

The Place of Brokenness

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Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

“And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God” (Mark 3:10-11).

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

The key to the life of Jesus Christ was the meekness and humility that He revealed in His humanity. He was so meek toward the Father, and so humble toward people and circumstances, that He was an amazing channel for the Holy Spirit to flow through. Magnificently, He was always in touch with the Father.

Oh, but He was human. He got tired—He went to sleep on the boat. He got weary and cold. But Jesus always submitted Himself with total surrender to the Father, regardless of the circumstances. He demonstrated an absolute faith in Him. He always humbled Himself before men and never retaliated—Jesus always revealed meekness and gentleness.

This is what David was talking about when he wrote Psalm 18:35: “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” He was talking about Jesus Christ's meekness. Despite all of his sins, David understood that Christ would reveal the meekness of His own humanity on the Cross. As we will see in these pages, Christ's walk of brokenness would take care of David's sins. That meekness would bring blessings to David no matter where he was.

Chapter One

THE SECRET OF JESUS' LIFE

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

I think this verse represents the secret of Jesus' life. Within the framework of Isaiah 57:15, we see a tremendous solution for the multitude of problems in the Christian church. It was not the demonstration and manifestation of His deity that made a real impact. It was humility and surrender and meekness toward the Father.

Long ago, in eternity past, Jesus volunteered to come and lay down His life as the ransom for us all. He had the power to do that. “I will die for the world, I will die for people while they are ungodly. While they are yet sinners, I will give my life for them,” He said.

That's amazing humility.

Let the Holy Spirit teach you the quality of the humility that prompted Jesus to say, "I will die for the sins of the whole world." He had to suffer and learn obedience in His humanity—His deity *could* not sin and His humanity *did* not sin.

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge" (James 4:10-11).

God wants us to learn this kind of humility. If we will humble ourselves before God in our relationships with people—and if we will be meek before God in our relationship to the Trinity and the Cross—then the Spirit will lift us up above the plagues and the evil spirits. He will set us above all principalities and powers in our human experience. Greater is He who is in us than the one who is in the world. We are lifted up above all of that.

Even if you are the weakest Christian on earth, God will lift you up if you humble yourself before Him. This is so important, because

the entire world system is infected with evil. No one can possibly make it unless he learns personal discipleship in Christ Jesus. More than just making it in this world system, evil spirits will flee from us because of the quickening of the Word of God (Psalm 119:25). God only does this for people who are broken and humble.

Beware Unclean Spirits

Sometimes a wedding will come up and people will get angry with each other and start acting funny. A beautiful occasion becomes strange because unclean spirits get in. Some people don't even realize it, and they rationalize their attitudes away.

There could be an amazing revival in our midst. We could see great healing meetings through messages on meekness and humility. We could see great deliverances —there doesn't have to be a big scene or magnified human experiences.

God revives the humble person. He quickens and strengthens the contrite. He is the Lord who inhabits eternity. He is in the high and holy place. God will come in with His deity and go to work on the humanity of anyone who is humble and contrite. A broken and contrite heart He will

not despise.

God carries us through with prayer, praise, and worship. He carries us through with power, victory, and divine motivation. We enjoy energized living in the Holy Spirit of God. We develop a love complex in our souls and we grow in spirituality through the resurrection power of the Cross.

Jesus said, "I do not mind becoming you and, therefore, guilty."

That's amazing meekness.

"I do not mind taking the blame for every single sin you have every committed."

That's humility.

"I don't mind paying the penalty for those sins of yours."

That is amazing gentleness.

And that is what made Jesus great.

Chapter Two

THE BROOK DRIES UP

In 1 Kings 17, the Lord spoke to Elijah and Elijah moved from Gilead to Jezreel. God was preparing a mighty servant, but right then Elijah was just a smoking flax, a bruised reed. He was as weak as they come.

God came to Elijah and told him to go to the brook Cherith. “Cherith” means “a place of being broken.” What was Elijah doing there? God could not use Him yet. He was over there by a brook that was now dried up—the very thing he desperately needed was gone. This mighty man of God was all alone by a brook with no water.

A pastor from Vermont called me once and said, “My ministry is all dried up. I have gone from 150 people down to 30 people. I don't know what's wrong. I have prayer meetings in the middle of the night. Nothing seems to work.”

I knew what was going on. Every man and

woman who is going to be used by God has to go through a time of being dried up. Anyone who is ever going to be anything for God will only be able to stand in the blessing if the brook has first dried up.

God led Israel out of bondage—and right into the desert. He provided them with bread from heaven—manna—and water from the rock. Still, there were many times when things were bitter and difficult. God is in the business of training people through circumstances and relationships.

Have your finances ever dried up? Has your marriage ever dried up? You go to your spouse and there's no water there. It's all dried up. There's not a thing there. Have you ever had friendships that used to be so meaningful and now they are dried up? Have you gotten up in the morning and your health seems to be deteriorating? Your bones seem to be all dried up.

Fed by the Ravens

God did something beautiful at Cherith, the place of brokenness, the place of training. Ravens brought food for Elijah. He was in God's perfect will where God controlled the ravens to bring him food—but the Lord was emptying Elijah.

Soon, Elijah would be standing before 400 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. There would be an amazing victory—but Elijah was not yet ready for that.

The Lord may want to use a man to pastor a congregation—but not right away. He has to experience faith in Jesus Christ and have meekness. This means absolute trust in God—sometimes in the most humiliating circumstances. He needs total humility toward men and women. When he learns the meekness and humility of Christ, he yokes up with that meekness. His humanity is still there, but he throws his natural life on God and derives his strength from Him.

