

BROKENNESS

BY

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Fort Collins, Colorado

July 24, 1995

First, for a fresh encounter with God that I have sensed among the staff since we have been together this week. And I know from listening to your hearts and from praying with many of you, that you have not come here this morning to hear another speaker. But that you have come with a heart longing in desire to hear from Heaven. That's the prayer of my heart, O Savior. That's the prayer of our hearts and we lift it up to you in the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Amen.

During these days we've been encouraged and stirred by the wonderful reports of what God is doing. The stirrings that God has been sending on many college campuses. And the stirrings that He has been sending to many of those in this room during the Ministry Days. The recent moving of His spirit and even during these days together, I've heard some wonderful reports of how God has been touching heart after heart in very specific ways by the power of His Spirit.

Steve and Dr. Bright started out our time Friday morning by saying that we were believing God to visit with us, not only during these days but as a movement and a ministry in the days ahead and how we need and long for that fresh continuing visitation of the Spirit of God.

And I felt directed by the Lord, I believe, to touch this morning on one of the most crucial ingredients of experiencing that visitation of the Spirit of God, not only this week but in an ongoing way in the days ahead. And so we ask the question, "What kind of heart does God revive?" And what does it take in my heart to experience ongoing continual revival?

Listen, if you would, to these scriptures and I think the answer will be plain: For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabits 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 heart of the humble and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones. The Lord is nigh unto them that are broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. You do not take delight in sacrifice or I would bring it. You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. O God, you will not despise. And then the Lord says, to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembles at My Word. And then we hear the works of the Lord Jesus: Blessed,

to be envied, happy are those who are poor in spirit, those who are bankrupt, those who are poverty stricken, those who are destitute, those who have no resources of their own, for theirs in the Kingdom of Heaven. And blessed, happy, to be envied are those who mourn, for they, those who mourn over their sin, those who grieve over that which grieves the heart of God, they will experience the comfort that only God can give.

As we hear those verses and think of many others like them in the scripture, what is the kind of heart that God revives? The heart that God revives is the broken, the contrite, and the humbled heart. We tend to think of revival as primarily a time of joy and blessing and fullness and abundance and excitement and enthusiasm and wonder and overflowing abundance. And so, at the right time it will be. We want a painless revival. We want, so to speak, a laughing revival.

The the ways of God are that the way up is down. And we are reminded by one of the leaders of the revival in Borneo in 1073 that revivals do not begin happily with everyone having a good time. They start with a broken and a contrite heart. You see, we will never meet God in revival until we have first met Him in brokenness. The Epistle of James reminds us, He calls us to draw near to God and He will draw near to you. But there is a process. First, cleanse your hands you sinners: purify your hearts you double minded; be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness.

First, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and then He will lift you up. But, as some who don't care much for the thought of brokenness, and I think that's perhaps because we have some misconceptions about what brokenness really is. You see, our idea of brokenness and God's idea of brokenness may be two different things. We tend to think of brokenness, for example, as being sad and gloomy and downcast, never smiling, never laughing, or as being morbidly introspective, or always trying to dig up some new sin to confess. Some have the image of brokenness as a sort of false humility where we are continually putting ourselves down. For some the work "brokenness" conjures up images of deeply emotional experiences and the shedding of many tears.

But I want to say this morning that there may be many tears without brokenness. As there may be, in some cases, genuine brokenness apart from the shedding of tears. There are those who equate brokenness with deeply, hurtful circumstances in their lives. But I would say again that it is possible to have experienced deep hurts and tragedies and yet never to have experienced genuine brokenness. You see, brokenness is not a feeling, it is not an emotion, it is a choice that I make. It is an act of my will. And brokenness is not, primarily, a one-time experience or a crisis experience in my life—though there may be those. Brokenness is rather a continuous, on-going lifestyle. It is a lifestyle of agreeing with God about the true condition of my heart and my life as He alone can see it. It's a lifestyle of unconditional, absolute surrender of my will to God. Even as the horse that has been broken is

surrendered and sensitive to the direction and the wishes of its rider. But it's the lifestyle of saying "Yes, Lord, not my will but yours be done." Brokenness is a shattering of my self-will so that the life, the spirit, the fragrance, the life of Jesus may be released through me. Brokenness is a lifestyle of responding in humility and obedience to the conviction of God's Spirit and a conviction of His Word and as His conviction is continuous, so my brokenness must be continual.

