

The Joy of Forgiveness – March 7, 2010

I was reading some things and became intrigued by the very basic biblical concept of the broken spirit. Jesus said in Matthew 5 that the poor in spirit are blessed and that the kingdom of heaven is theirs (Matthew 5:3). In Psalm 51:17, we read, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." (NKJV) Consider also Psalm 149:4: "For the LORD takes pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." The word "meek" means "depressed, figuratively, in mind (gentle) or circumstances (needy, especially saintly)" and is also translated in the scriptures as humble, lowly, and poor. The word "broken" in Psalm 51 has pretty strong meaning: to burst, break down, crush, destroy, hurt, and quench. Similarly, "contrite" means to collapse and break. By now, you are probably getting a good mental picture of what all of these words mean. They are clearly related and you are probably getting a picture of someone that is, as we are likely to put it today, "at the end of the rope." You get a picture of someone that is at the end of themselves and looking for outside help. Hopefully you have also caught the idea that this place of brokenness leads to blessing.

After considering these things, I turned to a calendar that has a scripture of promise listed for each day. The scripture for Saturday was Psalm 32:5: "Acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." When God shows you that there is sin in your heart and you feel convicted of how bad that is, or you realize that something is not right in your life right now, you have two choices: you can put your head high and forge ahead, ignoring the conviction and growing harder in your heart, or you can be crushed and fall down before the Lord and call out to Him for forgiveness. David called out for forgiveness and God forgave him. That is how the brokenness leads to blessing! Let me share with you the entire psalm for context.

Psalm 32

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. 3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. 6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. 7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. 9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. 11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

God convicts people of sin. When people are broken before the Lord, call out to Him, and turn from the sin, He will forgive them and heal them. "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to [God]. In a time when [He] may be found!" (6a) And here is the blessing in the brokenness: "But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him." (10b) There is much joy in God's forgiveness! "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!!!" (11) Have you been broken before the Lord? Have you been forgiven? Then you are blessed! If not, you can be forgiven! You can be healed! You can be blessed!