

When Your Heart Is Broken

Dan Nelson

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Have you ever felt shattered? I am not inquiring about life disappointments for these happen everyday. But have you ever been so struck by a tragic circumstance that it feels like you've collided with an on-coming train where all that seems to be left is wreckage. It is at times like this when some people lose hope. For some, calamity strikes upon hearing the news of the diagnosis of an illness, or the sudden loss of a job, the unexpected death of a loved one, or the betrayal of a friend. Whatever the circumstance that brought you to this place, you are at a loss of how to move on. You've been cut to the core and the wound is severe. Your heart feels so far deep into your stomach that it might just be on the floor. Your emotions are swirling as though in a tornado and confusion finds you unable to function. Whether to eat or not becomes the major decision of the hour. You can't decide whether to get dressed and keep your schedule or stay home and hide. You feel volatile and vulnerable and truly believe that you might crack if anything more were thrown your way. What do you do? Where do you go from here?

There is a common misunderstanding that Christians don't experience hardship; or at least they are not supposed to. That God doesn't want His followers to admit any inabilities to handle difficult circumstances nor to experience any pain. Instead, some believe we are supposed to act as though there is nothing wrong and thereby demonstrating the victory of God over circumstances. But that is not what the Bible teaches. The scriptures describe this world as an evil and fallen world, far from His perfection; it is dominated by sin and rebellion. The Bible goes so far as to refer to each person as enslaved to sin except they be set free through a miracle of God. Jesus never healed anyone who refused to admit the need. As long as someone insisted they were well, there would be no healing. He declared, it is the sick who need the physician, not the healthy. In Jesus' own earthly life, there was no hiding the hardships that surrounded Him. In all of His perfection, understanding, and power, Jesus still experienced difficulties and a broken heart; He was even betrayed by His friends. How about you?

In I Thessalonians 4-5, the Apostle Paul was writing to a broken hearted church. They knew Jesus had resurrected and ascended into heaven, having made promises to return for them. They didn't

really doubt the promise because they had too much eye witness evidence of the ascension which was all the proof they needed that everything else He said was true also. However, they were expecting Jesus to come back quickly. As time passed without Jesus' return they began to get disheartened. When loved ones began to die they became devastated with the misunderstanding that the ones they love would miss out on the promise and their hope of heaven would be lost. Their misunderstanding led to devastation. They were cut to the heart and Paul knew it. He writes a message of comfort and hope, clarifying the misunderstanding and reminding of the eminence of Christ's return for His people. That He Who promised will do it.

So Christian, what does this have to do with you? Everything! No matter what the cause of suffering and pain, we can be encouraged by the reality of Jesus having the desire and ability to keep every one of His promises. As you look at the news, don't get discouraged. When you are betrayed, don't be dismayed. When death and illness strike, be strong in your confidence, knowing that what Jesus has in store will by no means disappoint. And He will keep every promise.

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2004. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443
Ojai, CA 93024
(805) 640-9498
www.calvaryojai.org

Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:30am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View