Brokenness is a lifestyle that takes me in two directions. It's a lifestyle vertically of living, so to speak, with the roof off in my relationship toward God, as I walk in the light in transparent honesty and humility before Him. But, it is a lifestyle that requires also that I live with the walls down in my relationships toward others.

There are some wonderful illustrations in the scripture of broken people. Frequently, those illustrations are set in contrast to the lives of those who were not broken. Think, for example, of two Old Testament kings who sat on the same throne. One committed egregious sins against the heart of God. He committed adultery, he lied, he committed murder to cover up his sin, and he lived for an extended period of time in covering up his treacherous, traitorous sin against God and against his nation. And, yet, in the scripture we are told that King David was a man after God's own heart. Then we think of the king who preceded him, King Saul, whose sin, by comparison, as we would measure it, does not begin to be as great as that of King David. All that Saul was guilty of, from the seeing of the eye, was incomplete obedience. And yet, in response to his sin, he lost his kingdom, his family was destroyed, and he came under the wrath of the judgment of God. Why the difference? But prophets confronted men over their sin and both men said, verbally, "I have sinned." But you see, when King Saul confessed his sin, his confession was in the context of blaming the people, defending himself, making excuses, rationalizing, justifying himself, and he revealed the true condition of his heart when in the same breath as saying, I have sinned, he also said, please don't tell the people. He covered up whereas King David, when confronted with his sin, fell on his face before God in confession and the evidence of that contrite and broken heart was that he painted for the entire world to see those Psalms of contrition that we have in our scriptures today. You see, a broken person doesn't care who knows. God was not as concerned about the nature of the sin itself as he was about the heart, attitude, and response of these men when confronted with their sins.

In the Gospel of Luke gives us three wonderful illustrations of the contrast between a broken person and a proud, unbroken person. You remember the parable that Jesus told, and the scripture tells us that He told this parable to those who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else. He told about two men who came into the temple to pray. Remember this in Luke, Chapter 18, the one was a Pharisee. And as he stood to pray, the scripture says, he prayed to himself and his prayer consisted of looking around at all the adulterers and the thieves and the murderers that he knew and then at this lowly tax collector by his side and

saying, "O God, I thank you that I compare favorably to all these other sinners that I know." Proud people compare themselves to others. Though he justified himself, he protested his own innocence. And there by his side was a lowly, despised tax collector who could not even lift his eyes to Heaven, but in the presence of the Holiness of God smote his breast and said "O God, the only thing I can ask you for is to have mercy for I am a sinner." You see, he refused to justify himself, rather he justified God.

In Luke, Chapter 7, we read the story of Jesus being invited for dinner at the home of Simon the Pharisee. The scripture tells us that there was a woman who had lived a sinful lifestyle in that town. Apparently, it was widely known. And when she heard that Jesus had come to the home of Simon the Pharisee for dinner, she came into that home, presumably uninvited, bearing with her an alabaster box of perfume. She went immediately to the feet of Jesus, as he lay there reclining at dinner. The scripture says she stood behind him at his feet. You'll notice that everything this sinner woman did was at the feet of Jesus. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping. The picture, I believe, of the brokenness and the repentance of her heart before she even came into that place. And then as her tears began to fall on the feet of Jesus, she lowered herself to wipe the tears off his feet with her hair. I believe a picture of the forgiveness that she had experienced as Jesus had wiped her sinful heart clean. And then in the freedom of her heart, regardless of anyone else around her, what they thought, she kneeled further to kiss the feet of Jesus to worship Him, to love Him, and then took that alabaster jar and poured the perfumed ointment on the feet of Jesus, as if she were oblivious to everyone else in the room. All that mattered to her was Jesus and she cast herself in a broken and contrite spirit before Him. Now Simon the Pharisee was a picture to us of a proud, unbroken man who was incensed by all of this and said within himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is, that she is a sinner." Well, not only did Jesus know what kind of woman she was but Jesus also knew what kind of sinner he was. And so Jesus spoke to him, as you remember, and said, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. And Jesus, you remember, told the story of two men who owed moneylender amounts of money. One owed an extravagant amount and the other just a paltry amount, but neither had anything to pay so the money lender forgave them both their debts and Jesus said to Simon, "Now which of them will love this man more?" And Simon, said, "The one, I suppose, who had the bigger debt cancelled." Jesus said, "You understand that correctly, but there is something that you haven't understood about me." He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, just a common courtesy. But she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Simon, you didn't give me a kiss, a handshake of greeting, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet: therefore, I tell you her sins, her many sins, have been forgiven for she loved much. But he who has been

