

Broken Crayons: What to Do When Life Gets Shattered

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Broken Crayons

The message today was not the typical message, and when it was presented to me, I mean, I know this is what I need to present. I'm just, it's a very real subject, and I guess that's a good thing. And so the name of today's message is "Broken Crayons." Love crayons, you can color with them. It's really cool. And if you would, if you have your scriptures, please turn with me to John chapter 9, and we're going to read verses 1 through 12. John chapter 9, verses 1 through 12.

The Blind Man's Brokenness

And we start the story off with a broken man. As he passed by, he saw a blind man from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, that this man or his parents, why he was born blind?" And Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him, or through him. It was not this man that sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with his saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," which means "sent," and he went and washed and came back seeing.

I was familiar with this story, and the reality of the story is he spit on some dirt and rubbed it in a guy's eyes. This is the way of the master. But this man was a broken man, and his brokenness was used as a means to facilitate glory to God. You guys realize that this man was not made blind because of sin, such a time as this, that he was made blind because we're fixing to heal him. And guess what's going to happen? Because brokenness is going to be a witness of the man's past and what God can do in the renewal of all things.

Well, the rest of the world saw this man as a beggar begging outside, you know, a broken man, an invalid of society. Yeshua looked at this man and he saw a masterpiece waiting to happen. You see, when the man went and washed his face, everyone was like, "Hey, who healed you? How is this? Is this the blind man? This isn't him," because it was more, more changed in this man than just his sight obviously. He's unrecognizable. Isn't that him? That's not him. He's unrecognizable. Something about him glorifying God was just so, so stark in the contrast of who he used to be. "Who healed you? I don't know. Where's God?"

Broken Crayons Still Color

It's a funny thing about crayons. As you see kids playing with crayons a lot, we've introduced crayons to Benjamin whenever we go to restaurants and they give you the little three-pack, right, red, yellow, and green, or what not. And he's coloring, and he has no concept of lines, which is just fun to see because he's just free, you know. And I think we were at Applebee's or something, and Ben, you know, he's getting excited seeing these lines go everywhere with this crayon, and the crayon breaks in half. The crayon has lost the integrity of being a perfect crayon. It doesn't look like the other crayons. It won't even fit back in the package right because the paper's all gunked up now. And it's awesome to see that children typically continue using a crayon even after it's broken.

Ever wonder why? The cool thing about crayons is: broken crayons still color. Broken crayons still color. It reminds me of a story that I read recently, and apparently the story comes from a popular story in India. I have no citations for that. The author is unknown. The story is about two water pots and a Water Bearer.

The Water Bearer and the Cracked Pot

Now, this Water Bearer leaves his master's house every single morning, and he walks to the stream, kind of a long walk down this path. And he puts this piece of wood on his neck, and on either side he hangs these clay pots, right? And on his right side he has one clay pot, and it's perfect. He fills it up with water. The water stays in it. Works as designed. The other clay pot, however, had a small crack at the bottom of it. And you could fill it up with water, but by the time he got back to his master's house, there would only be about half the water left over.

And so for two years, this Water Bearer hooks the two pots up, starts his journey down to the stream, fills the pots up, comes back. And the water pot that was perfect, it was very proud of this: "Look at me. I'm perfect. I'm carrying all my water. Look at that! And you over there,

leaking out everywhere. Huh? Well, you got this broken pot essentially feeling quite ashamed of itself, feeling sorry for its Water Bearer.

And finally, one day, the Water Bearer comes and he's filling them up with water, and the pot with the crack looks up at him and says, "I'm so ashamed of myself. I'm so sorry." The Water Bearer looks at him and says, "Why are you sorry? What do you, what are you talking about?" It says, "Well, because of my imperfections, because of my flaws, you can never get the most out of your efforts. In other words, you carry all both of these pots to and fro every single morning, and you never get two full pots of water because of me, because of my brokenness."

And the Water Bearer looks at him and he says, "All right, on the way back I want you to notice all the nice things on the path. I want you to notice flowers, trees, everything. Specifically, the flowers. Look at the flowers. What kind of flowers are they? What do they look like?" So they walk back to the Master's house. He looks at all the little flowers on the ground and it cheers him up a little bit. Flowers make things nice for a moment. And they get back to the house, and the Water Bearer looks at him and says, "Hey, did you see all the flowers? Yes. Did you see that the flowers were only growing on your side of the path and not the side of the path of the perfect clay jar?"

