

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-19-13 AM NOTES
"BROKENNESS"
Hosea 10:12
#1 in Series, "Revival Reminders"

Hosea 10:12 (HCSB) "Sow righteousness for yourselves and reap faithful love; break up your untilled ground. It is time to seek the Lord until He comes and sends righteousness on you like the rain."

Psalms 51:17 (NKJV) "The sacrifices of God *are* a **broken** spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these, O God, You will not despise."

Psalms 34:18 (NKJV) "The Lord *is* near to those who have a **broken** heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit."

"The path to blessedness takes us through brokenness."

—Unknown

Brokenness is my response of humility and obedience to painful circumstances, to God's Word, and to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

I. The Purpose of Brokenness

A. Brokenness Brings Humility

"[Pride] takes many forms and shapes and encompasses the heart like the layers of an onion—when you pull off one layer, there is another underneath."

—Jonathan Edwards

Romans 12:3a (NKJV) "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think..."

James 4:6 (NKJV) "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: '*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*'"

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV) "Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

B. Brokenness Brings Fruitfulness

Jeremiah 4:3 (NKJV) "For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: 'Break up your fallow ground...'"

II. The Process of Brokenness

"Moses spent the first 40 years of his life thinking that he was a somebody. He spent the next 40 years in the desert learning that he was a nobody. He spent the last 40 years of his life seeing what God could do with a nobody who trusted God."

—Dwight L. Moody

A. Crisis

Genesis 32:3-6 (NKJV) ³Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴And he commanded them, saying, 'Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: 'I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. ⁵I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have

sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.' ⁶ Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him.'

Genesis 32:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷ So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. ⁸ And he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.'

B. Conflict

1. Isolation

Genesis 32:24a (NKJV) "Then Jacob was left alone..."

2. Confrontation

Genesis 32:24b (NKJV) "...a Man wrestled with him..."

Hosea 12:3-4a (NKJV) ³ He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. ⁴ Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed..."

Genesis 32:30 (NKJV) "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'"

"Christophany" —A pre-incarnate appearance of Christ

3. Desperation

Genesis 32:24c (NKJV) "...a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day."

Genesis 32:25 (NKJV) "Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him."

C. Surrender

Genesis 32:26 (NKJV) "And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.' But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'"

III. The Product of Brokenness

"God give me a deep humility, a well-guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let men or devils do their worst!" ..."[I] pray that I may be very little in my own eyes, and not rob my dear Master of any part of His glory."

—George Whitefield

Genesis 32:27-28 (NKJV) ²⁷ So He said to him, 'What *is* your name?' He said, 'Jacob.' ²⁸ And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.'"

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Every farmer and gardener knows that until the soil is broken up, it cannot produce crops; it only brings forth weeds and briars. What a picture of an individual Christian and also a church in need of revival. Our default mode is to become hard and unfruitful. It doesn't require any effort to go in that direction. Unless there is a breaking, our lives will only bring forth weeds and briars. All through the Scriptures we are reminded that God uses broken people. **Psalms 51:17 (NKJV)** “The sacrifices of God *are* a **broken** spirit, a **broken** and a contrite heart-- these, O God, You will not despise.” In **Psalms 34:18 (NKJV)** “The Lord *is* near to those who have a **broken** heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” The word translated “contrite” is “crushed” in the ESV. Someone has well said, “The path to blessedness takes us through brokenness.” [Unknown]. Roy Hessian said, “To be broken is the beginning of revival”. It is broken people who manifest Christ's life as they walk in this world.

The world has a warped idea of brokenness. In the world's eyes, brokenness is **never** a good thing. The world sees God (if He exists) as existing for us. They would say that God exists to make us comfortable, happy, and to help us fulfill our dreams. The world sees brokenness as being uncomfortable, unhappy, and having our dreams crushed. Thus brokenness is never a good thing in the world's eyes. The truth is that God doesn't exist for us; we exist for God's glory. Our lives cannot glorify God until our prideful self life and our self centered dreams and ambitions are nailed to the cross and Christ becomes our very life. In Scripture, true blessedness comes only through brokenness – brokenness to our pride and self centeredness. Ultimately, it is God who breaks us. The instrument that He uses may be some painful circumstance or some sinful, even satanic act done to us. God, while He never causes or originates evil, allows it in His sovereignty to bring us to brokenness that we might experience His blessing and bear fruit.