forgiven little loves little.” Do you suppose that Simon had less to be forgiven than did this woman of the street? I think not. They were both sinners. The only difference was that she knew she was and Simon, in the blindness and pride of his heart, could not see himself to be a needy sinner.

One more illustration in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15. Jesus gave three parables. And we are told in the first verse that was in His audience. There were two groups of people in that audience. There were the Publicans and sinners (tax collectors and sinners) and we are told they came to hear Jesus. They eagerly hung on His every word. They needed Him and they knew they needed Him. And then there was another group over on the sideline – they Pharisees and the Scribes, the teachers of the law and they were doing their typical, ordinary thing. They were muttering and mumbling and criticizing. Can you believe this man welcomes sinners and eats with them? Aren't you glad?

So Jesus told three parables, speaking to the two segments of His audience, and I would say in this audience today every one of us in our heart falls into one of these two categories. He spoke first of the lost sheep, then of the lost coin, and then of the lost son. He told of the two brothers and how the younger of them was a proud, rebellious, stubborn, wayward heart took his share of the inheritance and went off into a far land where he wasted it all in riotous living. But after he had spent everything, he began to be in need. It's often our need that leads us to the pathway of brokenness and repentance. And, finally, having no more resources of his own, having tried everything possible to make a living himself, now destitute and poverty stricken, the scripture says this young man became broken. And in his brokenness, it says, he came to his senses, he came to himself. He became honest in acknowledging what was his true condition. He said, "I will arise, I will go to my father." This is the step of repentance, turning from going my own way and going in the way to the Father. And then he said, determined to make appropriate confession, I will say to my father, "I have sinned against Heaven and I have sinned against you." And then he determined to say to his father, though his father never gave him the chance to say the words, "I am not worthy to be your son, just let me be one of your hired servants." You see, that's the heart attitude of the broken one, the humble person, it's the heart of I'm not worthy that you should extend your grace to me, O God. Just let me be one of your servants. And you know how the father welcomed the son, embraced him, the Father heart of God reaches out to, longs for, welcomes and embraces broken hearted sinners. Put the best cloak on him, the sandals, the ring, let's have a party, let's celebrate. I think, however, we're not as familiar with the latter half of the story. There was another brother, the elder brother. The scripture tells us in the 25th verse of Luke 15 that the older son, meanwhile, was out in the field. He was the good boy. He was out there doing what he was supposed to do – being faithful, working hard. He had never been wayward; he had never been rebellious, outwardly. He was faithful and hardworking. (And could I say, by the way, just out of my own heart and walk with the Lord, the

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pilgrimage with Him that years of tenure and a hidden desire for recognition and unfilled expectations can set us up to become 20th Century Pharisees.) Here's this faithful, hardworking son out in the field and he comes near the house and he hears music and dancing and rather than going to the source to find out what's really happening, he goes to a servant and says, "What's happening??" The servant tells him the facts but not the truth. And proud, unbroken people don't want the truth. The servant said, "Your rotten brother came home and your father's got a party going for him." He didn't say, "Your brother, you remember how he left so high and mighty and haughty, he's come back but he's not the same person, he's broken, he's humble, and he's repented. He hasn't had a good meal for ages and he's at the end of everything, but his heart is broken and your father has forgiven him and it's time to celebrate." The older brother heard that younger brother had come home and he couldn't rejoice in the boy's return. The father, hearing of the anger of the older brother, left the party, and I'm told that in the Jewish family that when the father left that the party had to stop while the father went out to deal with the proud, unbroken elder brother.