"He says, 'I knew about your flaw two years ago, and I took advantage of it. I used it as a blessing. You see, I planted seeds on your side of the path, and every single morning for the past two years, you've been watering these flowers, and they've been sprouting beautiful wildflowers. And for the past two years, I've been able to pick these flowers and decorate the table of my master. You see, without your brokenness, without your flaw, the master would never have that beauty in his house. Without your brokenness, without your flaw, the master would never have that beauty in his presence.'"

Brokenness Becomes Beauty

The story speaks volumes because it speaks about brokenness in my life. I mean, we all have brokenness in our lives in one way or another. And a lot of times we can look back at the brokenness and see the beauty that came from it, see the blessing that came from it. Certainly not instant. Sometimes it is years go by, and you reflect back and say, "Wow, if that situation never happened to my life, or if I didn't trip and fall in this situation, or if that brokenness did not overtake me in this area in my life and I've lamented about it when it happened, wow, this situation, I would have had this testimony. God would have been able to use me in this way. These flowers wouldn't have grown."

I love the story because it mentions jars of clay, and we know Second Corinthians, Paul speaks about this. He speaks about, "Well, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not us. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Yeshua so that the life of Yeshua may also be manifested in our body."

Treasures in Clay

And so what's interesting is in Corinth, Corinthians was a major manufacturer, not of jars of clay, but jars of bronze. Now, the funny thing about a jar of bronze is if you drop it, nothing will happen. It'll just bounce off the ground. The jar of clay, fragile, Paul talked about this. Something unclean touches it, break it, disposable.

You guys ever seen the little lamps that they sell in Israel that are from like the Iron Age and so on? They're little oil lamps, right? So when you go to Israel, I just found this out, and I find it exciting because when I did the afterlife series, this would've been an awesome little tidbit. Most of the little oil lamps that they find are broken for obvious reasons, they just don't survive. But how is it that Israel has all these perfectly preserved little oil lamps thousands of years old, still with little burn marks on them? Where did they find them? They're preserved in the tombs of the residents of Canaan and Israel because remember, Sheol was a dark place. So they placed a lit lamp in there. I'm just kidding, but, the funny thing is, most of the lamps that they find, most of the clay jars they find, are broken because they're fragile. And what Paul is saying here is he's celebrating the fact that yet we're fragile, we are jars of clay. But the Father has put a treasure inside the jar. The Father has put a spirit inside the jars of clay. The Father has put Yeshua inside the jars of clay so that even though we get cracks, even though we get busted up, even though we get broken, it actually benefits the treasure because now the treasure is seen through our brokenness. And that's a hard thing to comprehend, but it's an awesome thing at the same time.

Brokenness Reveals the Treasure

People can feel broken. People can feel unwanted. People can feel undeserving. People can feel uninvited. People can feel worthless, unlovable, even because of many different scenarios.

There could be emotional brokenness, maybe brought on by emotional abuse or bullying. Maybe someone said something harsh to you when you were younger, and you've lived a life

reaffirming a lie. Anybody know what I'm talking about?

So in kindergarten, the way our brains work, and it's amazing in counseling we see this, you got to deal with it. "You're stupid. You're worthless. What's wrong with you?" Words like this coming into the mind of a child. Man, don't they stick? Can you guys remember a time when you were called stupid as a child, maybe you had an authority figure say, "Get out of my way, your work's less"?

Now, what's amazing is sometimes we accept these lies and then we live a life affirming them, making them come true. So where forgiveness comes into play, and I see a lot about forgiveness, about how to get rid of those voices, forgive the people that hurt you. Forgive the people that planted that seed. But nonetheless, this can cause a lifelong subconscious voice in your head that continues the emotional abuse.

Different Forms of Brokenness

There's physical brokenness. Maybe you were physically abused. Maybe you were touched inappropriately as a child. Maybe you have a physical ailment that puts you outside the social norms of society, makes you feel pretty broken.

Then there's spiritual brokenness, something that affects many. It's usually caused by one of the two scenarios that we've talked about. Spiritual brokenness, sure, some of you have felt that sometime in your life. Where you don't feel like the Father is with you anymore. Where you feel far away from the Father. Something's happened where the Father obviously doesn't love me anymore, where He doesn't feel close. And the truth of that is the Father didn't move.