Perhaps it would be good at this point to try to give a definition of brokenness. **Brokenness is my response of humility and obedience to painful circumstances, to God's Word, and to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.** Let's enlarge on that definition as we look at the purpose of brokenness. Why do we have to go through this painful process of brokenness?

I. The Purpose of Brokenness

We all prefer comfort over pain, and yet God has determined that we need painful circumstances. Why?

A. Brokenness brings Humility

One of the root sins is pride. Some would say that pride is the root of all sin. Pride goes deep into every life. Jonathan Edwards said this about pride: “[Pride] takes many forms and shapes and encompasses the heart like the layers of an onion – when you pull off one layer, there is another underneath.” [*Humility*, Wayne Mack, P 10]. Basically, pride involves thinking that we are sufficient in our own strength and then living independently of God. Pride is when we are more concerned with being respectable rather than real. Pride is more concerned with what others think than what God knows. Pride always leaves a better impression than what is really true. Pride sees good in me and the wrong in others. Pride is described in **Romans 12:3a (NKJV)** “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think...” That's why broken people are open and transparent and really aren't controlled by what others might think. Winston Churchill perfected the art of the clever “put-down”. He once described a political opponent as, “a modest little man who has a good deal to be modest about.” The truth is, we are people who have a lot to be modest about!

The most dangerous thing about pride, however, is that it sets God in opposition to us and cuts off his enabling grace. **James 4:6 (NKJV)** “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*.’” That word “resists” means to stand in opposition against. When we live independently of God and operate in the power of our flesh, God sets Himself in opposition to us. Not only that, He cuts off the supply of his enabling grace and lets us flounder around in our own strength and human wisdom. When that happens, life becomes frustrating, boring, spiritually dry, and fruitless. We find ourselves battling a superior enemy and we are helpless and we will fall in one way or another. That’s what Proverbs 16:18 means when it says **Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)** “Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty [arrogant ESV] spirit before a fall.” The only solution is brokenness. Are you beginning to see why there can be no revival apart from brokenness?

B. Brokenness Brings Fruitfulness

Jeremiah 4:3a (NKJV) “For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: ‘Break up your fallow ground...’” The word fallow means idle and uncultivated. Just as the ground cannot bear the natural fruit of crops apart from being broken by the plow, we cannot bear fruit to the glory of God apart from being broken by God. Fruit is the evidence of God at work in our lives. Fruit is Christ’s resurrection life being lived out through us. Apart from being broken from our pride and self-sufficiency, there is only the works that our flesh can produce. Works are definitely not fruit.

II. The Process of Brokenness

There are many illustrations in Scripture of how God brings His people to a place of brokenness. Before God could use Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, Moses had to be broken. Moses had been raised as Pharaoh’s grandson and was possibly heir to the throne of Egypt. Moses had the best education that the world had to offer. People bowed to him as he passed. But God sovereignly engineered a series of circumstances that caused Moses to fall out of favor with Pharaoh and he actually had to flee into the desert to save his own life. He was stripped of all his worldly honor and power. He went from being a prince that people bowed to and from having all the opulence of being Egyptian royalty to being a shepherd in the desert. In the desert, there were no royal chariots to ride in; there was no honor, no respect – only smelly sheep and a lot of dust. This wasn’t a temporary assignment! Moses was there for forty years. Moses was then broken of his pride and self-sufficiency and then God was able to use him. Dwight L. Moody used to say, “Moses spent the first 40 years of his life thinking that he was a somebody. He spent the next 40 years in the desert learning that he was a nobody. He spent the last 40 years of his life seeing what God could do with a nobody who trusted God”.

