

The Brokenhearted

By R. F Becker

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” —Isaiah 61:1,2

Reader—Look carefully at these verses. They should interest you greatly. They should give you great concern of heart. For they have already brought peace to many uneasy consciences. They have been a cure to many a sin-sick soul. They have been healing balm to many a wounded heart.

These words show us a condition of the heart and soul few ever have (Luke 13:23). Yet without this experience of the soul no one shall ever see the Lord. The Word of God is very clear, that he who knows nothing of a heart broken for sin, does not know the Savior, and shall in no wise enter heaven (Luke 13:5; 18:14).

Well, I know it is not in me to open the eyes of your understanding. It needs the Spirit of God to reach your heart. But the Lord being my Guide I wish to set before you the experiences of one whose broken heart is bound up by Jesus Christ. Count it to my anxiety for your soul if I write plainly. And may God give you light to show you both as I try to show you how the Lord always deals in one way with a sinner if He finally brings him to a saving knowledge of Christ. Yes, Reader, be sure of this one thing. Whether the Lord converts a man in an hour or by slow degrees, one step by which he leads a soul to Himself and to Heaven is always the same. It is by the way of a humbled, contrite and broken heart.

Our little span of time is fast fleeing away. Today everyone of us is one day nearer our last living hour than we were yesterday. Death who waits for no one is slowly and surely doing his work in our bodies (James 1:15). Many have their tombstones ready and the place of their own grave marked out. Yet how few believe God that the way we enter Eternity we will abide forever. How few consider their priceless souls in the light of the Word of an unchanging God, Who has decreed—“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:12).

It is with the hope that you will realize this that I am writing. May a sense of your sins against God humble you. May the Spirit show you how important it is that you should fall upon Christ now and be broken for your sins before the day of vengeance of our God (Matt. 21:44). For Jesus, Himself, has said that He has power only on earth to forgive sins (Matt 9:6; Heb. 9:27). Only this side of the grave does He bind up the brokenhearted.

In the verses of Scripture before us we learn that it is Christ alone who binds up the brokenhearted. This is a kind of heart disease He alone can cure. For a soul really broken for sin there is no help in earthly friends. Fondest relatives can bring it no comfort. Money or property cannot buy peace for it. No earthly education can bring restful understanding to it. No church membership, no ceremonies, no morality, no amount of good deeds can satisfy it. And no worldly doctor can diagnose the trouble or find a remedy for it. God, the Father, His own dear Son through the Holy Spirit, can heal the broken heart, and no other power can ever avail.

Now, what sort of person is this one who is so brokenhearted that Isaiah tells us that Jesus alone can help him? To whom is this that Christ has been sent to speak good tidings? Who is this captive He has come to free? Who is this mourner Christ alone can comfort? Reader, may the Spirit of the Lord show you as He has me that it is not the self-styled saint, but the sinner Christ came to save. It is not the self-righteous, but the penitent. It is not the proud-hearted, but the brokenhearted Jesus came to bind up. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4).

But, Reader—BEWARE OF A FALSE BROKEN HEART. Beware of a heart not completely riven from sin, with only a surface break in it. This is the kind that soon heals over without Christ's binding, and is calloused and hardened (Heb. 3:13). Such hearts are often sore broken because of loss of a loved one, an accident, loss of property or a business failure, yet is never bowed to God for its sin. These are like Pharaoh, whose heart seemed to fail him on account of the plagues, yet just so soon as the trial was over he wholeheartedly returned to his sin. Like King Ahab, who sold himself to wickedness in the sight of the Lord

and committed abomination in following after idols, these seem to sit in sackcloth while judgment is sounding in their ears, but afterwards return to sin and false prophets again. Like a dog, soon as his sickness passes returns again to his own vomit, so many a man seemingly broken by earthly trials, after a time returns in a sort of relief to his old haunts of sin. Just as Cain whose heart was wounded because God received not his offering, went out and built a city, so this kind chokes his convictions and conscience with much worldly business. He turns his back on the Bible and races from place to place to buy and sell and get gain. And thus the surface sore of his heart is healed. Many, like Saul, when in distress of spirit seek jovial company instead of God's Word, until conscience is put at rest again, and his sin covered up (Luke 12:2). Oh, my Reader—shun this kind of brokenness! Beware of a sore conscience that accuses and then excuses itself. Search your innermost being. See if you are broken indeed by events, yet wholehearted enough for sin. Jesus, the Father's appointed Physician, never binds up such hearts. Nay, this kind of brokenness is only the first fruit of Hell.