I mean, I had a prayer that I prayed when I got to speak at Camp Yoshua. I told the teams that the prayer I had every single night for the camp is that the teams coming there, the teams that are struggling in their life, and I'm not just talking about struggling with gossip last week or struggling because I looked at some porn last week. I'm talking about struggling with the effects of being abused as a small child by maybe a parent that isn't around anymore, that left them high and dry. These things that teens bring to the camp.

I pray that they feel comfortable coming forward and saying, "How do I forgive them for that?" My prayer at the camp is my same daily prayer for here: that every single person would not only see the Father but would have the opportunity to run into the arms of the Father and literally feel the reality of the love of the Father wrap around them. That's my prayer for everybody to experience. That's more than just some Holy Ghost experience. That is absolute Shalom in your life when you feel the gravity of that love.

The Voice of Brokenness

But this sense of brokenness sometimes keeps us from accepting that, keeps us from getting too close. Anybody ever maybe spoken to themselves and said, "Why does God want me? How could God love me? Why would God use me? I'm worthless"? Things we tell ourselves that are so so so untrue. "I'm broken because of the things in my life."

You know, it's amazing when we start looking in Scripture. We see a man by the name of Moses.

Biblical Examples of Brokenness

Moses was a broken man. Separated from his family at a young age. He was adopted by the very people, separating him from his people and his family. I'm sure that had some type of psychological impact. I mean, I don't know, but he became a murderer, he killed someone. Now, we like to read the story and Moses is, of course, the hero, the prophet of God. And we sometimes just kind of minimize the fact that he murdered somebody.

And then he's rejected by his own people, people who he just longs to be accepted by. And then he's ousted by the people that raised him. He's kicked out, exiled from Egypt. Every time he spoke, baffling over his words, he probably appeared to be uneducated and unsure of himself.

And what God said when He looked at Moses? Perfect. Perfect. That treasure is going to go in that jar, and it's going to shine through the cracks. It's going to be awesome. I can use that man. That could be a masterpiece.

Jacob. Israel. The selfish, diseased deceiver full of greed. He became broken one night, physically, his leg broke, fighting with God. And this broken man who went through this family ordeal, I mean, this was the man who was the star player in [Genesis 33](#). If you ever, baby, don't you know what a soap opera is? During [Genesis 33](#) of the family of Jacob? Yeah, drama. I love my one wife.

In the midst of being broken by God, he cried out to this messenger, this angel: "Bless me! Give me something of the divine! Let me feel something of the divine! Let me have some type of inheritance of the divine! Let me feel my Father in heaven!"

So we know what happened, alright? Jacob, we're going to name you Israel, commonly translated as "fighting with God" because he was fighting with the angel. But I lean towards the translation of "fighting with God" meaning no matter where you go, what you do, God will always fight with you against any adversaries on your side.

Then we have a man by the name of Yeshua. In [Hebrews 5](#), verse 7, I read something that caused me to stop. It says: "In the days of His flesh, Yeshua offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death. And He was heard because of His reverence or obedience. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered and being made perfect." Everybody, and being made perfect! How excited about this verse! "He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

He came perfect. What's fascinating about this verse is Yeshua was called perfect specifically by the writer of Hebrews, after He was beaten, after He was broken, after He was outlawed by the Empire and rejected by His own people. After He was stripped naked. After He was crucified. After He died. After He suffered. Perfect.

It's amazing how the resurrected King, He knows something about pain, stress, anxiety, and brokenness. He's called perfect because of it.

Broken Crayons Still Color

Your brokenness, if we look in Scripture, is beautiful. Your brokenness can be a blessing. Your brokenness is not the end of whatever journey you think you're on. Your brokenness is an opportunity to be used by God to produce something great. Your brokenness is perfect. Why? Because broken crayons still color.

See, I got my story of Avery in here. We were in Camp Yoshua. There was a man, the founder of the camp, Brent Avery, a pastor, who was the one who originally started it. He comes every Sunday and talks. This year, he was talking about forgiveness.

Now, forgiveness is one of those things that, if left unchecked, will ruin your life and keep you broken more than you know. He was doing a sermon about forgiveness, talking about how you need to forgive and how bad things were done to you that you need to forgive. And I'll be honest, he's a great preacher, but I was tired. I was in the back, on my phone a little bit.

Brent Avery's Testimony

And then I heard him mention, and when I was at youth camp, I woke up in the morning. For some reason, I perked up. What's he talking about? Youth camp?

He was 12 years old. He was talking about how he woke up the next morning and the sheets were no longer, he couldn't feel the sheets anymore. It's weird. He didn't understand what was going on. He was just kind of waking up, but he knew something was wrong.

