

# Binding up the broken hearted

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[ 0 : 00 ] We may now turn to words in the book of Isaiah, chapter 61, and the first verse.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

And especially these words in the middle of the verse, he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.

He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted. And we shall, first of all, as we are unable to think on the question, what the broken heart is.

What is meant by this term, the broken heart? And then we can look at the physician of the brokenhearted and the cure, lastly, that he effects in their experience.

[ 1 : 38 ] And certainly, broken hearts are becoming ever more numerous in this world of sin and misery.

There is, without doubt, a need, increasingly a need for compassion and for grace and mercy to touch the hearts of stricken men and women and children in this world tonight and every other night.

Now, the verse before us speaks of the physician of the brokenhearted as one who has the spirit of the Lord upon him.

But we do not have to inquire as to his identity. We read in Luke chapter 4 that the Passion is, in fact, Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners.

In a synagogue on that occasion of which we read, when he was given the Bible, the Old Testament scriptures to read, he read this very passage and told his audience, when he had laid aside the scroll, that that very day the scripture had been fulfilled before their very eyes.

[ 3 : 55 ] He was the one of whom Isaiah spoke. 700 years before these words had been written, there were Christ's pressures.

When we view him, as it were, against the background of the condition of so many hearts, in the sin-laden and sin-wearied world.

But first of all, what does the Bible mean by the word heart?

It's a word with which all of us are familiar, but which we use customarily in respect of our physical makeup.

And we use the term heart of a member, one of the members of our bodies. Just as surely as our hands and feet are bodily members, so we are a bodily member, as everyone knows, that we call the heart.

[ 5 : 17 ] But most frequently, when we come across the term in scripture, we mean, or the scripture means something very different.

Something that has a spiritual meaning, rather than a physical one. For example, when it is said in the Bible, Son, give me thine heart.

God is the speaker, and he is not commanding those he addresses to give them their bodily members primarily, or even the member known as the heart.

He is addressing them as regards their soul. When he commands us to keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, he is obviously not speaking about our bodily, physical heart.

He is speaking about our soul. It is from our soul that flow the issues of our lives.

[ 6 : 42 ] When the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to his disciples before departing from them, saying, Let not your heart be troubled.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me. Again, he was not thinking of their physical heart. He was thinking of their soul.

Or some function of their soul. And we shall later see that that is actually the case.

It is not merely the soul that we are to understand by the heart. You know that Paul speaks of the hidden man of the heart.

The heart, in this sense, as it were, takes the place in man's spiritual life that is, in a sense, similar on the physical level to the place of the physical heart as a member of our bodies.

[ 8 : 01 ] It has been described as the central motive for the soul. And it is used more than 700 times in the Bible, that is, between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

This word is used over 700 times and is used, as I have tried to point out already, to represent the inner man.

There are several places where it is used interchangeably, I would say, fairly obviously, as far as our understanding can go of the word of God, with the term conscience and also with the term mind.

But most often it is not interchangeable with either of these, which reminds us that the soul of man surely and in a sense more assuredly than the body of man has many different functions.

And we speak of man's mind or man's intellect and perhaps it is better for us to understand by that term not what we are naturally inclined to understand by a kind of department within the soul but rather the soul itself functioning in a particular way.

[ 9 : 56 ] There is no doubt that the soul of man has a structure but it is a simple structure as is true of every being which is spirit.

One of the difficult things for us to comprehend regarding the nature of God is the simplicity. unity. In the nature of God in that God is one that there is a unity unbroken an unbroken unity in the divine being because he is spirit.

It is not correct to think of him as being as it were divided into different parts so that we can separate one part from another.

No, that same truth applies to the case of the human soul. It has a unity that cannot be broken.

You cannot divide the soul into divisions or compartments because it is spirit. But it has functions, a variety of functions.

[ 11 : 27 ] And when we think of the understanding, we think of a function in the soul of man. One of the ways in which our soul works, as it were.

We apply ourselves by our souls to the understanding of some knowledge, of gaining of some knowledge.

When we speak about our will, we are speaking about another function of our soul. Our soul wills to do this or that by exercising itself in the way of choice, preferring one thing rather than another. we will to do something or we will to say something or we will not to do something or not to say something.

And then, as I have often pointed out, our soul functions as a spirit capable of loving and hating.

And so we speak of the affections of our soul.