I believe that the clearest example in the Scripture where we see the process of brokenness is in an incident in the life of Jacob. Let me remind you of some background material that sets up what we are going to look at. Jacob, Isaac’s son and Abraham’s grandson, was an unbroken man. Jacob was highly intelligent. He became a plotter and a schemer. He was filled with pride and self sufficiency. He schemed his way into getting his Father’s blessing for the first born even though his twin brother Esau was born first. When Esau found out that Jacob had stolen the blessing of the first born, he decided to kill Jacob. Jacob had to flee for his life to escape his brother’s wrath. Jacob went hundreds of miles away to stay with his Mother’s brother, Laban. Jacob’s 20 years with Laban was a case of the cheats cheating the cheats. He worked seven years for a bride he was in love with only to discover that he was given her sister. Yet, with all of his trials, Jacob would scheme and plan and seemed to always land on his feet. Finally, the relationship with Laban (who was now his Father in law) had deteriorated to the point that Jacob and his large family had to leave. Don’t feel sorry for him. He had gained great wealth and had been tremendously successful. Let’s see how God began this brokenness process with Jacob.

A. Crisis (Genesis 32:3-6)

When we pick up the story, Jacob and his large family are headed back home after having been gone for 20 years. As they got closer to home, Jacob started scheming. We see his pride and self-sufficiency put on clear display. He figures that 20 years has probably cooled his brother’s anger, but he has some schemes in place just in case Esau is still angry. **Genesis 32:3-6 (NKJV)** “³ Then Jacob sent messengers before

him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ And he commanded them, saying, 'Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: 'I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. ⁵ I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.' ⁶ Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him.'" This report struck terror into Jacob's heart. This was indeed a crisis in Jacob's life, and it had been engineered by God! Instead of coming broken before God saying "God I need You", Jacob starts scheming. **Genesis 32:7-8 (NKJV)** "⁷ So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. ⁸ And he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.'" After he made his plans, he figures a little prayer wouldn't hurt anything. In Genesis 32:9-10 he flings up a prayer. Jacob's pattern was to scheme and then pray. God was not Jacob's first response; God was his last resort, his backup plan. Jacob's confidence was still in his own abilities. Can you relate to Jacob? I can. I've done that. Jacob, if he is going to really be used of God must be broken. Again let me remind you that God has engineered this Esau encounter for Jacob. What is your Esau encounter? It is also possible for a church to have an "Esau encounter. What do we do when the programs and plans aren't working?"

B. Conflict (Genesis 32:22-25)

What happens next is one of the strangest encounters in the Bible, and yet from this conflict we see how God brings His people and His churches into a place of brokenness that leads to blessing. Notice the process that God brings Jacob through.

1. Isolation (Genesis 32:24a)

Genesis 32:24 (NKJV) "Then Jacob was left alone..." One of the reasons that the process of brokenness takes so long in many lives is that we don't get alone with God. It is in a time of being alone with God that we begin to hear from Him. Our lives are so full of distractions and interruptions. I wish television, cell phones, and computers had never been invented! We are so distracted! How many times do we (notice I said "we") sit down to have a quiet time with God and think we'll take just a minute to check emails or see if we have any messages or texts? Then we think that we really need to answer that email. The person who sent the text is waiting for us to answer. Soon our time set aside with God is mostly gone and we sheepishly say, "God bless my mess as I go through this day." I'm glad young David didn't have a cell phone and an iPad in the wilderness while he was watching the sheep. If he had them we wouldn't have the 23rd Psalm! God is still speaking to His children, but we are so distracted that we don't hear Him. Sometimes God engineers some circumstances in our lives that force us to a place of isolation so that we can hear Him.

2. Confrontation (Genesis 32:24b)

Genesis 32:24 (NKJV) "...and a Man wrestled with him..." Someone pounced on Jacob and a wrestling match ensued. Who was this mysterious man? It becomes obvious that it was a supernatural being and not someone sent by Esau. The prophet Hosea gives a commentary on this incident in **Hosea 12:3-4a (NKJV)** "³ He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength **he struggled with God.** ⁴ Yes, **he struggled with the Angel** and prevailed..." Look also at **Genesis 32:30 (NKJV)** "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'" Many Bible scholars believe (and I agree with them) this is a "Christophany". A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. **Jacob is wrestling with the Lord!** I remember hearing Henry Blackaby say that most of our spiritual warfare is not against Satan; it is against God. I agree with him. Keep in mind that the Lord started this battle. God is bringing Jacob to the end of himself; He is bringing Jacob to brokenness. Jacob had a heart for God and the things of God but there was so much pride and self-sufficiency that God could not fully use him until it was broken away.

