

Blessed Broken Given: Broken

Are any of you junk collectors?

After a while, those things that we keep, especially those things that need fixing, which we never find time to fix, are thrown out.

That's usually what happens to broken things. We purge them from our lives. They are no longer of any use to us.

Last week we talked about how difficult it is to imagine our ordinary, common lives being *blessed* and sacred and holy. Yet that is what happens to our story when we surrender to Jesus. To be blessed is to have our identity recovered and restored; it is to become who we were made to be: carriers of the glory of God.

This week, we will talk about the word "broken".

We use the word "broken" in several ways.

First, brokenness is a way to describe our own *frailty*.

Secondly, brokenness can refer to our own *failure*.

Finally, brokenness is also speaking about the *fallen world*.

It's the last two that will be our focus today.

What can Jesus do with our brokenness?

Luke 22:19

The occasion here is Passover. Passover is when God dealt with sin and evil. God delivered His people by providing a covering of blood over their sins. That makes this passage the perfect place to talk about what Jesus does with our own brokenness.

Let's talk first about the brokenness of our failure.

Unlike the gods and priests of other religions in the ancient world, Israel's God provided a sacrifice specifically for the removal of guilt. The most dramatic way sin was dealt with in Israel's worship came on the day of the year known as the *Day of Atonement*. On that day, the high priest would first offer sacrifices to cleanse himself. Then he would select two goats.

-After laying hands on one goat and imparting to it all the sins of the nation, the priest would lead that goat out into the wilderness. (Scapegoat) The goat took the *blame* and was led away—a picture, an enacted parable, of God removing guilt from His people.

-The second goat was sacrificed and its blood was sprinkled on the altar inside the holy of holies. This goat took the *punishment*—a picture of God allowing the people to be spared judgment.

God was the only god who made a way to deal with sin, guilt, and shame.

The writer to the Hebrews connects these elements and symbols to Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:13-14

Because of Jesus, every word of the blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26 is now true for all who belong to Him.

Jesus takes the brokenness of our sin and gives us peace.

But what about the brokenness of the world?

In John 11:17-27, after their brother Lazarus's death, both Martha and Mary asked Jesus the very question that haunts us in our suffering: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died". It's the question that arises every time pain is disconnected from justice, when suffering is the result not of guilt but of the brokenness of the world.

Couldn't you have prevented this, God?

When a person suffers needlessly, when pain seems random, or worse, unjust, the appeal to the God of mercy and justice rings throughout Scripture.

What we often hope for from God is *prevention*. In the face of the brokenness of the world, we want to be spared.

Yet God opts for something He must know is stronger than prevention, something we call *redemption*.

What we often call what Lazarus experienced "resurrection," is not quite right. Lazarus was raised only to die again, so this is more accurately described as "resuscitation." He was not raised in the same way that Jesus would be raised—with a perfected and glorified body that is incorruptible. *Resurrection* is what awaits all who are in Christ. The resuscitation that Lazarus experienced was a sign of the resurrection to come. It is a clue suggesting what God will do about the brokenness of the world.

Resurrection breaks death's power completely. Resurrection is the reversal and undoing of death. That's the power of redemption. ***Just as resurrection is stronger than death, so redemption is more powerful than prevention.***

It is one kind of power to say, "You shall not harm me!" It is a wholly other kind of power to say, "Do your worst; I will prevail."

On the cross, Jesus absorbed the full weight of evil and the judgment of God against it. Jesus became the sin that leads to death, and He became the curse that infects God's world. He drained the venom from the serpent and drank the poison to the last. He died the death that is at once sin's wage and God's verdict.

And on the third day, the Father raised Him up from the dead. Now because of His resurrection, one day death will be swallowed up in victory. Only God can do this. Only God can take *brokenness* and bring *blessedness* from it. Only God can make blessedness *come through* brokenness.

Jesus takes the brokenness of the world and gives us hope.

The sin and suffering God did not prevent are not beyond His capability to redeem.

What God *blessed*, He will *redeem*. He has the power to make His blessing come to pass, over and against the infection of evil. God the creator blesses; God the redeemer carries the blessing to its completion, even through the brokenness that comes.

God's redemption makes even the broken become blessed. God did this by becoming the broken. In Jesus, the blessed God became the broken human so that broken humans might become God blessed.

To be broken is to be opened to the grace of God.

When you place your brokenness in Jesus's hands, it becomes *openness*. It is brokenness that opens us up to grace, and grace that puts us together. The goal is to let the grace of God redeem and restore and repair.

Where is the brokenness in your life?

When grace comes rushing in, it does not leave us broken in our sin. It heals and restores and cleanses and forgives. It makes us new in a way that is more beautiful than we could have imagined.

Grace holds the broken pieces together.