And isn't that like so many of our ministries and churches and fellowships today. There's no celebration going on, no joy because they have to deal with all the proud, unbroken, angry, resentful with God people. As I look at this elder brother I am reminded that the higher up we go in terms of influence and leadership and responsibility and faithfulness of service, the easier it is to become proud and blinded to the real condition of our hearts. We become so deceived to think that we don't need to be broken. And it becomes more difficult for us to be broken for after all we have more to lose in terms of our reputation. Well, as we think about these different comparisons, let me ask which ones do you identify with? Do you find yourself identifying with proud King Saul, with the Pharisee, with the elder brother? Do you find yourself identifying with adulterous David, the broken and sinful tax collector, the sinner woman, the prodigal son? You say, well I don't think of myself as those people. You see, in each of these comparisons, both parties have sinned. The only difference was in their response to that sin. Whether they were proud and unbroken or humbled and broken before God, aware of their sin. You see, God is more offended, I believe, by the arched back, the stiff neck, the haughty eyes, and the un-teachable spirit than he is by the Sodomite, the prostitute, the adulterer, the murderer, or the abortionist. Because frequently those who are so wrapped up in sins of the flesh know that they are sinful. But those of us who are the elder brothers, the respectable leaders, the Pharisees, the ones who have it all together so often find it difficult to acknowledge the real need of our hearts.

In recent weeks I found God searching my own heart. I've gone before Him many times and said, "O God, show me what it means to be a broken person, to live a lifestyle of brokenness." And what are some of the

characteristics, the evidences of a proud, unbroken spirit? Let me just share with you some that have come to my own heart as I've waited on the Lord.

- 1. Proud people focus on the failures of others, but broken people are overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need.**
- 2. Proud people are self-righteous. They have a critical, faultfinding spirit. They look at everyone else's faults with a microscope but their own with a telescope. And they look down on others. But broken people are compassionate. They can forgive much because they know how much they have been forgiven. They think the best of others and they esteem all others better than themselves.**
- 3. Proud people have an independent, self-sufficient spirit. The broken people have a dependent spirit and recognize their need for others.**
- 4. Proud people have to prove that they are right but broken people are willing to yield the right to be right.**
- 5. Proud people claim rights and have a demanding spirit but broken people yield their right and have a meek spirit.**
- 6. Proud people are self-protective of their time, their rights, and their reputation. But broken people are self-denying.**
- 7. Proud people desire to be served,, but broken people are motivated to serve others.**
- 8. Proud people desire to be a success, but broken people are motivated to be faithful and to make others a success.**
- 9. Proud people desire for self-advancement, but broken people desire to promote others.**
- 10. Proud people have a drive to be recognized, to be appreciated. They are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked. The broken people have a sense of their own unworthiness. They are thrilled that God would use them at all in any ministry. They are eager for others to get the credit and they rejoice when others are lifted up.**
- 11. Proud people have a subconscious feeling; this ministry is privileged to have my gifts and me. They think of what they can do for God but broken people have that heart attitude that says I don't deserve to have any part in this ministry and they know that they have nothing to offer God except the life of Jesus flowing through their broken lives.**
- 12. Proud people feel confident in how much they know but broken people are humbled by how very much they have to learn.**
- 13. Proud people are self-conscious, but broken people are not concerned with self at all.**

