love for all who are broken in spirit: "To this one will I look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble [broken] spirit, *to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite*" (Isaiah 57:15, my italics).

What incredible promises our Lord has given to those who are broken in spirit. He pledges to dwell with all who have been broken and to revive their hearts.

Both the Psalmist and Isaiah are speaking prophetically of a brokenness that points to Jesus' death and resurrection. There is a *physical brokenness* that is the result of human despair. I'm talking about bereavement, emotional pain, anguish that comes from physical afflictions. Yet the brokenness spoken of by Isaiah and the Psalmist refers to something other than human despair. They are speaking of *spiritual brokenness*.

The truest picture of spiritual brokenness is found in Luke 19. In this passage Jesus is riding on a colt into Jerusalem:

"When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If you had only known, even you, at least in this your day [times], the things which were meant for your peace! But now they are shut from your eyes" (Luke 19:41-42).

The Gospels show only a few instances when Jesus wept. Once was at Lazarus's tomb. In that passage, the translation says Christ "cried silently." But here in Luke 19, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the Greek translation means, "WAILED ALOUD."

Jesus gives us the reason why he wept such wailing tears: "O Jerusalem, which kills the prophets, and stoned them that are sent to you — how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Luke 13:34).

Here was the source of Jesus' agony. We're told Christ "came to his own and they received him not." Jesus was crying, "If only you had accepted the things I said to you! It would have brought you my peace, my blessings, my hope and purpose for your lives."

As Christians we know Jesus is the only hope for the world. Every believer knows we have One to turn to. We have a source to go to for strength and comfort, because we believe Jesus is who he claimed to

be. Paul speaks of this hope when he writes:

“Remember...in time past, you were without Christ, being aliens...strangers to the covenants of promise, having NO HOPE, and without God in this world. But now...you have been brought near by the blood of Christ. FOR HE IS OUR PEACE” (Ephesians 2:11-14, my caps).

The author of Hebrews adds, “We have fled [to Christ] for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor...both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:18-19).

Here is the difference between us, who have found refuge in Christ, and the multitudes who are lost: *They have rejected their rescue*. To many people today, the truth of Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection is but a fable.

As the prophets warned, they have heard and rejected him and have turned to their own ways. They are lost without hope — and what a tragic loss that is.

This tragedy begins with what the multitudes have lost. The lost generation today is like the multitude in Jerusalem that Jesus wept over. The people of Christ’s day lost what he had wanted to give them.

They missed true freedom. They lost the peace that comes from the assurance of having all sins forgiven. They missed the healing touch of Jesus. They lost a hiding place from the storm. They missed the abiding, comforting, guiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

It was over these lost masses Jesus wept and cried, “*If only!* If only you had known what I wanted for your life. If only you would have taken what I offered you. I wanted to shelter you, to spread my wings of comfort over you. If only you had listened. If only you knew my love and mercy toward you.”

“But now they have been hidden from your face...because you did not recognize your time of visitation” (Luke 19:42, 44).

What does Jesus say of those who reject him? “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it. But wide and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who are on that road” (Matthew 7:14, 13).

The multitudes of Jesus’ day rejected his offer. And today his offer is still being rejected. Yet this is still the day of visitation for the present generation. Of how many multitudes will Christ say, “If only”?

What did Jesus see, exactly, that broke his heart and caused him to weep? Christ looked upon multitudes of Jews and Gentiles desperately trying to please God through rituals. He saw masses of people worn down, heavy in spirit, despairing over their lifelong efforts to please God. They all were so sincere as they went through their imposed rituals. Yet it only increased their burdens. The Jews themselves had 613 laws and rituals to keep. And the Gentiles had many more gods to try to

appease.

Think of how deeply grieved Jesus must have been as he witnessed this. He had just spent three years preaching to crowds throughout the land, “I am the way, the only way to the Father. I am the resurrection and the life. No man can come to the Father except by me.”

Now he saw the multitudes streaming in and out of the synagogues and temples. And in his prophetic eye, he saw it happening not only in Jerusalem but throughout the whole world down through time.

