

“I Am Like A Broken Vessel”
Psalm 31:12

Introduction: As we look at Psalm 31, we must note the importance of this psalm. It was quoted by Jonah, Jeremiah, and Jesus. Further study of the psalm reveals that it is broken down into six parts with each part focusing on complimentary and contrasting ideas. In this psalm there is salvation and strength; surrender and song; sorrow and shame; supplication and scorn; safety and sympathy; sweetness and stability. The emphasis of the psalm is on trusting the Lord even though we are broken. Notice:

1. When others do evil, trust God for His strength vs. 1-8
2. When others cause pain, ask God for His mercy vs. 9-18
3. When others see the victory, give God the glory vs. 19-24

Body: It is in verse 12 that David reveals the condition of his heart. He described it as a broken vessel. The heart represents the emotional center of the body and David is saying that all of his feelings are broken to pieces. It is deterioration from the inside that those on the outside may not notice. Although this may not be a pleasant condition, we need to realize one thing and that is there is a principle in the Bible that teaches us that brokenness is a prerequisite to usefulness. David could have never reached his full potential unless he was broken. Therefore, you and I cannot reach our full potential unless we are broken as well. Notice some lessons on brokenness in the Bible.

- I. The Importance of Brokenness
 - A. God will never use a man until he is broken.
 - B. Jeremiah 4:3- *“For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.”*
 1. Fallow ground is that which is permitted to lie idle and uncultivated.
 2. There can be no blessing without effort and no harvest without plowing.
 3. There is not making without breaking.
 4. Before the ground can be made useful it must be broken. The cutting blade of the plow must turn over the soil, and the sharp teeth of the harrow must pulverize the soil.
 - C. John 12:24- *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”*
 1. Before there can be life there must be death.
 2. Before there can be joy, there must be weeping.
 3. Of itself, a seed is weak and useless; but when it is planted, it “dies” and becomes fruitful. If a seed could talk, it would no doubt complain about being put into the cold, dark earth. But the only way it can achieve its goal is by being planted. We must die to self so that we may live unto God.
 - D. Although broken things to us are tragedies, to God they are opportunities.
 - E. Without Him we can do nothing but with Him we can do everything.
 - F. Broken Pitchers Judges 7:18-20
 1. Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

2. Earthen vessels is a type of our human bodies.
 3. In the pitchers were placed torches.
 4. Point: The torches were there, but there was no light and no victory until the pitchers were broken. When it was broken the light shone forth and the enemy fled.
- G. I Corinthians 11:24- *“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”*

II. The Illustrations of Brokenness

- A. The Bible is full of illustrations of brokenness.
1. Genesis speaks of broken fellowship—God used it to reveal grace
 2. Exodus speaks of a broken law—God used it to reveal to man His need of God
 - a. The broken law calls for a broken Saviour, and the broken Saviour calls for a broken heart.
 - b. God permitted man to break His law to convince him of his need for a broken Saviour.
 3. Numbers speaks of a broken covenant
 4. Psalms speaks of a broken heart
- B. Broken Roof Mark 2:1-5 (v. 4)
1. The man sick of the palsy had no means of getting to Jesus, but he did have four friends who were interested in Him.
 2. When they brought him to Jesus they could not get to Him. They could not get through the door, and evidently a window was not available. A broken roof was the only means of getting this man to the Lord Jesus.
 3. O God, set us on fire! Help us to break up our homes if need be to bring this paralyzed, dying world to Christ.
 4. Mark 2:5- *“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”*
 5. People may be perishing because we have no faith. Men and women are lost today because of our lack of faith.
- C. Broken Ship Acts 27:44- *“And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.”*
1. They were not saved by their ship but were saved by the breaking of their ship.
 2. We can see the curling of the waves and the foaming of the sea. We can see the struggling people plunged beneath the water, then emerging a littler nearer to the land. We can hear their cries of fear give way to a note of hope as at last their feet touch the sandy bottom. Then, another wave picks them up again, overwhelms them, but throws them farther towards the beach. Then came the roll call and everyone was safe.
 3. If the ship had not been broken, there would have been no pieces; and if there had been no pieces, there would have been no hope.
- D. Broken Loaves Matthew 15:29-39 (v. 36)
1. The loaves belonged to the disciples until Jesus needed them.
 2. Point: We have a life and Jesus wants us to give it to Him. Will we let Him have it and break it up to feed a starving multitude?
- E. Broken Box Mark 14:1-9 (vs. 3, 8-9)

1. In those days three hundred pence was a large sum of money. A man would toil all day in the fields for a penny. The sum that the disciples had in mind represented a good part of a year's wages.
2. She broke a box and destroyed all possibilities that anyone else could have been anointed with the same contents in that box.
3. It was an act of final consecration on the woman's behalf. The box could be broken only once, and it could never be repaired.

III. The Insight about Brokenness

- A. God makes only what He breaks and breaks only what He wants to make.
- B. Sunshine all the time only makes a desert. We need the clouds, the dark days, the storms, and the rain just as much as we need the sunshine.
- C. The faith that is not exercised is a faith that will not grow; a faith that is not tried will never be strong.
- D. Steel is iron plus fire. Soil is rock plus crushing. Grapes must be crushed before juice can be made. Wheat must be broken to make bread. Unless the violin string is stretched until it cries out in pain, there is no music in it. If we are to be what God wants us to be it must be faith plus suffering.
- E. Job 23:10- *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*
- F. Psalm 66:10- *"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried."*
- G. Proverbs 17:3- *"The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts."*
- H. God has planned that every broken piece in the lives of His own children will fit in somewhere in the complete portrait of His eternal counsel and will.
- I. It is said that a bar of steel worth \$5 when made into ordinary horseshoes will be worth only \$10. If this same \$5 bar is manufactured into needles, the value rises to \$350, but if it is made into delicate springs for expensive watches, it will be worth \$250,000. This original bar of steel is made more valuable by being cut to its proper size, passed through the heat again and again, hammered and manipulated, beaten and pounded, finished and polished, until it is finally ready for its delicate task.

Conclusion: What answer does David give in this psalm for someone that feels like a broken vessel? The only answer is found in verses 1, 6, 14, 19. We can only trust Him as we go through our trials. Will you trust Him?