[ 12 : 45 ] because our soul is able to love and able to hate. We speak of our conscience because our soul is able to make judgments.

our soul lacks, as it were, as a kind of tribunal to itself, as if there were a judge within us that is one of the functions of the mysterious soul of man.

He knows wrong as well as knows right and knows to justify one thing while condemning its opposite. That is the soul functioning in what we call the conscience of man.

But then when the Bible speaks of the heart, as I said, it can be described as the central motive for it is as it were, the fountain, as the Bible itself has said, the heart is that from which proceeds the issues of our lives.

Or in other words, the condition of one's heart, in a moral or spiritual sense, as to its moral or spiritual nature, determines the way in which the soul functions in its understanding.

[ 14 : 22 ] Is the understanding in darkness regarding spiritual things? The immediate explanation for that is the condition of the man's heart.

Does he choose the good rather than the evil? Well, the explanation is the condition of his heart. In the exercise of his conscience, does he always justify the good and condemn the evil?

Always the answer is determined by the condition of the heart. And so, the same applies in the case of the affections. What is the supreme object of my soul's love?

Well, the condition of my heart will determine what it is. Is it God or is it something other than God depends upon my heart and your heart and everyone else's heart.

Someone has said that a review of the scripture references to the heart shows that it is the central organ of the soul, it is the seat.

[ 15 : 49 ] Now, you listen to the list of what you might call functionings or experiences of our souls that have their seat in our heart.

It is the seat of desires, passions, affections, emotions, motives, impulses, reflexes, and instincts. The secrets bring and fountain of life and personality. It is here that ideas are conceived. Why, said Peter to Ananias, hast thou conceived in thine heart heart?

Concerning his sin. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

Like the heart of the physical body, the heart of the inner man is the center of vital action. And a continental philosopher expressed the same idea in these words.

[ 17 : 11 ] In particular, the heart is the place in which the process of self-consciousness is carried out, in which the soul is at home with itself, and is conscious of all its doings and suffering as its own.

It is the real ego. Here we have the seat of the emotional phenomena of the soul. As I said, the spiritual and moral condition of one's heart determines the condition of one's mind, will, conscience, affections, and obviously therefore, the whole of a man's life.

heart. We are here made to think of that heart in a very specific condition.

heart. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted. Now, there was a time, as I hope you all believe, when man's heart was whole, when it had never been broken.

condition, and I make this as a general observation regarding this particular condition. We do not believe that Adam, in the state of innocence, had any experience that could be described as a broken heart.

[ 19 : 05 ] This is an experience that has come in as a result of the fall. It is part of mankind's history as a result of the fall into sin and misery.

Now, in our fallen state, we find many kinds of hearts, as it were, or heart conditions described for us in God's word.

I have listed some of these. I cannot say that I listed all of them, but I shall just mention quickly several of the descriptions of the heart given in God's word.

It speaks of a heart that is desperately wicked. It speaks of a stoked heart, a hard heart, a stiff heart, a fearful heart, a faint heart, a trembling heart, a double heart, a soft heart, a heart that is melted like wax within one.

It speaks also, of course, of a merry heart, a joyful heart. heart. It speaks and I suppose these can be put into the same category as the heart described in this text, the broken heart.

[ 20 : 48 ] heart. David in Psalm 61 confesses that his own heart was overwhelmed.

At the time of which he speaks that his heart was overwhelmed. In Psalm 109 he speaks of a heart that is wounded.

The wise man in Proverbs says that the heart knoweth its own bitterness.

in the book of Ecclesiastes he speaks of the heart taking no rest in the night.

And you remember how in Isaiah we come across words of comfort addressed to them that are of a fearful heart.

[ 21 : 52 ] And also to the heart of the contrite as a heart in which God takes special delight. The troubles of my heart the psalmist says are enlarged.

My heart was grieved. My heart and flesh faileth he says in Psalm 73. And then we might very well ask how is it that men feel their hearts afflicted in that way.

and of course we are not to assume that everyone who would say that they have a broken heart or that their heart is overwhelmed is a child of God.

We have to take account of the fact that the miseries that men express in this way have overtaken all of the race of mankind. That we have been all made liable to all the miseries of this life to death itself and to the pains of hell forever.

And I shall refer in tracing some of the causes of brokenness of heart to certain kisses that I have come across recently in reading.

[ 23 : 14 ] We discover illness to be a cause of brokenness of heart very commonly in the world. Many, many years ago, in fact, generations ago, there was a pastor whose life was largely spent in the south coast of England, in Devonshire actually.