Indeed, what Jesus saw happening then is going on right now. Millions worldwide make sacrifices to their gods each day hoping to appease their wrath. Some even afflict their bodies with great pain as an offering to their deities. At any given moment thousands of prayers and chants are sent upward in desperate attempts to find hope.

I often see foreign masses during my prayer walks through Times Square. Every time I take such a walk I see crowds of tourists from around the world. Visitors from India arrive here from a land of over a million gods. Visitors from China and Japan represent nations with millions more gods.

The majority of these people are looking for the same thing: *atonement*. They are desperate for a way to placate their gods, desperate to make some sacrifice that will help them escape the guilt of their sin. The great question for them all is, “How can I obtain peace with my god?”

As Jesus looked around the temple, he saw people everywhere buying lambs or goats or pigeons to offer as sacrifices. That is when great grief overcame him:

“When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If you had only known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which were meant for your peace! But now they are shut from your eyes” (Luke 19:41-42).

Christ was saying, “If only you had known the provision made by my heavenly Father for you. You would know the peace that passes all understanding.”

The Bible offers up this same cry, “If only!” from cover to cover. If only they could have believed God’s promise to Abraham. Each of the three major religions of the world — Christianity, Judaism and Islam — claims Abraham as the father of their faith. Yet few within these religions share Abraham’s faith in God.

In obedience to God, Abraham took his son, Isaac, to the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice. Along the way Isaac asked his father, “Where is the lamb for sacrifice?” Abraham answered with faith: “My God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8). And God did, leading Abraham to find a ram caught in some brush.

Abraham's faith speaks clearly to us today, just as it spoke to Isaac: "If only you had been looking, you would see God provide for the sacrifice."

If only God's people had believed the words of John the Baptist. Here was one of their own prophets, revered and trusted, who said of Jesus: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Later, John again identified Jesus this way: "Looking upon Jesus walking, he said, Behold the Lamb of God!" (1:36).

God provided his own lamb for a sacrifice: Jesus, his only Son. And when Christ was crucified, buried and raised from the dead, he became our atonement, our peace. Jesus willingly took on himself our sin, guilt and shame. He died and rose again to set all men free.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [practices] received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (Peter 1:18-21).

Peter reminds us of the glorious truth: "Christ is our hope!"

Jesus was resurrected as our only righteousness, our only way to please God. The Father said of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The apostle Paul reminds us of this again and again throughout his epistles, teaching that Christ alone is our righteousness in God's eyes.

"Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:21-24).

Paul then adds, "David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (4:6-8).

The apostle is saying, "Here is righteousness by faith alone: to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness. My own 'righteousness' is of the law. But the righteousness that is of Christ comes on the basis of faith."

We can give to the poor and needy, we can be kind, we can think good and honorable thoughts. And we may convince ourselves that these good works will help save us on Judgment Day. Not so. Even if I lived for years without breaking God's Word in thought and deed, it would avail me no credit. "Not by works we have done...but by faith in the shed blood of Jesus."

I do not say any of this lightly. It is devastating for any person to hear, “Your good deeds won’t save you.” Indeed, we can’t convince anyone of this. Such convincing requires a miracle of God’s mercy; it is a work that must be done by the Holy Spirit.

Here is the sacrifice we are to make, according to Isaiah: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

Finally, what is brokenness? Brokenness is to give up all hope of attaining heaven by any measure of personal goodness. It is to lay down all trust in our own efforts. It is turning wholly to the victory of the Cross of Christ, believing he is the only way. Finally, it is trusting him to empower us through his Spirit to live up to his claim on our lives.

That is brokenness, contriteness, humility. And we need such brokenness to keep walking in faith: “The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:15).

No matter how I may feel, Christ is my righteousness. No matter how many doubts may arise, Christ is my righteousness. No matter how many accusations I hear from the devil during the day, I stand on this: God sees me as righteous in Christ!

“To this one will I look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

Where is the Lamb of God now? He is in heaven, seated on his throne, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Prince of Peace. One day all the religions of the world will bend their knees before Jesus and confess he is the Lord. “Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, He was — He is — the everlasting Lamb of God.” Behold, the Lamb of God!

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