14. Proud people keep others at arms length, but broken people are willing to risk getting close to others and to take the risk of loving intimately.
15. Proud people are quick to blame others, but broken people accept personal responsibility and can see where they were wrong in the situation.
16. Proud people are unapproachable, but broken people are easy to be entreated.
17. Proud people are defensive when criticized, but broken people receive criticism with a humble, open spirit.
18. Proud people are concerned with being respectable. They are concerned with what others think and they are working to protect their own image and reputation, but broken people are concerned with being real. What they care about and what matters to them is not what others think but what God knows and they are willing to die to their own reputation.
19. Proud people find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others, but broken people are willing to be open and transparent with others as God directs.
20. Proud people, when they have sinned, want to be sure that no one finds out. Their instinct is to cover up, but broken people, once they have been broken, they don't care who knows, who finds out, are willing to be exposed because they have nothing to lose.
21. Proud people have a hard time saying, "I was wrong, will you please forgive me." The broken people are quick to admit their failure and to seek forgiveness when necessary. When confessing their sin Proud people tend to deal in generalities, but broken people are able to deal under the conviction of God's spirit to acknowledge specifics.
22. Proud people are concerned about the consequences of their sin, but broken people are grieved over the cause, the root of their sin.
23. Proud people are remorseful over their sin, sorry that they got found out or caught, but broken people are truly, genuinely repentant over their sin which is evidenced in the fact that they forsake that sin. Under the misunderstanding or conflict in relationships, proud people wait for the other to come and ask forgiveness, but broken people take the initiative to be reconciled. They race to the cross, they see if they can get there first. No matter how wrong the other may have been, proud people compare themselves with others and feel worthy of honor. The broken people compare themselves with the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for his mercy.
24. Proud people are blind to their real heart condition, but broken people walk in the light.
25. Proud people don't think they have anything to repent of, but broken people realize that they have need of a continual heart attitude of repentance.

26. And proud, unbroken people don't think they need revival but they are sure that everyone else does, whereas, humble, broken people continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with God, for a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit.

Now why would, with that long list, why would anyone want to be broken anymore than we would want to sign up for suffering or surgery? You know we learn from the scripture that brokenness brings blessedness. Brokenness brings blessedness. Jesus said blessed are the broken ones. Those who are poor in spirits. What kind of blessings does brokenness bring? For we heard from the verse that Chuck read earlier that God draws near to the broken. He lifts up those who are humbled. We are told that God stiff-arms the proud, He resists them, He keeps them at a distance, but He comes close to, even as the father of that prodigal son drew that repentant, broken son to his chest and embraced him, we find that our Heavenly Father draws near to the heart of those who are broken. You want to get close to God, God draws near to the place of brokenness. You find that brokenness brings the blessing of new life being released. Jesus said that if that grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and its outer shell is not broken, if it does not die it will abide alone. It's the loneliness I have found in my own life is often an evidence of unbrokenness. It is only when I am willing for that hard outer shell to be broken, then the life of Jesus can be released through me and there is reproduction, there is fruit produced in the lives of others. Of course the ultimate picture of that brokenness is the Lord Jesus who we have worshiped this morning. As He said, "this is My body which is broken for you". On that cross as he experienced and endured the brokenness of fellowship with His Heavenly Father from whom He had never known a moment's separation and as He took upon Himself the full weight of our sin and was broken on our behalf. His death released eternal life for us. And so, when we are willing to be broken, His abundant life flows through us to others. Brokenness will bring to us an increased capacity for love and worship. I think back to that sinner woman in Luke, Chapter 7, she had been forgiven much so she was able to love much. I see in that woman an abandon in her relationship with Jesus that I desire for myself. She was oblivious to the rejection or the thoughts or the disapproval of anyone around her. All that mattered to her was Jesus. And in her worship and in her love there was such a lavishness, an extravagance of freedom, that's because there's a cycle in the ways of God that brokenness leads to genuine repentance. Genuine repentance leads to forgiveness. Forgiveness represents in my life freedom from guilt, freedom from the bondage in my sin and myself and when there's that new freedom bursts through brokenness and repentance and forgiveness, that freedom will produce a new capacity for love and worship. Capacity to love others, to love the unlovable, to love God, to worship God, and of course that worship and that love of God leads us always back to new levels of brokenness. Leading to greater and deeper repentance, to new forgiveness, to new found freedom, and increased capacity for love and for worship.