And over the course of many, many years, he became accustomed to tragedies in the lives of his people. But in addition to that, he himself was a frail, sickly man.

He was advised to go to southern Europe in order to try and recuperate from his illness, which was diagnosed as consumption, which was very common in those days.

and we find that man broken in half on his last Sunday with his congregation.

And I think I shall read to you it impressed me how he addressed his people before he left them, probably suspecting that he might never see them again.

[ 24 : 49 ] I stand here, he said, to them among you as one alive from the dead, that I may hope to impress it upon you and induce you to prepare for that solemn hour which must come to all by a timely acquaintance with the death of Christ.

and so he begged them once more to put their trust in the Saviour. Later he served at the Lord's table in a communion feast with his now tearful congregation, then committed them to the Lord in prayer.

And at home that evening, anguish poured from his grief-stricken soul, and he penned words of what is now a famous hymn, I shall refer to the hymn later on in connection with the healing that comes to the broken hearted.

Perhaps some of you have heard or read about a minister who was famous in Scotland last century. He was born in Glasgow, I think, in the year 1843.

His name was George Matheson. And when he was quite a young man, it was discovered that he had a disease that inevitably would result in the loss, in the total loss of his eyesight.

[ 26 : 22 ] From a broken heart, because of disappointment in life, is someone probably whose name you know, William Cowper, the famous English poet, Christian poet.

Cowper was an exceptionally able man, well-educated man, who had passed all the bar examinations required for an English lawyer.

And having successfully sat and passed all these examinations, he found very little success, hardly any success. success, it might be said that he found no success, he was afflicted with a degree of self- contempt, one might say, that disabled him from, as it were, pushing himself upon the attention of other men.

and he too suffered brokenness of heart in the way in which George Matheson, whom I already referred to, suffered also.

Cowper went as far as to, at least twice, to attempt to take away his own life, but God has saved him from his own folly.

[ 28 : 02 ] He found peace with God, and we shall refer to that later. And at the moment dealing with causes of brokenness of heart, and citing cases, individuals who knew what a broken heart was, in no little measure.

Bereavement truly is the cause of many broken hearts in the world. Recently I was reading about one of the disruption ministers.

There is one of the ministers who followed the free church in 1843. It was a minister in Kelso, and he buried five of his family before he himself left the scene of tears.

Spare not the stroke, he said, to the Lord. Do with us as thou wilt. let there be not unfinished, broken, marred, complete thy purpose, that we may become thy perfect image.

rich. I read of another minister who buried ten of her family before he left this world.

[ 29 : 38 ] You can believe nothing else than that these men knew what it was to have a broken heart. heart. In that sense, a heart feeling the weight of God's hand upon them, softening them, making them tender, like wogs, as the Saviour says, melted within them.

I read recently also, I was ridding with the intention to bring to light such kisses. I read of an American teacher of music who one day received two letters.

When he opened the first one, it was from a former student, and it told him about the loss of that former student's wife.

They were both still young, not long married. And he put the letter aside until he had seen the other one, and until he had thought about how to answer his friend's letter, and when he opened the other one.

It too was from a former student, and it contained the same news from him, that he also had lost his young wife.

[ 31 : 12 ] And we shall see how that man responded to the sorrowful news that he had received that day. The special scripture I may mention now that came to him was this, the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting harms.

Orphans know what it is to have a broken heart through the loss. They have suffered.

And you remember that. and let me remember that.

That when we become hardened in the world as we grow older, and when our hearts and minds are becoming more and more influenced, perhaps by our own interests, and our own concerns, in prosperity, perhaps more than in adversity, let us remember that there are broken hearts, and that there are children who have broken hearts, who are in desperate need of comfort.

have you ever read how Robert Murray McChain was affected even by the loss of a brother?

[ 33 : 13 ] People who have never experienced these losses can respond to them so lightly, just almost as fleeting thoughts that cross their minds when they hear news of someone who has died, and they think for a moment of members of the family, they think perhaps of a brother that they know, or a sister that they know, but very little thought often is given to the wrenching of the heart of that brother or sister by the loss of a loved one.

I read of an Irish man, a brilliant Irish scholar, who had just graduated from Trinity College in Dublin, and he had, as men thought and as he hoped for himself, a brilliant career ahead of him, and he was engaged to be married, and on the evening, the eve of his wedding, his fiancée was drowned. He left for Canada shortly after in the hope that his woes and sorrows were left behind him. As soon as he arrived on the other side of the Atlantic, he began to be dogged by ill health.

