The Broken Heart

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and the contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Ps. 51:17

Perhaps no other psalm expresses more fully the experience of the penitent and believing person. Firstly David humbly confesses his sin (v. 3, 4 and 5). Secondly there is an intense desire for pardon through the blood of the Lord Jesus (v. 7). Thirdly he longs for a clean heart (v. 10). Fourthly he wants to give something to God in return for all His benefits. What can we give to God? David says:

- ***"I will teach transgressors Your ways."*** (v. 13)
- ***"My lips shall declare Your praise."*** (v. 15)
- He will give me ***"a broken heart"*** (v. 16-17)

➢ **The natural heart is unbroken.**

The Biblical laws, the truth of the Gospel, all God's mercies to us, our troubles and even sickness do nothing to break our natural hearts and minds. They are harder than stone! There is nothing in the universe so hard! This is clear in the following verses:

"Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness." Is. 46:12

"O Lord, do not Your eyes look for truth? You struck them, but they felt no pain; you crushed them, but they refused correction. They made their faces harder than stone and refused to repent." Jer. 5:3

"At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The Lord will do nothing either good or bad'." Zeph. 1:12

Every one of us who has found this same forgiveness should come to this same resolution – to offer up to God this day a broken heart. But why are the natural hearts of men and women so hard? There are at least three reasons.

1. There is a thick curtain over their hearts. They may read the Bible but see it more as literature than as God's Word speaking directly to them.
2. Satan can easily carry away the seed that has been scattered.
3. They are ***"dead in their transgressions and sins"*** (Eph. 2:1). The dead don't hear and they don't feel!
4. They have built a thin wall with no cement, hoping it will be a refuge in times of trouble and will give them protection.

Let us continually pray to our Father God to keep us away from the curse of a dead unbroken heart. If our heart is unbroken then we are in a slippery place and the Evil One is laughing at our peril.

If we are deeply concerned about our situation then there is hope. The Lord Jesus is ready to welcome us home and rejoice with us at our deliverance.

➢ **The awakened heart is often wounded but not "broken".**

<u>The law causes the first wound</u>. The Holy Spirit prompts us to reflect on our sins. We read verses like, ***"Cursed is everyone who …."*** [See Jer. 11:3; 17:5; 20:14-15; 48:10] As we reflect on our lives and the state of our hearts, we see our sin in all its awfulness.

<u>The majesty of God causes the second wound</u>. We become conscious of how very great and holy is our Father God whom we have sinned against. ***"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done evil in your sight…"*** Ps. 51:4

The third wound comes from our own sense of helplessness. So often our hearts are still unbroken and they rise up in frustration with God. Why are His laws so hard to keep? Why is faith the only way to salvation? Why is God completely sovereign and He can save or not as He wills? This reveals an unbroken heart. And there is no more miserable state than this.

- **The believing heart is also a broken heart**

- **It is broken from its own righteousness**

When the Holy Spirit leads us to the Cross our hearts are broken from seeking our salvation by trying to appear more righteous. All the burden of our self-effort drops away. We have an overwhelming sense that the work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross was perfect and it is His wisdom and power that give us His divine righteousness.

I often feel so foolish that I could ever have thought there would be any other way of saving myself! If I now think of saving myself by my own hard work, my whole heart and mind refuse to do it. I wonder why the whole world doesn't see that the way of salvation is only by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus appears so wonderful. This righteousness is given to me free – to such a sinner as I am! For so long I neglected, despised and hated the God who has provided it for me. I tried to put mountains between us, but yet He came over the mountains to me! Ezekiel puts it this way, ***"Then when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation declares the Sovereign Lord."*** (Ezek. 16:63)

- **It is broken from the love of sin**

When a man believes in the Lord Jesus sin is hateful to him. Why is this so? It was sin that separated him from God. It was sin that crucified the Lord of glory. It weighed down His soul and His body and made Him bleed in agony and die.

Do we know the truth of this broken heart – broken through a sight of the Cross? It isn't when we look into our own hearts or even into the heart of hell, but rather when we look into the heart of the Lord Jesus that our hearts are broken.

Let us pray for this broken heart! All boasting is excluded. To God be all the glory! Worthy is the Lamb! All the struggles for a crown of self-righteousness to put on our heads are replaced as we think of that crown of righteousness that we will lay down at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

- **The great advantages of a broken heart**

- It keeps us from being offended at the preaching of the Cross

A natural heart, especially in the Muslim World, is offended every day at the preaching of the Cross. Perhaps some of you were once offended by this. The preaching that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus was something that I must have or eternally perish often enraged me. I don't think I am alone in this. Many have left the faith on account of it. The offence of the Cross has not ceased. But a broken heart can't be offended. A broken heart would wish forever to hear of the righteousness that is given to us without our works. Many are really offended when we speak plainly of their sin, but a broken heart is never offended since it hates sin. Many are like the Ba'al worshippers in Judges 6:30, ***"Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Ba'al's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."*** But our broken hearts love to see the idol stamped upon and beaten small.

- A broken heart is at rest

The heart of the godless man is like a raging sea in a hurricane. It goes from crisis to crisis. His mind and heart are not at rest. The sorrows, regrets and pains of death always accompany those who have forgotten their resting place. But the broken heart says to itself, ***"Be at rest once more, O my***

soul, for the Lord has been good to you." (Ps. 116:7) The righteousness of the Lord Jesus takes away every fear. His love ***"casts out fear"***. (1 Jn. 4:18)

- Nothing that happens is 'wrong'.

However dire the situation may be, a broken heart is always satisfied with the Lord Jesus. This is enough! Whatever happens His love and His presence remain for ever and completely satisfy.