

# Broken Hearts, Broken Ways, Broken Spirit

January 18, 2026

There are THREE kinds of "brokenness."

**Broken #1,** We live in a **broken world**. It doesn't work the way it was designed to. Things, break, disease, tornados, flat tires, etc. People don't treat us the way we want to be treated.

**Broken #2, We are broken.** We do not work and live and relate the way we were designed. People (we) are broken and the world is broken.

**Broken #3,** There is a *good* brokenness. When we move away from God to make life work like we want, it's only a matter of time before it doesn't work. Consequences ensue. Trouble falls on us. It's when we finally realize *we've moved away from God* that we become "broken" (humbled enough to repent) in a good way. We never want to do *that* again!

## DAY 1: Brokenness #1

We live in a broken world. Things don't always "work" like they're supposed to. You stretch for your ideals and you can't quite reach them. Dreams break.

Personal lives are broken. Sometimes marriages break. Families break. Businesses break. Finances break. Good habits break.

The good news? When we break, it *should drive us to our knees*.

*Psalms 69:19 "You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you. 20 Scorn has **broken** my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none."*

1. List or underline all of the ways the psalmist experienced brokenness. Look for at least eight!

2. Circle or list the ones that you have experienced.

3. When have you experienced this kind of brokenness?

4. Which of these words resonate with you?

5. Where did the psalmist look for sympathy and comfort?

6. Where have you looked for sympathy and comfort?

## DAY 2: Brokenness #2: what is wrong with our nature?

*Jeremiah 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, **broken** cisterns that cannot hold water."*

1. This is one of my favorite Old Testament verses.
2. Sometimes we experience the brokenness of the world through no fault of our own: usually it's the sin of others. But sometimes we experience brokenness because what we are really trusting in to make life work for us "breaks."
3. God identifies two sins. What's the first one? This is "Sin #1."
4. What do you think it means to "forsake" God?
5. When they did forsake God, what were they were missing out on? What phrase does Jeremiah attribute to God?
6. The imagery God uses through Jeremiah is water. Jeremiah uses a noun ("spring") and adjective ("living") to describe what God can do for us IF we turn to Him. Describe both images below.
  - a. What is a "spring" like?
  - b. What do you think Jeremiah meant by God as a "spring?"
  - c. What comes to mind with "living" water?
  - d. How does this image of "living water" describe what God can do for us?
7. IRONICALLY, these people *thought* they were God's people. They would have been shocked by the charge of "forsaking" God! Describe how it is possible to believe you are being "spiritual" or "religious" and yet be "forsaking" God.
8. What would you say is your *real* source of "water?" What things or people are you banking on to make life work how you want?
9. Would Jeremiah say you are committing the first sin in this verse?

### DAY 3: Understanding my brokenness

1. Any way of making life "work" how we want to is doomed--it's just a matter of time. This is not the way God designed the world.

*Jeremiah 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, **broken** cisterns that cannot hold water."*

2. Today we look at "Sin #2." Jeremiah says they dug their own "cisterns." A cistern is a very large "bowl" dug out on top of a hill. When it rains, the "bowl" fills up with water, making a reservoir for drinking water and irrigation. On a *practical* level, this is smart. But ONE HUGE problem. Instead of trusting God for water, they "bi-passed" Him and relied on their own ingenuity.

3. The *immediate* application in this verse is clear--it's about trusting God for water. What strikes you about this application?

4. The *general* application of this verse covers every NEED (not just water), and every WAY of getting those needs met (not just wells).

a. In the list below, check the needs that are important to you. Then add PEOPLE'S names, the WAY you want those needs met. The first is an example from my life.

Validation, by Mindy: "I 'need' her to validate me."

Appreciation, by \_\_\_\_\_

Sense of importance, by \_\_\_\_\_

Feeling loved, by \_\_\_\_\_

Approval, by \_\_\_\_\_

Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) by, \_\_\_\_\_

b. There are ARENAS OF LIFE that we believe "*need to go well*" in order for life to "work." Below, check the area of life, and jot down any specifics you recognize you are "living for" in make life "work." The first is an example from my life.

Career: If I'm "successful" people will think I'm a pretty sharp guy.

Finances: \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ :

5. Whenever we say we "*need*" someone or something for our needs to be met, we commit the two sins of Jeremiah 2:13. (There's nothing wrong with "*desiring*" these things).

6. What strikes you from this verse?

## DAY 4: God breaks our cisterns (our false trusts; our idols)

*Jeremiah 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, **broken** cisterns that cannot hold water."*

1. Sometimes, God waits until our "cisterns" finally break--they don't hold water. They don't make life work like we want. And sometimes, God Himself breaks our "cisterns." This speeds up the process!

*Ezekiel 30:21 "Son of man, I have **broken** the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. It has not been bound up for healing or put in a splint so as to become strong enough to hold a sword."*

*Ezekiel 30:22 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the good arm as well as the **broken** one, and make the sword fall from his hand."*

2. What is the significance of God using the metaphor of breaking an arm(s) of Pharaoh?

3. What was Pharaoh tempted to trust to make life work?

4. Why would trusting your military might be so tempting to do?

- It is something you can "see"
- It is something you have "control" over
- It is something you can do something about
- You've seen your army win victories before
- When you compare your army to smaller armies, you look stronger
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. When we are trusting anything other than God for our needs to be met, it should not surprise us if God **breaks** the very thing in which we place our trust!

*Ezekiel 6:6 Wherever you live, the towns will be laid waste and the high places demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and devastated, your idols smashed and ruined, your incense altars **broken** down, and what you have made wiped out.*

6. Do you sense God has been **breaking** something you've been trusting to make life work?

7. This may "look" like God is against you, but in reality, it is His "severe mercy" to you.

8. Ask God to give you eyes to see what He is doing in your life.

## DAY 5: God uses brokenness to bring us back to Him

REVIEW: There are three kinds of brokenness:

**Broken #1**, We live in a **broken world**.

**Broken #2**, **We are broken**. We do not work and live and relate the way we were designed. People (we) are broken and the world is broken.

**Broken #3**, There is a *good* brokenness. When we move away from God to make life work like. What is "broken" is our pride!!! That's a good thing!!

1. God uses brokenness in order to bring us back to the spring of living water!!! That's what we MOST NEED!!!! What strikes you about this point?

*Psalms 51:16 For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifice acceptable to God is a **broken** spirit; a **broken** and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

2. These two verses are the end of David's prayer of repentance. What does David say is the thing we're tempted to do to make things right? (51:16).

3. Why do you think a broken spirit/ broken heart is so important?

4. God doesn't just "break" us but also "builds" us. From the following verses write down the words describing how God builds us back up:

*Job 5:17 "Behold, happy is the man whom God reproves; therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty. <sup>18</sup> For He wounds, but he binds up; He smites, but His hands heal."*

*Amos 9:11 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its **broken** places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be..."*

5. MOST remarkably, God then uses us, the broken, in His redemptive purposes with other people!

*Isaiah 58:12 **Your people** will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of **Broken** Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.*

6. What strikes you about this verse?

7. What strikes you about the process of God taking the broken and making them agents of rebuilding and repairing?

8. What is your biggest take away from this week's study?