And he was starting to talk about this situation. I think it was someone who was a couple years older than him, someone who was really hairy. And he could tell by the hair that it was his peer doing this.

And he was so scared in that moment, alone, being abused by this man. And you could hear a pin drop in the room, 300 people, because everyone's attention in the room went to him in that moment. When this man was telling his testimony of being sexually abused as a child, and the emotions that went through him.

The guy finally left, and he just laid there. "I don't know what to do. What do I do?" And he started to confide in a few close friends. And they were like, "Is it about so-and-so?" And he said, "Yeah, me too." Crying. What do you do?

Twelve years old. And he spoke about understanding that even at that age, "I could get angry. I could get revenge. I can hold this as an excuse for the brokenness that's come upon me, to label me as who I'm supposed to be for the rest of my life. Or I could forgive him."

And he actually set up a meeting, came out, said, "It was wrong. I forgive you." He just spoke to him again.

The Beauty of Brokenness

What was amazing about the story wasn't the actual story, it was the fact that this man has been in ministry for 50 years and he's looking at the teens and essentially saying, "If I had to go back in time and had the opportunity to change it, I wouldn't change the circumstances that caused my brokenness as a young child."

Why not? Because then I couldn't be used for other people who are in broken situations. I couldn't tell them about the love of my Father in heaven, tell them about the peace that I have now because of my Father, and tell them how to get through the situations that define them or do not define them. His brokenness was beautiful, and it was incredible because at that night all these changes. And when you're a teenager, it's incredible because you know everything. But from the moment you turned about 23, 24, when you just start getting stupid, you know, everybody remember that? When you guys started getting stupid, and where'd all my knowledge go? I used to do everything with so much pride and selfishness.

Well, so he said this to me on Facebook: "I'll forgive them. My mom and dad divorced, and I'm not holding this grudge against them. Someone punched me as a kid, and I don't want to forgive them." Not to minimize these situations, but it was incredible because I saw a man right there

who was admittedly broken because of something that took place in his life. And because he had the testimony of restoration, nobody in that room had any excuse to fall back on, no reason they could not say, "I forgive you" for whatever offense they were holding on to. Nothing in that room, and it was incredible because during the time of prayer, the things the teams were holding on to for ten years were freed up. Sobbing.

Why God Uses Brokenness

For some reason, God chooses to use brokenness in a way to achieve victory. Have you ever wondered why? Yeshua talked about it: "If you want to be the greatest in the kingdom, you've got to serve. If you're gonna be the greatest, you're going to have to go through suffering. If you're gonna be the greatest, you're going to carry the cross."

Because the pagan world uses military victory to conquer other nations, but Yeshua brought a different message. We're going to bring the right way for it; we're going to bring something else. We're gonna use a different weapon. When Yeshua was talking to Pilate, he's like, "Man, if my kingdom was of this earth, you'd have someone killing you right now with a big ol' knife. I mean, I've got some guys, zealots and everything, man, we'd overtake this place, kill y'all, hang you on crosses. But my kingdom is not from this place."

You know what the kingdom of Yeshua uses to achieve victory and conquer other nations? I know in the South we don't like it. We love guns. I love guns too. He says love and servitude towards others, forgiveness, repentance, peace, Shalom, and whatever means it takes to achieve that, even if you have to suffer for it. That is the way of the kingdom.

Brokenness is beautiful because it allows God to work through the treasure that's inside. Paul speaks about this in 2nd [Corinthians 12:9](#). He says, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

We've got two people excited to be here and read these scriptures about a topic that I know is not popular. Because we don't want to acknowledge our brokenness. We want to sit at home and think, "Wow, I'm so broken. I don't deserve this. I'm unloved because of this. I'm going to suffer because of this. Well, I don't deserve anything because of this. I'm unworthy because of this." But we don't like light to be shined on it so that we can achieve something to overcome it. We don't like it to be a good thing. We don't like it to be something that we can conquer. We'd like to tell ourselves, "I'm just a sad little person", but that's not true. It's a lie.

Paul's Testimony of Weakness

They can't take anything from you. Paul says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me. For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am made strong."

See, persecutions, calamities, these are things that would cause someone to be broken. Wow. When I'm broken, the power of Yeshua is revealed to the world, because that's the opportunity I have, just like Yeshua did on the cross, to reveal the love of God.

