



September 2012

Friends,

What do you think about brokenness? Do you think it's a sign of weakness or strength? Is it good or bad? Is it something that should be talked about at all? Or, when the subject of brokenness comes up do you say to yourself "Oh no! Please don't talk about brokenness. Let's only talk about happy subjects like love, or grace, or joy, or heaven. Brokenness can be one of those not-so-fun topics that we'd like to avoid if we can." But the truth is... we can't avoid it. It's a place where our old life no longer works and we feel empty. And what makes this emptiness especially hard is when we realize that what's really broken is not something in another person, but something inside of us.

Sometimes we may believe things would be great if our life were like the athlete or the actress we see on TV. The truth is, they are just as broken. They may be able to hide it well from the spotlight for a while but it usually manifests in some form... perhaps drug use or an affair. The brokenness was already there - it was just hidden away where others (and they themselves) didn't see it. Maybe it's just a small part of their life that is a mess. If it were a room in a house, the room would be a complete mess, like it had been vandalized by someone looking for something. The furniture is overturned and papers are scattered across the floor. But with door closed and the light turned off, no one knows.

What does God say in His Word about brokenness?

Psalm 55:22 - Cast your burdens upon the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

Psalm 51:17 - The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 - But he said to me, "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. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Getting to brokenness is nothing more than opening closed doors and turning on the lights, but it can be dreadful and uncomfortable. It doesn't fit the image that we peddle of a person who has it all together. Suddenly, we are exposed for the pretender that we are. We feel shame at the mess and shame at the lie - all the efforts we've made to hide it.

The truth is that we're all broken because of sin. But the beauty here is God's plan to take what is broken and redeem it. Have you ever seen a "mosaic", where colored glass is shattered into small pieces then the pieces are used to make something like a table, or picture frame? The broken pieces are used and end up making something very beautiful. In the same way the Father uses adversity to break our self-will and transform us into useful

vessels for His kingdom. Brokenness is the Lord's method of dealing with our self-reliance—that desire within us to act independently from Him.

The Word gives us some great examples of broken, yet exceptional leaders:

- Moses was broken in the desert. He spent 40 years learning to obey the Lord before God used him to free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.
- Paul's "thorn in the flesh" kept him from praising himself despite his missionary success.
- Peter was corrected many times throughout the Gospels so that he could eventually lead the church (Acts 2).

God, in the same way today, targets our areas of self-will through adversity in our lives. He wants to break the attitudes that do not honor Him such as self-righteousness, self-reliance, and self-centeredness. It's not punishment or a penalty, but rather an act of mercy intended to bring us to repentance. Brokenness is also about the future. The Father deals with our attitude for the purpose of conforming us to His will and making us effective ministers to others (Eph. 2:8-10).

Do you believe brokenness is a path to further intimacy with God? If you do, why would you continue to resist it? Would it be the pride of appearing to your friends and family to "have life together", or fear of "being found out"? Would it be rebellion toward God or a stronghold of Satan over an area of your life? If it is any of these, or another reason, I pray that you'd hear the gentle urgings of the Father telling you it's ok to let go of whatever it is that may hinder you. I also pray that God would provide a trustworthy person or small group you could be honest and vulnerable with. Maybe God will provide that person or group through Grace Klein Community.

This is why brokenness matters... it ultimately helps us spread the gospel by leading us toward transparency. Light shines brightest through transparency. Acts 19:18 - Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. (and the result was in verse 20) So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Broken and free,

*Hebrews 13:16 "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*