Then, too, **THERE IS THE LEGAL BROKEN HEART.** Most men are never brokenhearted for sin, even if guilt has deeply stained their lives and souls. Like a serpent's poison, sin being a part of them, they do not feel bad about it. But when God's Word is heard, somehow they feel as though all is not well (Jer. 23:29). The thorn of guilt in the conscience begins to fester. Yet like the adamant stone broken, each piece is still hard. This kind of heart has not been emptied of sin poison. And, though conscience through the Word may startle him, he loves the sin within, still. And still trusting in doing, this kind turns again with more zeal to salving his aroused conscience with more deeds. And even if the unclean spirit will leave for awhile, he will return (Matt. 12:45).

The last false broken heart I want to speak of is the **PROFESSOR'S.** Though he safely passes the first and second watch as a Christian he will be halted at Heaven's gate (Luke 13:24). While the truly brokenhearted will be broken in time, the professor will be broken forever at death. Like the man Bunyan saw who came tumbling over the wall onto the road to Heaven, he has never come by way of the Cross. Yet he seems to smoothly sail in religion's wide and shallow stream. Very pious appearing is he on Sunday. He is always in his pew, always gives his mite. Any doctrine or teaching is the same to him just so long as the preacher reads a verse from the Bible. Holy Ghost ministry never moves him. No sense of guilt ever seems to trouble him. No doubts of his eternal welfare ever disturb him. No consciousness of utter unworthiness, or utter sinfulness ever make him go softly, broken and sad. He can listen to the Gospel today and enjoy a carnival or movie or field day tomorrow. Like Jehu, he can say, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord," and then go and serve Jeroboam. Like Egypt's frogs, he can live in water or out. His motto is, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." Has he not professed? Of course. Has he not been a member of good standing in the meeting or the church? Has he not had a sensational experience? Has he not eaten and drunk the Lord's Supper in His Presence? Has not the Lord Himself taught in his streets? Oh, my friend, take heed that this be not your description! This kind of man shall surely be broken for sin, but too late. It will be when he shall strive to enter Heaven and shall not be able (Luke 13:24). Though in that day he may trim up his profession (Matt. 25:7), though he may crowd among the godly (Matt. 22:11), though he may plead ignorance (Matt. 25:44), or cry with many tears (Heb. 12:17), his brokenheartedness only for the loss of the blessing will never be healed. Oh, my Reader, again I plead with you beware of this condition of soul! For such shall go out to weep as men never wept before! They shall cry in dire agony with no place to flee! Fountains of terrible remorse will be broken up within them, but no mercy then. They will look for no help. They will expect no salvation then. For the Lord Jesus who now kindly binds up the mourning, brokenhearted sinner with His loving words, "Come unto Me," will then be the Master, risen up with the condemnation, "I know ye not whence ye are." O preacher, O professor, O church member, do you now see why I ask you, have you been truly broken for sin and bound up by Jesus Christ? Reader, would you know whether or not you ever had a truly broken heart? Unlike the temporary brokenness that many have, who never find healing in Christ, the soul that is drawn by the Father (John 6:37) never does in this life cease to mourn for sin (Zech. 12:10). His repentance needs never to be repented of. True brokenness for sin runs parallel with the true faith in Christ. And it is found only in a believing heart (Acts 20:21).

Now, just what is it that the Lord uses to make a man repentant and to cause his soul within him to mourn for sin against God? What is it that makes him so brokenhearted that none but divine grace can help him?