Let me give you a scenario, and then we'll move on. Yeshua's on the cross, and I've said this before. He's naked, he's been stripped, he's been pierced, and he's suffered. We've been whipped before with a belt. I'm sure some of us, maybe we've never been whipped with cat-o'-nine-tails and had skin ripped off, bones exposed. This is where he was on the cross. He had every excuse in the book to cuss at the folks doing it. I mean, let's just be real, every excuse in the book. Your mom! I mean, something, right? The ultimate brokenness that could be achieved in the physical world, upon him, all eyes on him. And the only thing he could do was pray for his enemy and speak to the Father and say, "Father, forgive them, give them a blessing", they didn't ask for forgiveness. Matthew, so... they didn't ask for forgiveness, but "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Opening up the portal of God's love into the world.

Our Own Brokenness

Sometimes our brokenness is caused by our own stumbling, our own sin. Anybody tested it? All right, a few folks. Yeah, sometimes we mess up. A jar jumps off the table and gets broken. Maybe a lack of integrity at some point in our life still echoes. Sometimes we feel like we deserve to be broken. We feel like we deserve to be alone. We feel like we deserve to be unloved for something that we've done.

And even though we've been forgiven by those we may have trespassed against, and even though we've repented to the Father and went into prayer and said, "Hey, Father, will you forgive me?", we know that the Father forgives us, we continue to hold our own offenses against ourselves.

Anybody? Anybody? I mean, I'll be honest. Anybody? I mean, you sit there and you think back, and you'll be like, "Man, that was awful, like... oh." And you get that? You get those feelings of regret and guilt in your stomach again. Man, that was just... man, you're disgusting, broken, huh?

Even though we pray, "Father, will you forgive me?", it's incredible because when we do that, and I'll say it like it is: when we do that, we block out the power of God's forgiveness in our own mind as if it's not enough. As if our repentance toward the Father was not enough. As if he is not sufficient. As if he is not all-loving, as the Scripture says.

Peter's Denial

So this brings me to the story of Peter. Loved Peter, zealous disciple. And the stage is set. We know that Yeshua is about to be betrayed, and he's going to be taken to the high priest's courtyard for the kangaroo court that's about to take place, the illegal trial. And Peter's following along, right? So this is one of his loyal disciples. And just a little while earlier, before the arrest, he's like, "Hey, I'm gonna stay with you till death!" You thought, "Oh, haven't I ever felt like that? No, no, till death, right?"

Then Peter's walking through the courtyard, and it's amazing. So it's late at night. The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" Here, starting to get nervous, sweat starting to drip down his face, his heart pounding. "This is dangerous. I am NOT one of his disciples!"

Now, one of the servants and officers made a charcoal fire. What kind of fire is that? Hey, what's a charcoal fire? Is that just like a small bonfire? It's just kind of charcoal, so it's not a huge fire. It's just a charcoal fire that keeps you warm. Okay, charcoal fire, because it was cold there. And they were standing, warming themselves, and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

He already denied Yeshua once. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "Hey, you also are not one of his disciples, are you?" And he denied it and said, "I am NOT."

Then one of the servants of the high priests, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" I mean, this guy got his ear cut off by Peter, and I think he's recognizing him. "Did I not see you in the garden?" And Peter again denied it.

And then the rooster crowed. Or, to be more precise in translation, the rooster crowed. We know that the priest came out, blew the trumpet to signal the time in the morning. Can you imagine at that moment when he hears the trumpet blowing, the rooster crowing, and he remembers the prophecy that Yeshua had told him: "You're going to deny me three times"? "I will never deny you till death!" Can you imagine what he was thinking at that moment? The

guilt. The regret. I mean, imagine if you were there, and this is: "Am I really like Judas? Am I really a Judas?"

Imagine walking back, maybe across the courtyard. You look up, and there's Yeshua. And he gets a glimpse at you, looking at him, knowing you denied him. I just... Peter disappears from the scene for a couple of days. He's not at the side of the crucifixion, along with many disciples. We don't see Peter again till he's booking it to the vacant tomb that Mary Magdalene had talked about. I mean, just imagine what was going through his mind. What do I say when I see him? If I see him. Is it really empty? Is he alive? Was he resurrected? Was he right all along? I began to doubt, but then I got scared. Maybe he's still in the tomb and I'll never get to tell him that I'm so sorry. Maybe he's there, I don't know, just booking it to the tomb.

