

“Brokenness: The Key To A New Beginning”

2 Kings 5:1-19

Sermon Series: “Broken”

Introduction: In this series we are going to examine brokenness from different angles, some positive and some negative. The Bible presents the concept of brokenness as positive in some ways and negative in other ways. However, the reality is that brokenness is good and necessary in our spiritual lives. Psalm 51:16-17 says, “For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.” What is brokenness and why does God desire it from us? Let’s examine this from the the story of Naaman.

Naaman was a Syrian military commander who had a lot going for him, but he also had leprosy. Leprosy pictures sin in the Bible. It is a major problem, but maybe the purpose of the problem was to bring him to the end of himself and bring him to the Lord. The unsung hero of the story is an Israelite slave girl who told her mistress about the prophet Elisha. In a great act of faith, courage, and unselfishness; she told her that Elisha could heal Naaman. So, the king of Syria sent a letter to the king of Israel telling him to heal Naaman of the leprosy. The king thought it was a political ploy to provoke a quarrel and got scared. However, Elisha heard about it and asked the king to send Naaman to him. Naaman came expecting royal treatment and a spectacular event. He was insulted when Elisha told him to wash seven times in the muddy Jordan River and he would be healed. He balked at this but finally relented at the urging of his servants, and he was healed. He then genuinely placed his faith in the one true God. What can we learn from this for our lives today?

Definition: Brokenness is coming to the end of ourselves and living in dependence on God.

Main Idea: We have to come to the end of ourselves in order for God to give us a new beginning.

Characteristics Of Brokenness:

1. Brokenness is characterized by laying down our pride and coming to Jesus with humility (v. 9-12, see also James 4:6, Luke 18:9-14). Dr. Eli Eyzenberg writes, “Here’s how Naaman prepared for the meeting with Elisha: So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing... Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha’s house. He came to do

honest business with the God of Israel and he reasoned as worshiper of Syria's god would: Generous gifts of the worshiper (Naaman) buy blessings of forgiveness, cleansing and prosperity, including physical healing. He took an amount of silver, gold and extremely expensive clothing that a priest of Israel's God would find to be fair price or even a generous reward for services rendered. In this way Naaman approached the God of Israel as a moral man who, proud of his morality, approaches God today. He knows his need for God, but wants to save his pride once this need is met by divinity. He wants to pay the price or give a very generous gift. However, he is not looking to enter into a life-long relationship of dependency and servitude to that divinity whose temporary help he is now seeking."

2. Brokenness is characterized by laying down our terms and coming to Jesus on His terms (v. 11-13). Dr. Eyzenberg writes, "He was willing to receive something from the magical power of Israel's holy men, but at the same time he was totally unwilling to abandon his great faith in Rommon-Haddad. He no doubt thought that it was this deity who gave him victories and not the covenantal God of Israel. This is the reason he brought bribes. He wanted to enter into a temporary arrangement with the religion of Israel. He wanted to get the product, get the bill, pay it, and move on in life. The problem was that Israel's God is not a pagan deity. Naaman was unprepared for this reality. Israel's God does not cut deals and he does not play games, but He absolutely loves to show mercy to people regardless of their ethnic or even religious identity. Naaman learned this once he finally listened to the advice of the nameless, theologically unsophisticated slaves who came with him on this trip to Elisha."

3. Brokenness is characterized by laying down our self-will and coming to Jesus in obedience (v. 13-19). When Naaman acted in obedience on God's instructions (given through the prophet), he experienced a miracle by the grace of God. However, he had to do what God said before God acted. God could have healed him without this, but He wanted to change his heart and bring him into a relationship with Himself.

Applications:

-We are only saved by the grace of God and must humble ourselves and admit our need for Him (Ephesians 2:8-9, John 6:29, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

-For God's will to be done in our lives, we have to live in faith and obedience according to His terms and not our own.

-We can only face and overcome the challenges of life by admitting our weaknesses and relying on God's strength (Zechariah 4:6).