First—a CONSCIOUS REALIZATION OF PAST GUILT. This is why most never become alarmed or repent. They never believe that they are very guilty before God, regardless of their standing before men (I Sam. 16:7). Just as long as the lepers' sickness did not show itself by breaking forth in scabs or bright spots he was all unconscious that his body was saturated with its deadly foulness (Lev. 13). So the sin poison that comes from the heart and defiles the natural man (Matt. 15:18) is not felt, or believed to be present, until the light of the Gospel reveals to him that by the actions of his sins, the disease has broken out. Alas! Suddenly does such a one learn from the Bible that in God's sight he is only "wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, that have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1:6). He had thought he was well enough but now the consciousness of guilt's poison makes him sick at heart. And he does not deny the truth of his past guilt, for the Word, like a two-edged sword, cuts his heart both way. Now he is self-condemned as he remembers the past. And while he used to roll sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue, it has now become hateful, loathsome and abhorrent to him. Day and night his sins are ever before him. And beginning to realize that it is against Christ these sins were committed, he mourns within with a great and broken heaviness. And realizing Christ alone can deliver him, he longs exceedingly for that peace that He made by the blood of His Cross.

The *second* thing that makes a man brokenhearted is a REALIZATION OF THE POWER OF PRESENT SIN. The soul that seeks peace for his guilty heart now learns another bitter lesson. Sadly he arrives at another conclusion. He learns that in himself he cannot control his sinning. Now he sees that added to his past guilt there is a daily mountain of condemnation piling up. That which he would not do he is always doing and so he learns there is no goodness in him. A very painful sense of guilt and powerlessness take control of him, and so, sadly he goes on his way mourning and sighing within. And though he knows it not, he is gently being drawn by the Father to the Great Physician.

But for the present no interest does he take in earth's brightest prospects. All frivolity seems hideous to him. All tastes of temporary happiness drawn from earth's cisterns leave a rancid taste. Unconcerned companions seem like trees walking. And the fountains of the deepest parts of his soul seem to break up altogether as day in and day out his sins and guilt and powerlessness parade before his conscience as an exceeding great and frightful army. And believing surely that God, by His own Son's sacrifice can save him, he cries out like one of old, "God be merciful to me THE sinner." Reader, have you ever felt your need something like this? Did you ever experience in your inmost soul some similar conviction and a desire to know your sins forgiven? If not, believe me, regardless of what you profess, you are at this very hour a lost soul in danger of Eternal burnings (Acts 8:21). Oh, leave everything else behind and "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near" (Isa. 55:6).

I have attempted to show, my reader, what are causes of a broken heart, under the gracious influence of the Lord. Now, what is the result in a man who has come to realize his exceeding sinfulness, his great need?

First—he is a CONTRITE MAN (Isa. 66:2). He is bruised of heart, by the Spirit that convinces of sin. No one, not even his best friend, could now make him believe that he is righteous, that he is upright, that he is fit for heaven in his natural condition! Nay, it would be far easier for him to believe that he had never yet breathed. Surely convinced is he that he is entirely ruined, that he is evil itself; and except Christ redeem him, he will perish. In true godly sorrow his broken sin-sick soul is emptied of the last vestige of anything righteous or good in himself. And though very often his companions and relatives see no evidences of it, he goes along softly mourning in bitterness of soul for his sins against Christ, who now appears to be his only hope.

Secondly—his is a VERY SHAMEFUL HEART. Like Jeremiah, his heart is crying within, "We lie down in our shame and our confusion covereth us for we have sinned against the Lord our God" (Jer. 3:25). What a conviction of base ungratefulness comes over him! Now, by God's Word, he sees that all his day he has been a wrongdoing rebel against the One who has kept him in love and infinite faithfulness. How these thoughts shame him and break him only a truly repentant soul can know. For there is no sickness like soul sickness.