We know Yeshua spends time with the disciples two more times. Then he tells them to go to Galilee, and they all go up to Galilee. A few chapters later, they're waiting. They obey instructions. You've been there. You know he was crucified. You know God raised him from the dead because he's visited you. And now you go to Galilee. And what do you do when you go fishing? You go fishing. All the disciples are in the boat, and they start to go fishing because that's what they do, they're professional fishermen. You go back to work in construction. I go to the office. But they couldn't catch anything.

Then here comes this guy up on the shore, giving this unsolicited advice about fishing to these pro fishermen: "Don't you guys throw the net on the other side?" And 153 large fish are caught. Boats tipping over. And then I think John says, "Look, it's the Lord! It's the King, it's Yeshua!" And here comes Peter again, jumping into the water. The man just loves to jump out of perfectly good boats every single time he gets a chance. And he swims to Yeshua and goes to Yeshua. And it's awesome because Yeshua, he comes, and Yeshua looks at him and says, "Why don't you go bring your own fish to the charcoal fire?" And that's what I think Peter realized: "Oh, I gotta go help." So he ran back and helped the disciples pull the boat up with the fish.

The Charcoal Fire and Breakfast by the Shore

Some interesting things take place when they got on the land. They saw a charcoal fire. What kind of fire? Charcoal, good for warming and cooking, I guess. With fish laid out on it and bread. And Yeshua said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went back aboard and hauled the net to the shore full of large fish, 153. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. And Yeshua said, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" For they knew it was the Lord. And Yeshua

came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. And this was now the third time that Yeshua was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Yeshua said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" If you love me more than these, of course, of course. "You know I love you, Lord."

He said, "Feed my lambs."

He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" And he said to him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you."

He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

And he said to him a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

And Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you: When you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you were old, you will stretch out your arms and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." And this is said to show by what death he would glorify God.

We know that story. We discussed that a few weeks ago. And after saying this, he said to him, "Follow me."

Forgiveness and Redemption

Charcoal fire, see, I wouldn't have made a big deal about emphasizing the charcoal fire if it hadn't appeared anywhere else in the entire New Testament. There are only two places where charcoal fires are intentionally written into the text. One is when Peter is standing there looking at his King and saying, "I don't, I don't, I don't deny, deny, deny." Can you imagine Peter walking up the last time he was at a charcoal fire? "Oh, that's when I did it." Oh, the feelings of regret. Oh, the feelings of shame. Now he's face to face with his Yeshua. And Yeshua questions his devotion three times: "Are you devoted to me? Are you sure you're devoted to me? Are you one of my disciples?" "Yes, yes, yes."

Three times denial. Three times "I love you." Followed by instruction. And of course, the very last thing in the chapter that Yeshua says is "Follow me."

I can't help but view this story as an intimate reminder of Yeshua's forgiveness, of his mercy and compassion. Someone denied you three times, right? Running away. No, I mean, casually at first, warming yourself around the fire. "You're one of them?" "Not one of them." It's not even skipping a beat. "I think I saw you there." "No, not at all, master." "I love you. I love you. I love you." And Yeshua says, "All right. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep. Here are the instructions I'm going to give you. This is what you need to be doing now. Follow me."

I not only think that this was a time of forgiveness, Yeshua to Peter, but can you imagine how bad Peter would have felt? Peter had to accept the fullness of that forgiveness. Sometimes in counseling we talk about forgiving yourself, even though it's not really a thing. It's accepting God's forgiveness. But in the form of forgiving yourself: I know that if God isn't going to hold this against me, then I do not have the authority over God to hold it against me. Accepting the love of the Father and then walking forward and taking the instructions and applying them to your life. Powerful scene indeed. Incredible.

Brokenness Is Beautiful

Your brokenness can bring a blessing if you allow it. And if you allow God to use it. Because I want you guys to take out your pamphlets. Everybody get a pamphlet, little pamphlet. I've been working on those, right? And I think everyone, I want to make sure everyone could walk out with something. So can you guys get a pencil out? I want you to write these words down. There's a blank line at the bottom of the pamphlet where I want you guys to write something. I want you guys to write: "Brokenness is beautiful." Okay? I want you to write that with that pencil.

What will happen? The pencil's not sharpened. The pencils aren't sharpened. But the pencils are brand new. What are you talking about? "Bottom just yesterday, brand new. They're perfect. The eraser hasn't been used. They're perfect." "Oh, the pencil has to be sharpened before it can be useful. Is that what you're saying? The pencil has to be sharpened before it can be used by the one who's going to use it to write a message, to send a message, to do something." "If the pencil's broken, it's not new anymore. Just got sent through a tunnel of razor blades." "It's beautiful now. It can be used now. It has a function." Isn't that fascinating?