3. Desperation (Genesis 32:24c)

Genesis 32:24 (NKJV) "...a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day." They wrestled all night. Jacob was really stubborn. He just would not surrender. Have you ever wrestled with the Lord? That place of total surrender and total trust is often so difficult for us to come to. Oh how I thank the Lord for not

giving up on me and being willing to wrestle with me until I break and die to my pride and self sufficiency. He wrestles with us until we take up our cross and nail our pride there in total surrender.

What happens next is a manifestation of God's love for His children. Finally the Angel of the Lord says, "Jacob, I hate to do this", and he cripples him. **Genesis 32:25 (NKJV)** "Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him." If you know anything about wrestling, you know that a wrestler has to have his legs. The Lord struck Jacob at his point of his strength. Jacob is now in a place of desperation. It is likely that his last scheme was that if Esau prevailed over Jacob's entire plan, he could outrun Esau. Now he was crippled. Every thing he relied on was stripped away.

In this historical incident in Jacob's life we see a picture of how God works with us individually and as a church. Are we as a church wrestling with God? Are you wrestling with God? What hip socket is He going to have to put out of joint to bring you to a total surrender and a renouncing of your own pride?

C. Surrender (Genesis 32:26)

Genesis 32:26 (NKJV) "And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.' But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'" This is what brokenness looks like. Jacob has come to the end of himself. There is no more scheming and plans that leave God out. He is saying, "Lord, You are all that I have. You are my only hope." Instead of wrestling with the Lord, he is now clinging to the Lord. Oh the blessing of coming to the end of self and seeing God as our all in all – our only hope. Jacob won by losing this battle with the Lord. What a beautiful illustration of the Lord's love for His people.

Are you wrestling with God? Have you come to a place of desperation yet so that you are clinging to Him? If not, what hip joint is He going to have to pull out of socket to make you desperate for Him? I'm not even going to give you illustrations of what that might look like, but I know that it will be painful. God does this because He loves us. He cares more about our holiness and our fruitfulness than He cares about our comfort and temporal happiness. He has an eternal perspective. He knows what is best for us 10,000 years from now. Again let me remind you that this applies to us as a church. What is God going to have to knock out of socket in this church family to bring us to a place that we say, "Lord, wherever You direct us we will go; whatever it costs we will pay; whatever uncomfortable things we may be called to – we are ready. We look to You in desperation."

III. The Product of Brokenness

There are so many wonderful things that flow out of brokenness – a new openness, a sweet fellowship within the church, power with God, and certainly joy. But the main product of brokenness is humility. The thing that we are broken from is pride, and when pride moves out, humility moves in. If pride is living independently of God, then humility is living in total dependence on God. Humility sees God as BIG and me as small. Humble people, who know how small they are, live in dependence on God because they realize how big and powerful He is. George Whitefield was greatly used by God in the First Great Awakening in Colonial America. In 1737 he prayed, "God give me a deep humility, a well guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let men or devils do their worst!" Five years later after seeing God use him so mightily, He recorded this prayer in his journal: "[I] pray that I may be very little in my own eyes, and not rob my dear Master of any part of His glory." ["Revival" by Brian Edwards, P57]. When you are broken before God, you live in total dependence on Him and desire only his glory. Self sufficiency no longer rules.

CONCLUSION

Let me go back to Genesis 32 to close us out. We see Jacob's brokenness in **Genesis 32:27-28 (NKJV)** "²⁷ So He said to him, 'What *is* your name?' He said, 'Jacob.' ²⁸ And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.'" "Jacob" has several meanings in the Hebrew, but one (the one in mind in this text) means "schemer" or "plotter". In Scripture, a person's name encompassed who they were. Jacob says, "I am schemer, I am the plotter, the planner, the one that thinks he can handle it himself". This was a confession of what a mess his life had been. God says to him, "Now you have a new name – Israel". "Israel" means "prince with God; one

who has power with God". Our God of grace takes self-sufficient planners, plotters, schemers and breaks them that they may become humble servants who have power with God.