So, while the unmoved impenitent man digests sin with great pleasures, this mourning, broken soul loathes and abhors the evils that have separated him from Christ. And while the heady letter professor can boast of his love to God, and convince others what a loving Christian he is, this man in shame cannot so

much as lift up his head, as he realizes over and over that from his youth he has not obeyed God, nor loved Him. This breaks him asunder as he learns, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

Thirdly —his is a RENT HEART. As the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, so his heart has been rent to the core. All the reigning love of sin pours out, leaving a deep, deep wound only Jesus can bind up. Like the sewing of a new piece of cloth on an old garment that causes a rent, so the knowledge, new to him, of his sinfulness and disobedience causes a torn and aching conscience. The truly penitent's heart is thus torn away completely from any hope in man, and is exceeding sorrowful until Christ heals him with His Word.

Fourthly —his is a WILLING HEART (Matt. 8:2). He cries, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). And again like the leper, "Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst make Me clean." Broken completely as far as human aid is concerned, now he says with the poet "Have thine own way Lord, Thou art the potter; I am the clay." The truly broken soul now realizes that while he is now willing (yea, he desires it more than all else) that Christ should come into his heart, it is not of him that willeth but of God that showeth mercy (Rom. 9:16). And he sees, too, that man's much lauded free will is only that Christ should depart from him. For the willingness that is in him now he knows is not of nature. And did not Jesus Himself say about natural man, "Ye will NOT come to me that ye might have life?" (John 5:40) Yet in his own broken heart he finds a willingness that he knows God alone has planted. And in this willingness he sees a ray of wondrous light! He sees that his one and only desire to have Christ is proof that he was given already to Christ, by the Father, and knows that his brokenhearted willingness to come to Him is not of man but of God. And did not Jesus Himself promise, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out?" (John 6:37) So in spite of his humility over his great guilt, he believes Christ can bind his wound. And in a faith, that only a believer ever has, he clings to Christ as he now begins to know Him in His Word and says like Jacob who wrestled with the angel, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

His hope is now like Job's when he said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." Like the dying thief his heart is crying, "Lord, Remember Me." Now he prays to Christ "Whom have I in heaven but Thee" (Psa. 73:25) It may have been only an hour, it may have been spread over years of time, but Reader, have you ever had such heart searchings before God? If not you surely have not experienced the binding of a broken heart by Jesus Christ.

Briefly I have sought to show you somewhat of the process God uses to humble the sinner He is gently drawing to Christ (John 6:44). But how does Christ bind up the brokenhearted? Surely there are mysteries in God's dealing with souls we can never understand (John 3:8). However, it is also evident that Christ uses two kinds of bindings to heal a broken heart. He uses both the unseen inner bandages and a visible outer one. And these are His alone to use. The Spirit of God has anointed Jesus Christ, and no other to apply them. And so having drawn a man by His own Spirit, through His own word, to see himself as God sees him, thus causing him to mourn for his sins, Christ gently but surely applies the first bandage to the broken heart.

This is the band of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is the Comforter Jesus sends into the penitent's heart. He guides the wounded heart to all truth (John 16:13). And He, the Comforter, shall teach the sinner sad and broken that there is healing in Jesus' blood, even for him (John 15:26). He then teaches that he, a vile sinner, is loved by Christ with the same love with which the Father loves the Son! Oh, wonderful bandage for a sin sick heart! Oh, blessed truth for a broken soul! Oh, loving binding of the Comforter, who leads a sinner to confide only in Christ, and testifies of no other. Now what beauties does the broken-hearted one see in Christ, by the Spirit's teaching! Now he sees no man save Jesus only. For Christ's own bandage of the Comforter has begun to bind up the deadly wound in the heart that the revelation of sin has made. The Comforter also teaches the penitent that none can ever be saved without Christ (John 14:6). And though he feels very sick for his sin, he also, by divine light, comes to know that Christ has already borne his awful guilt! And so by the Great Physician's power, the Spirit brings the brokenhearted to feel and believe as the man who said, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Also by his same gentle binding the one sore broken for his guilt can now say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall I go? Thou has the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