To hear Dr. Bright speak yesterday, out of his heart, about his love for Jesus, I wonder if some of you, with me, sat there and felt, - oh how I would love to love Jesus in that way. And we long for a greater capacity to love, to worship, to love the people we work with, to love the people we live with. Why is our capacity so limited? Perhaps it's because we're not living in brokenness. For brokenness yields that wonderful fruit of increased capacity for love and worship. And then brokenness brings increased fruitfulness. For you see, God uses things and people that are broken. There are so many wonderful illustrations of this in the scripture. It's when Jacob's natural strength was broken at the Nile that God was able to clothe him with true spiritual power. It's when the rock at Horeb was struck and broken by Moses' rod that the water flowed out to quench the thirst of the people. It's when Gideon's 300 soldiers broke their pictures that the light of their lanterns within showed forth. It's when the little boy's five loaves were broken (and I tell you I had a picture of this yesterday driving by the picnic and I said, this had to look like something of the feeding of the 5000). Had imagined Jesus taking those five loaves but when they were broken in the hands of the Master they were sufficiently multiplied to feed the multitudes with abundance left over

Brokenness brings increased fruitfulness. It's when Mary's alabaster box was broken that the fragrance was released and filled the whole house. And as we have said, it is when Jesus' body was broken on Calvary that eternal life was released for the salvation of the world. And then the fruit of brokenness is to be seen in revival. That for which we have longed and prayed is really nothing more than the release of God's spirit through broken lives. You see, there is so much in the history of revival and we'll be sharing more about some of these illustrations in the seminars tomorrow and Wednesday.

But let me just highlight a few moments where God used brokenness to bring about revival. We have read about and Mrs. Bright has shared with us about the Welsh Revival in 1905. The song that was sung throughout the Welsh Revival, sung through lips that represented broken and contrite hearts was that chorus "Bend Me Lower, Lower Down at Jesus' Feet." And through that brokenness God released a great floodtide of His Spirit that encompassed that whole land and brought untold revival blessings to the world.

You've read, perhaps, about the Shantung Revival in the late 1920's and early 1930's there in China. I read about that again recently and told by Dr. C>L> Culpepper who was the Director of the Southern Baptist Mission Agency in that Providence. He tells the story of how there was a group that had been praying for revival – a group of leaders, missionaries. He told one night how he went to his own home after the prayer meeting and he got before the Lord and he sensed need and dryness but couldn't put his finger on what it was and said into the late hours of the night, "O God, what is it in me?" After he had met with God that night he came back to the prayer meeting in the morning

and confessed to his fellow missionaries and leaders the sins of spiritual pretense, of spiritual impotence. He confessed that their praise of him being a good missionary had caused him to be proud and to steal glory from God. He said my heart was so broken I didn't believe I could live any longer. And out of that brokenness God brought brokenness to that assembled group of missionaries and national pastors and Christian leaders and resulted in an unbelievable outpouring of conviction of God's Spirit, conviction of His Holiness, conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment which resulted in Confession of sin and a great outpouring of God's Spirit throughout that province.

You've heard, perhaps, of the Lewis Revival in 1949-50, on the Island of Lewis, the largest island of the Outer Hebrides, just off the coast of Scotland. We'll talk more about that in the session tomorrow. But there was a group of deacons of the church there who had met for months three nights a week for 18 months at night in a barn to pray for spiritual awakening and revival. And they prayed as much and as intensely and fervently as they could without seeing any results. And then the story is told of how one night a young deacon rose to his feet and quoted from Psalm 24, "Who shall ascent onto the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart, he shall receive blessing from the Lord." And he looked at the assembled group of deacons there and he said, "Gentlemen, it seems to me to be foolishness for us to be praying for revival as we are if we ourselves are not right with God." And there on the straw the men knelt and confessed their sins to God, and out of that brokenness was released a revival throughout the island of Lewis that is still spoken of in Scotland today as a great moving of God's Spirit.

You've heard, I know, the story of how God brought revival to the little nation of Romania in the mid-70's, which ultimately led, I believe, to the revolution there. But perhaps you may not have heard how that revival actually started. The pastor of one of the largest evangelical churches in the country went before his people. Now it helps to understand that in Romania, at least in those days, believers of all denominations were referred to as repenters. And this pastor stood before his people in that Second Baptist Church of Irradia(?) and said, "It is time for the repenters to repent." And he called his people to join him in repenting of specific sins that if I named them to you, we, in our western world, would think, "how insignificant." But broken over their sin, the repenters began to repent, and through their brokenness was unleashed, and released the reviving power of God through that little nation. You see, God says I dwell in the high and holy place, but I also dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. To revive the heart of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Are you a broken person? You say, “Where do I start?” How do I begin in this lifestyle of brokenness? Well, I think first, certainly, we need to come see God as He really is. The closer we get to God, the more we will see our own need.