He returned, and later he met another fine young woman to whom he proposed, and almost immediately after, she suddenly died as well.

and he became a victim, not surprisingly maybe, of severe depression, and of deteriorating health.

[ 35 : 21 ] But God left him in his own service for many years. And then there is the brokenness of heart that we ought all to hope to have before we leave this world.

Brokenness of heart through conviction of sin. Oh, that God would give me more of that brokenness of heart.

And my prayer to God is that he would give it to you, too, before you leave this world, that you would know, truly know, in this seat of your personality.

Know in the depths of your being, in that well, that deep fountain whence come the issues of your life, what it is to be a sinner in the light of the holiness of the God against whom all sin is committed, that you would know the blackness of sin, sin that is so ingrained in your own very soul, that you would know how that sin has brought the wrath of God upon mankind and upon yourself as an individual, that you would know how heinous sin is, what despite it does to the holiness and the spirit of God, and that you would realize that it compels you to trample underfoot the blood, the precious blood shed for the very remission of sin, the blood of the

God man, and that it is sin alone that makes you to disregard that precious blood, and to continue to live as if you had no need of that blood, as if your own righteousness, which is as filthy rags in the sight of God, were sufficient to cover over any shortcoming or any little guilt in your life, and then that your heart would be broken.

[ 37 : 55 ] with a sense and apprehension of the goodness of the God against whom you have sinned, of the mercy of that God who has made such a provision as I have mentioned for the forgiveness of such sins, and that your heart would melt down and flow down in true, sincere, and lasting penitence before that God who has not dealt with you according as you have sinned, nor has he required it to your ill against you.

sinned, the son under conviction of sin know what it is to feel a broken heart, as a result of feeling forsaken by God, that God has turned his countenance away from them, that if he looks upon them at all, it is with a death, that he has turned from you and left you to your own devices.

Have you ever felt like that? And have you justified God in doing that to you, as one who deserves nothing better, but deserves everything that is wished for time and for eternity.

That breaks a man's heart, but fortunately, as we shall see, it broke someone else's heart, so that there would be healing for us. People's hearts are broken because they are made to feel that they are outcasts, that they are outcasts from the company of the righteous, the godly, and also outcasts from the company of others because they have no desire for the kind of life that others lead.

They no longer want to live in sin and in the company and according to the counsel of sinners. They have no company at all, in other words, and their hearts are broken.

[ 40 : 27 ] do you know what it is to feel heartbroken because of your own utter helplessness?

Because there is nothing you know how to do to rescue yourself from the loss, eternal loss you deserve for your sins.

and has every affliction that you meet on life's way for that reason become so unbearably heavy to you.

Or there is a physician described for us here. The spirit, he says, of the Lord God is upon me.

he hath sent me. Someone has a commission, as it were, for the benefit of the broken hearted.

[ 41 : 33 ] And someone has a divine commission. He did not assume his office himself alone, not that he rebelled against it, not that he would have chosen some other service to perform, as it were, but for all that he came and he comes.

He continues ever to come, as one sent, one sent by divine authority. And he is a physician who has come well qualified, indeed fully qualified, the spirit of the Lord is upon me.

The spirit whom we discover in the New Testament bearing the name, the wonderful name, the comforter, who could come with a more suitable identity, as it were, for the broken hearted, than one known as the comforter.

And biblical names never are meaningless. They are not chosen, as it were, indiscriminately any more than they are chosen by chance, or without purpose, they have a meaning in them.

They are given because they reflect something about the nature of the bearer of the name, and there is one who is known as the comforter, because in his passion, in his nature, and in his operations, he discovers himself amongst men in the world as one worthy of the name, and more than any discovery made by men, he is known by the Father, he is known by God the Son, the Savior, as those who know him from everlasting, perfectly, and they are the ones who give him this name, the comforter, and the Savior sent to the brokenhearted, says of him, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, he is upon me,

[ 43 : 56 ] I am perfectly equipped to heal the brokenhearted. Christ, oh, Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love.

Christ knows, I do not believe that God in his divine essence, experimentally knows pain.

I do not believe that at this moment, or at any moment, there is in the ineffable divine essence, in either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, a feeling that you can justly describe as one of pain, let alone of excruciating pain.

But we do not need that source of healing. We know that in Christ, we have a Savior, who has been equipped by the Father, who sent him, not only by the anointing of the Spirit that is upon him without measure, but also as one who was enabled to endure suffering.