Sometimes we got to be sharpened. Sometimes it doesn't feel good. Sometimes it's self-induced. But what can come out on the other side, if you choose to allow it, is a tool that though it's missing some paint at the top and though it's got some shavings taken off of it pretty violently,

it can now be used by the Father. Brent, his testimony, that pencil was right. He's been using this brokenness in his life as a beautiful testimony of God's grace, God's goodness, God's love.

I don't know what you guys have gone through in your life. Maybe divorce. Maybe abuse. Heaven forbid, maybe bullying, mocking. Maybe someone telling you that you're just stupid and not worth anything. I don't know what makes you feel broken. Maybe a sin in your past. Guys, if you're bold enough to stand up and say, "You know what? This can be a blessing for someone else. God can use me for this", if you're bold enough to get past that sin in your life, if you're bold enough to say, "You know what, I know I have victory over this, and not only that, the sin is not going to go away, but it's going to be a testimony of victory in my life that I can encourage someone else with", If it's abuse, you can help some people that don't know what to do right now. If you can claim that brokenness as something that you can take forward and be used by God. If it's bullying, if you can look back and say, "I forgive that kid with the pimples in the schoolyard", I was a hard one, especially when we're carrying around our whole life. If you can say, "I forgive them," and allow the peace of God to come upon you, then you can start helping someone else write their story, write their victory letters. But only if you accept the brokenness for what it is, something that can produce beauty and blessing. Amazing.

Selfishness and Learning to Be Useful

I was talking to Jason earlier, and we were talking about how you don't really know how selfish you are until you come into a marriage, right? You have no clue how selfish you are until you get married, man. "I want the bowls to be washed on the top rack of the dishwasher. That's my way." Jenny was not raised the right way in this regard, the bowls go on the bottom incorrectly, but that's beside the point. We got in a fight over where the bowls go in the dishwasher because I was filled by my own selfishness, having it my way. Now, we put the bowls on the bottom, and it's not a big deal. But I learned what it means to be useful.

Learning to Sacrifice

All right, then you have kids. I'm only two years in, but already you know, you thought that marriage is draining, just sucking the life out of you. I mean, all the free time that you thought you ever had is just gone. And I digress. But you have children, and you love them. I love my son. I don't know what I did before I had my son, literally, what did I do all day long? But you learn to give. You learn to sacrifice. Some would say you suffer. But not really, it's a love thing. You learn to love selflessly.

I say all that to say: as you mature into an adult, you learn that life isn't all about you. Sometimes you have to do things you don't like or go through things you don't like so that a blessing can occur. In this real-life story, how many of you guys remember when you used to get a full night's sleep before you had kids, right? I mean, a full night's sleep! You still got to get up and go to work in the morning, right? Even if you only got three or four hours of sleep, right? Do you moan about it, say, "I'm not going to work today because I didn't get enough sleep"? No. You get up, drink that pot of coffee with a straw, and you go to work. Why? Because that's what you got to do as an adult. You've already gone through the process of learning how to mature, and you learn that you need to do what you need to do. You're going to conquer work because you have to.

The Contrast of Maturity

Then you got teenagers, man, complaining about how they only got eight hours of sleep the night before! See the process, the contrast of an unsharpened pencil and a sharpened pencil. All right, that may be a bad example; it's not really a brokenness situation. But the journey is kind of the same.

You can move forward from the things that have happened to your life, the traumatic things, the awful things, the things that shouldn't be spoken about. You can move past the sin that you feel has conquered you in your life. It hasn't. You may have given it victory, but it hasn't claimed it. If you choose to walk forward, make that decision to say, "You know what? This does not own me anymore. This brokenness does not own me. This does not control me. This does not dictate my future. This does not label me."

A Sharpening Process

If you choose to do that, it's a big step, it's a sharpening process. And you will see blessings come from that. Not only in your own life, but the peace that dwells in your own life after saying those words, "I forgive you", to someone who may be dead and gone. Now God's going to use you in someone else's life. If you're struggling with the same thing, God's going to use you in someone else's life. Say, "Hey, they don't have peace, and your testimony can show them how they can get peace. Why did this happen? Why do I feel broken?" Wow! So that the mighty works of God can work through you.