I think of Job, a righteous man, enduring intense suffering as part of that cosmic plan of God in the warfare between Heaven and Hell, just a bit player in a sense. But under the philosophies and input of his friends, Job began to reveal a heart of self-righteousness. He spent many chapters defending himself and protesting his innocence and he talked on and on and on till finally God said, “I’d like to speak.” And for chapters God began to reveal Himself and His ways to Job. And when God finished, Job could hardly breathe. And he said, “O God, I had heard of you with the hearing of my ear, but now my eye has seen you and now I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes.” No more self-righteousness, rather a broken man pleading with God for mercy.

I’ve spent most of the last seven months in the book of Isaiah and how God has met with me there. When you read the fifth chapter and see Isaiah, this great servant of God, pronouncing woes, woe to them who are materialistic, woe to them who are proud, woe to them who are sensual, woe to the hedonistic pleasure seekers, woe to the immoral. And he had the list down. And then we come to the first verse of Chapter 6 and Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up, holy, holy, holy. No longer is Isaiah seeing himself in the light of all the sinful, wicked people around him, but now he sees himself in one light only and it is in the light of a holy, high and lifted up God and he says no longer woe to them. The first words out of his mouth as he sees God are, “Woe to me.”

The Apostle Paul had the wonderful privilege of seeing a resurrected Christ there on the road to Damascus. His life was never the same. He spent the rest of his life here on earth drawing close to that resurrected Christ. And the more he grew in his spiritual pilgrimage the more he saw his own need. Early in his Christian life he called himself “the least of all saints,” as he thought back on what he had been and where God had found him. But as he matured in his faith, as he came to know God better, he called himself “less than the least.” And at the point at which he was the closest to God, he referred to himself as the “chief of sinners.”

See God as He is. Get into His presence and in His presence we will see ourselves as we really are and then fall on the Rock. Jesus said, “I am the Rock and if anyone falls on this Rock, he will be broken, but anyone on whom the Rock falls, it will crush him to powder.” Don’t wait for God to break you. Fall on the Rock, on Christ Jesus who was broken for you and begin the habit of the Publican crying out “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” with David “Have mercy on me, O God.”

And then I find this is just a practical step in developing a lifestyle of brokenness – is the need to acknowledge and to verbalize need both to God and to others. To God that I might live with the roof off, saying “Oh Lord, it is not my brother, it is not my sister, it is not my leaders, it is not the deacons, it is not the pastor, it is not the

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leadership of this ministry, it is not my neighbor, it is me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.” To cease my blaming, you see, there is no brokenness as long as the finger of blame is still pointed at another. But when I acknowledge my need to God I say “nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling, naked, come to Thee for dress, helpless, look to Thee for grace, foul I to the fountain fly, wash me Savior or I die.

I’m learning not only to acknowledge need to God but also to acknowledge need to others. You see there is no brokenness, no true brokenness, where there is not openness. Does that mean every sin I confess needs to be confessed to every person I meet. Certainly not. But I tell you the broken person is willing for others to see him at his point of need. He is willing to be transparent, to be honest. He is willing to say, “Will you pray for me? I have a need. God’s dealing with me in this area.”

A number of years ago, God’s Spirit brought deep conviction to my heart that I had developed a pattern in my life of exaggerating the truth and God began to show me that it was lying. That I lied to make myself look better, to make a better impression on others than was honestly true and I found myself in brokenness before God coming to confess that sin, looking to Him for cleansing and victory. But I want to tell you friends, the victory did not come in its fullness until I was willing to find two Godly people and confess openly my sin before them and say, “Would you pray for me,, that God would deliver me from the sin of lying.” And I want to tell you with that openness and that brokenness before god and before others, as painful as it was at the time, came unbelievable freedom and deliverance to speak the truth to every person in every situation regardless of the cost. Brokenness brings release of His life through us.