One Year with a Widow

“And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

“Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

“So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray

thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

“And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

“And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

“And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

“For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

“And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

“And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah” (1 Kings 17:8-16).

God had another stop for Elijah to make—Zarephath, the place of testing with fire. The

Lord was saying to his man, “You’re not done yet. You were broken at Cherith. Now go down to Zarephath.”

After a long journey, Elijah wound up at a widow’s house.

“Can you give me some bread?” Elijah asked her.

“I don’t have anything left—just a little meal and little oil. I am going to make a little cake for me and my son and then we will die,” the widow answered.

“Fear not. Make something for me first and God will take care of you,” Elijah said.

Why did he say something like that to this widow? Because when you give to the work of God, God will always bless what you have left. For those who give sacrificially, just as this woman was doing, God tremendously blesses what remains. The widow’s cruse of oil and barrel of meal remained full for an entire year.

God wasn’t through with the widow yet. Her son died, but Elijah stretched himself on the child three times and the life came back into the boy. This made a big difference for the woman, who now believed the Word of God that came from the prophet.

“And Elijah took the child, and brought him

down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

“And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth” (1 Kings 17:23-24).

Chapter Three

FROM TROUBLE TO TRIUMPH

Why was Elijah sent to Zarephath? Because God empties the flesh, empties the pride, and bankrupts everything about our Adam nature. God was bringing Elijah to the end of himself one step at a time. God put him into places where there was no popularity, no personal glory—where he was only going to trust God. Elijah came to a place where he would only be moved by the Spirit of love and relate to Jesus Christ in personal faith. In his meekness, Elijah would absolutely trust God in the midst of personal difficulties.

Elijah learned contentment. He became patient and gentle. He made wonderful confessions and obeyed the Word of God. He learned how to listen to God with meekness and love through humility.

Some people get into this business long before they are ready. God has a Cherith waiting,

however—there will be a Zarephath. Some come to Bible College and their brook dries up—their finances disappear. That is part of coming to college for those folks, because God is training them.

When we make our best decisions, our brooks dry up because God wants to empty us of everything we would rely on apart from Him. After we are emptied, meekness and humility come in and can say, “If I perish, I perish! I trust God.”

A pastor in our ministry lost four children in a fire. I remember the phone call that came that morning. I did the funeral and I remember the pastor and his wife’s courage and bravery. Their testimony that day was so sacred. They did not wear black. “My four kids are dancing on streets of gold,” the mother said.

Satan wanted their brook to dry up—he wanted them to dry up with it. But what happened was revival in their little New Hampshire town. Scores of teenagers were saved and chose to follow Jesus.

Fire Falls from Heaven

“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that trou-

bleth Israel?

“And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

“Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel’s table.

“So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

“Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men” (1 Kings 18:17-22).

“And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy ser-

vant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

“Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

“Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

“And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God” (1 Kings 18:36-39).

On Mount Carmel, Elijah was outnumbered 850-to-1. His short prayer—that lasted maybe 28 seconds—brought down fire from heaven. He had set up his offering and had them soak it with barrels of waters. He made it just as difficult as possible for God to burn up his bullock. The false prophets kept shouting and crying and piercing themselves—and got no answer. Their god never answered. Elijah knew that his God, the Lord of lords, would not take too long to answer his prayer.

“Will you show them who the Lord God is?”

Down came the fire. It consumed the offering. It was a wonderful experience. However,

Elijah first had to go to the dried up brook. Then he had to be with a widow. He had to grow weary and learn to trust God in adversity. God worked in meekness toward the plan in the circumstances. God worked in humility through the places of brokenness.

Imagine Jesus on the Cross. Surrounded by mockers and railers, He says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). What amazing humility. Three days later, Jesus Christ was gloriously resurrected in tremendous victory.

CONCLUSION

Our ministry is named “Greater Grace” because we understand that God gives greater grace to the humble and He resists the proud (see James 4:6). He gives greater grace over disease. He gives us greater grace in prayer, in marriage, in love, in manifesting the Holy Spirit’s power over evil. He gives us greater grace over plagues and over the atmospheric negativity that comes against us. He gives greater grace over our natural life and our decisions.

Just be humble before God. He will give us a burden—a burden that is light, a yoke that is easy. All of our tribulations will work into us experience and patience. Yes, we will go through trials, but God will not take us beyond what we are able to bear. He will bless us and bless us.

Through these times of brokenness, we become so strong. We get yoked up with Him. Everything is fine. We are able to face mountains and cast them into the sea because of this beau-

tiful yoking up with meekness and humility.

God Really Cares For You

Jesus loves you deeply. However, the fact that all have sinned separates us from God (*Romans 3:23; 6:23*). Still, God cares for you and He provides a way to share His love with you.

Jesus Christ's love for man was so great that He came and died on the cross for all the sins of mankind. He shed His blood for you so you can be forgiven and have eternal life.

The only thing He requires of you is to come to Him in simple faith trusting His character and love for you, and accepting Him as your Savior. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (*Acts 2:21*).

Simply pray, "*Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I receive you as my personal Savior. Thank you for loving me so much that you died for me so I can have eternal life with you. Amen.*"

He promises that He will never stop loving you and that He will never leave nor forsake you (*Hebrews 13:5*). Develop your relationship with Him by reading the Bible, praying, and attending a good Bible-believing church.

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