It Always Ends in Blessing

Sometimes it doesn't seem fair, but it always ends in blessing. I don't know who here is going through some issues, I truly don't. But I have a few slides I'd like to go over. If you would just participate with me, it might not mean anything to you, and that's fine. But the slides are going over some of the common lies that we tell ourselves. Some of them may be familiar to you, and some of them may have been accepted to you as truths. And I want to proclaim that these are in fact lies in our lives right now.

As the point of this message is: all of these experiences, as horrible as they possibly are, can be used for the greatness of God. But the choice is yours. The choice is yours, what decision you're going to make from here on out? The choice is yours, what decision you're going to make when you walk out the door?

The Choice Is Yours

Are you going to stand victoriously for the kingdom of God, or are you going to say, "No, this defines my entire life, and this is what my kids are going to know me as, this broken person defined by this incident in my life, this sin in my life"? It doesn't have to be that way. You don't have to continue living like this.

There was a famous person in a Nazi prison camp who said, "Every experience God gives us, every person he puts in our lives, is the perfect preparation for the future that only he can see."

Every Experience Is Preparation

Man, if I had time to go over some personal stories, things I would not wish on my worst enemy that I went through in my life, my experiences, through me, were able to change the lives of two teenagers at Camp Yoshua because of the testimony that I had to share with them. And they were able to speak the words: with me praying over them, sobbing, "I forgive [him] for this and this and this and this and this."

If you truly want to be an ambassador of the kingdom, you have a choice in that matter. Why? Because [Romans 8:28](#) says, "And we know, for those who love God, all things work together for good, and for those who are called according to his purpose."

Do you want to walk in the purpose that God has for you? It's a choice now.

God Is Not Really Enough

One of the biggest lies that I've been told, and sometimes we tell ourselves, is that God is not really enough. Now, you don't have to raise your hands, but has this ever been a reality in your life? No, no, we as a fellowship can't say yes. But yeah, the reality is most people have told themselves this. Most people have said, "You know what, the Father is really not enough for me right now in my life." I mean, maybe in a spiritual, not a literal way, yeah, he's enough. But not in my life, not what I went through, not what's happened to me.

I want everybody to repeat after me: "God is not really enough."

Repeat after me: This is a lie. The truth is: Repeat after me: "God is enough. If I have him, I have all I need." This is truth.

I Cannot Trust God

"I cannot trust God because he has let me down in the past." Maybe we've never said that. Maybe we've never said it. Are you ready for this? Are you ready?

The lie is: "I cannot trust God because he has let me down in the past." This is a lie. This is a lie.

The truth is: I need everybody to participate in this right now. This is a big deal, and there might be one person right now who this is impacting and changing something in their soul right this second. And by you just speaking the words, even if you feel silly, man, and you're thinking, "I don't need to be speaking this stuff", please participate for the sake of one person in this room.

The truth is: "God is faithful and has my best interest in mind, even when I can't understand his ways. He has a plan for me if I obey Him and have faith in Him."

I Am Not Worthy of Love

"I am not worthy of love." This is a big one, and this is the biggest lie that the adversary loves to tell us. Because if you're not worthy of love, then what's the next step spiritually? You're not worthy of God's love. Therefore, you will never experience running into the arms of such gravity of love. This is a lie. This is a lie.

"I am not worthy of love."

The truth is: "The Father loves me completely, thoroughly, and perfectly. And there's nothing I can do to add or detract from that love." This is truth.

I Am Precious and Honored

Last one, this is a lie: "I am ashamed of and regret my decisions and mistakes of the past. I can't forgive myself for what I have done." This is a lie.

The truth is: "I am free from condemnation. I am precious and honored in the eyes of my Father. I value God's opinion of me more than my past or what others think of me. My value comes from being a son or daughter of the King." That's right!

Broken Crayons Still Color

If we can overcome the lies that we've either been told or accepted, then we can walk in the truth of God's desire for our life. Then we can walk in the truth of what God has in store for you. Then we can walk in the truth that being broken is not something that has to stop your life from proceeding forward. It can be something that goes on to produce great blessings in God and show forth the beauty of God's mercy and plan for you.

Why? Because broken crayons still color.

You don't have to continue living like this. And it seems difficult, but if you can take one step forward, either by forgiving whoever put that doubt in your mind, forgiving yourself, or by looking at your situation and saying, "You know what? God is enough for me, even in this situation that seems like there is no way out and there is no escape. I know that God has a plan, and I want to be used by Him," as are some powerful and understanding that...

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