In assuming old nature, he was enabled to endure suffering. In assuming a true body and a reasonable soul, he came into a condition where he became liable to suffering, which is a penalty God imposes upon sin.

[ 46 : 00 ] Sin cannot escape suffering. Creatures who sin against God inevitably enter upon the prospect of suffering and of suffering endlessly if there is no salvation provided.

And there are creatures who sinned against God and who began to suffer, for whom there is no salvation provided. And so we discover hell to be described by God as the place prepared for the devil and his angels, for whom there is no redemption.

But then because there was redemption for the race of mankind or for some of them, one had to endure their suffering, their suffering, their penal suffering, the requirements of the holiness and justice of God, someone had to endure them.

But in addition, he endured suffering as one who was to be a perfect savior, a savior of justified ones who would continue to suffer while they remained in this world, who would begin to discover more and more of what is meant by the broken heart.

And he, as one who himself suffered being tempted, is able to suffer them that are tempted.

[ 47 : 38 ] In the midst of life's afflictions, there is a heart, you might say, beating, a human heart, beating in the very midst of the throne of glory in heaven, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

people can say in the depths of their suffering, that there is no comfort for them.

Someone who has, you know, if we visited especially hospitals, we would be kept continuously aware of the frequency with which hearts are broken because of illness.

You think for a moment of someone in middle age, middle age, a married man with a family, a strong man, a healthy man, who has never in his life felt dependent upon charity from any man or from the state, and to seize before him nothing that mars his prospect of being able to provide for himself and for his own, and in a moment, not only is that prospect marred, but it is gone forever, and he is alive to suffer the brokenness of heart, that accompanies that sudden visitation.

He is alive to suffer the broken heart. I have met many cases like that. Some of you have also, who visit hospitals, and who work in hospitals.

[ 49 : 35 ] You know what I'm talking about. Well, let us always point out to them that there is a physician who has a cure for that kind of broken heart.

people who have suffered disappointment of other kinds. There is a physician who knows how to cure their broken heart. People who have suffered because of bereavement, whose hearts feel as if they were irreparably damaged, splintered, beyond repair, you might say.

There is a physician who can get at them into the very inmost depths of their brokenness and heal them.

Time has passed again, and I have much to say on the cure which I must leave aside at least for the moment.

beginning with the last cause of brokenness that I mentioned, conviction of sin, a sense of God forsakenness, a sense of burden and loneliness and helplessness.

[ 51 : 11 ] Oh, well, when you think of the many examples of such, in God's holy word, Manasseh, who had made Jerusalem streets to flow with the blood of the saints, and who felt conviction of sin when he was in chains, with no reasonable hope of escape, and he cried to God, and he was delivered.

When you think of David's pains and sorrows and griefs because of sin, when you think of the woman who is described in the holy word as a woman who was a sinner, and when you think of the rivers of tears that flowed from her soul, when she realized who she was in the presence of a holy God, but she also discovered that there was a physician who could heal a broken heart.

think of the thief on the cross on Calvary's hill, who had persisted in rebellion against God, who had, as it were, ripened himself during all his life's push in this world for the place of war.

war. Oh, he cried to the great physician, from the depths of the agony of us all living now in dread of a lost eternity, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.

He's now, ever since, in the place of the blessed. blessed. I was going to at least refer you to some of the results of the brokenness of heart, the cases in the cases that I referred to.

[ 53 : 38 ] Horatius Bonner was the 1843 disruption minister I referred to. I heard the voice he said of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast. heart. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad. the music professor whom I refer to who had received news on the one day of the loss of two young wives on the part of former students of his own.

what have I to dread, he wrote, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms. I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms.

George Madison, the blind preacher, he wrote the following words, as one who knew the comfort and the strength that restore the broken heart, over love.

[ 55 : 31 ] oh love, that will not we D what what Let us pray May God bless these thoughts to us Let us pray Do thou Show Thyself to us And do thou speak To our hearts And do thou draw us To thee As the fount of all life Of all blessedness And peace and joy As the one Who alone has healing

For the broken hearted Who binds them up And who continues so to do Day after day Year after year When thou Dost deal with thy people Here in this wilderness And we thank thee For the world Wherein there is no Broken heart Nor any fear That any Heart Shall ever Be broken In that blessed place Where there is joy And mingled with sorrow Throughout endless ages And pardon all our sins

For thy name's sake Amen Amen