The second inner band used by Christ to bind the brokenhearted is FAITH. He causes this bandage to be applied to the heart by the hearing of the Word (Rom 10:17). By faith the broken soul learns to depend entirely, absolutely, altogether on the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins. By faith he sees that since Christ has died for him, he is now safe from the dreadful penalty. By faith, he learns that he is in God's sight forever justified and saved from wrath (Rom. 5:9). By faith, the confidence comes now unto his sin-riven heart that Christ will never—no never—cast him away since He really has bought him with His own blood (I Cor. 6:20)! By faith, Christ fills the hungry heart with good news as he binds it. Oh, how sweet now seems the truth that Jesus Himself has made peace by the blood of His Cross (Col. 1:20)! And the wondrous tidings: “Thy sins and iniquities I will remember no more” (Heb. 8:12)! What a healing is this to the broken heart to really see that Christ his Passover has been sacrificed in his stead, and that he now is one with Christ—complete in Him! By the healing band of faith, the broken believer now puts a priceless value on the blood of Jesus, for he sees for sure it is the only barrier between him and a lost eternity. How wonderful are God's Words: “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11); and “When I see the blood I will pass over you” (Ex. 12:13). And as the healing bandage of the Comforter breaks the power of sin so the band of faith by the virtue of the Blood cancels all guilt.

Along with his new faith a new DESIRE springs up in every true believer. And so while he who has only a profession to keep up, and has never felt his dreadful guilt can calmly excuse his sins by saying, “we are not under law,” the man who has been taught by Christ never wants to, or never will feel free to sin. “Oh, no! Sin nailed Christ to the tree!” says he. “I have died to sin, how shall I live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2). He who came to bind his broken heart has made him a new creature, old things are passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). And the same bands of the Comforter and faith that have bound up his heart, have bound him in life to the Great Physician with a tie that can never be severed (John 10:28).

Now what is Christ's outer bandage for those who in contrition come to Him for binding up? Is it not HIS OWN WORD? Is it not in the Bible we find the assurance we crave and need for the walk of faith? Yes, Reader, the Word of God is Christ's outer band for the broken-hearted. Oh, how precious are the words of the Bible to the one whom Jesus loves and has healed! In it we find His own promises, His own assurances, His own commands, His own strengthening encouragements. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

But the believer's assurances and affections rise and fall even though his broken heart has been bound by Christ. And so while the inner bands are often not felt and realized, the outer band of the Word remains immovable, immutable. Like the Lord Christ Himself, it is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). So the repentant believer finds that while Christ's blood has saved him, Christ's Word is the visible band of assurance. Feelings rise and fall but the Word never changes. “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away” (Luke 21:33). After Jesus has bound up the brokenhearted He gently teaches him to rely only on His own Word for assurance he is forgiven. This is a sure band for a broken heart, and will never fail. “Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed” (John 20:29).

God looks down from Heaven and sees the ungodly, worldly man enjoying his sin and repulsive disobedience. He sees the dead professor's black and sinful heart under his fair pretensions—pretty disguises of fair conduct. He sees the world, corrupt and vile, reserved unto fire and judgment. But He sees another group here in the land of the living. It is the body of believers who are in the world but not of it. These are they who have come to believe His Word. These are they who have become broken under a sense of their guilt and have been bound up by Christ's eternal bandages, and so also bound by Him. Blessed and holy are they who have thus been resurrected from among the dead ones of the earth. On such God's wrath shall never fall. Over these the second death shall have no power. These are made kings and priests unto God, and keep His Commandments which are not grievous. These are they who in the day of judgment shall stand at Christ's right hand. They are His own. And in that day when every eye shall see Him, they shall sing, “Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and hath made us a kingdom, priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever.” Reader, are you one of these? Has your heart ever been sore, broken for sin, and then bound up by God's appointed Physician? If so, you can go on your way rejoicing. For Jesus has bought you, and you are now His free soul. And while the world scorns and despises the one who has humbly come to Christ and clings only to Him, the Lord Himself has said, “The

sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:17).