And finally, to be broken, to live that lifestyle of brokenness, do the very thing that you know God wants you to do, but your flesh least wants to do. What is it? Many of us have been obeying God in different ways this week, responding to God. But I tell you, obedience can be sometimes cosmetic and respectable. And Isaiah asked God, we don’t need to ask Him, sometimes He’s already pointing it out. He’s pointed it out to some this week. What is the step of obedience? What is the step of humility before God? Do the very thing that you now God wants you to do, that your flesh least wants to do.

A number of months ago, God’s Spirit spoke to my heart and I realized that for me living alone with the television had become a barrier in my relationship with the Lord. And God’s Spirit prompted me, “You need to turn that television off when you are alone in your home.” And a heart attitude of humility and obedience says fore God, “Yes, Lord, I will obey you.”

There’s a chorus that’s been sung frequently in some of the student revivals we’ve been talking about, “Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.” Think of that blind beggar who heard that Jesus was coming his way and he cried out, “O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy

on me.” Listen, proud, unbroken people won’t pray that way. They see no need for mercy. Those who are rich and with increased goods and have need of nothing will not cry out for mercy but those who have been face-to-face with the crucified Savior and a Holy God, can cry out for mercy. That is the cry of the poverty-stricken heart that acknowledges its great need.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is passing this way, today, and He wants to meet with us. He wants to visit us, He wants to release His Spirit through us and He can and He will when He finds humble, broken, contrite hearts that have been emptied of self that He might fill with Himself.

If it's the cry of your heart, sing it with me, “Pass me not O Gentle Savior.”

Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry

While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry

While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

Could we bow our hearts before the Lord, please? In a few moments, I'm going to ask Rich to play softly at the keyboard. Chuck is going to come. As Rich plays there, I want us to take a few moments, and I want us to take an opportunity, where needed, to take a step of brokenness. Is there a step of brokenness that you need to take right now? You see, obedience is doing exactly what God tells me to do, when He tells me to do it, with the right heart attitude. I don't know what step of obedience you may need to take, what step of brokenness. For some, it may be just to make that seat where you are sitting an old fashioned alter, a mourner's bench as they used to say, and get on your knees and there confess to God your need for Him and for His mercy. You may need to cry out to Him and admit that you have been trying to live the Christian life, to run your ministry apart from His in-dwelling power and life within you. For you, a step of brokenness may be to find another believer there, take them by the hand, and say, “I need somebody to pray for me. Would you pray for me?”

For some, God has been speaking to you about some of the challenges that we have heard this week. Your step of brokenness may be to find that China card or get another one if you lost that one or threw it away and say, “Lord, if that is where you want me, I'll go.”

God may have spoken to some, and I believe God spoke to many, in Dennis' session on Saturday. And for you, your step of brokenness may be leaving this auditorium, going and finding the nearest telephone and making a phone call to your parents to express honor and love; where necessary, to seek forgiveness. For some, a step of brokenness may mean going to another staff member or to a son or daughter, if you have to go pull them out of child care and say, “I have wounded you with my spirit, would you please forgive me.” Listen, don't wait for them to come to you. Your step of brokenness may mean you need to go find your supervisor and say, “I have not

responded to your leadership, I've not been a servant, I've not been submissive to the God-ordained authority in this organization, would you forgive me.

For those who are leaders, the step of brokenness may be fining those who are your subordinates and acknowledging, "Listen, I have been talking further down the road than I have been walking. The impression you have of me is not who I really am, for I haven't prayed for you or loved you or led you in the way that God would desire."

For some, your step of brokenness will be taking your mate by the hand and saying, "Pride has kept me from loving you and serving you in the way that I ought. Would you please forgive me."

I don't know what God is saying to you. I am going to ask Rich to begin playing quietly and as he does, in these next few moments, would you do whatever God is saying to you. Take that step of brokenness. It is only one,, but it may start you onto the pathway, a lifestyle of brokenness. You say, the thing God want of me is too hard. I can't do that Listen, don't quench the Spirit of God by a point of pride that says, "I will go this far but no further. I will do this thing but not this thing." You know the hardest person you need to go to, you know the hardest thing you need to do, you know what God is saying, just do it. That person may be in this auditorium. You may have to cross across this whole gymnasium—do it. Take the step of brokenness. We'll wait. You do what God says and watch the power and the life of the crucified, resurrected Jesus begin to flow through you.