

Sermon 7-30-2017 Broken and Contrite Hearts Psalm 51:10 and 17

Dear Contrite Hearts:

A young man gave his bride a gold chain with a small gold heart dangling from it. It was a little rounded puffy hollow heart. His wife loved the gift and she wore it all the time around her neck.

The couple was blessed with children. They had 3 children over a number of years. Each child loved the rounded puffy hollow heart that hung around mom's neck. They would grab the heart with their tiny fingers. Soon that little puffy hollow heart would go from their fingers to their mouths.

Overtime the hollow, puffy heart became dented and crushed. It still looked like a heart but now it was flat and did not resemble a nice rounded puffy heart.

The puffy heart was now a broken heart.

Life does that to us.

- Hearts are tender things
- They are easily bruised and broken
 - Maybe we had our heart broken in grade school when we were ignored or overlooked by other classmates
 - Maybe in high school we had our heart broken by someone who rejected us
 - Maybe we have experienced a broken heart when we lost a loved one

Our hearts can be broken very easily especially when sin is involved.

- Maybe our own bad choices have brought us or others suffering at one time or another
- Maybe when we look into the mirror of God's law and see how we have fallen short and our hearts ache with the pain of sin

Sin breaks hearts...our hearts...other people's hearts.

We are crushed by our own failure and destroyed by our own wickedness and evil.

When we are forced to look into our own heart it is not a pretty sight. **Proverbs 20:9 says: “Who can say, I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?”**

No one else knows our hearts like we do. Despite our best efforts to put a good face on things, we know the reality. Sin is functioning too freely in our daily words, actions and thoughts.

- We begrudge the good fortune of others
- We resent the joys that are denied us but enjoyed by others
- We see the suffering of others and turn away

Our hearts break down in shame, regret and sorrow. It breaks at the staggering cost of sin. Broken hearts aren't fun.

- A broken heart hurts.
- It can express itself in physical suffering
- A broken heart takes a huge toll
- No one wants to deal with a broken heart

So, when a heart breaks we try to stop the pain and end the hurt by trying to fix our hearts on our own.

We fix things. We fix toys, office problems and small appliances. But we can't fix a broken heart.

King David had a broken heart.

- He had committed adultery with Bathsheba
- He then planned to have her husband, Uriah, killed
- Even though David had sinned horribly he knew that forgiveness was available from God

David repented of his sin after confronted by Nathan the prophet. David pled for restoration and renewal. He asked that God would purify his heart. David cried

out to God for help with his broken heart. David wrote Psalm 51 as he confessed his sin of adultery and murder.

Psalm 51:10 and 17 “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

A broken heart is what God desires of us.

- He wants crushed, battered, torn and bleeding hearts
- He doesn't want hearts that are whole and perfect
- He doesn't want hearts that have been patched up
- He doesn't want them fixed by us
- He wants them broken and repentant

Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

God wants us to come before Him with honesty and humility. He wants us to enter His presence as we really are ---broken hearts and all. When we pray the Lord's Prayer we come with broken hearts: “Forgive us our trespasses....”

Luther says in the Large Catechism: In fact, the entire Lord's Prayer is nothing else than such a confession. For what are our petitions other than a confession that we neither have nor do what we ought, as well as a plea for grace and a cheerful conscience? Confessions of this sort should and must continue without let up as long as we live. For the Christian way essentially consists in acknowledging ourselves to be sinners and in praying for grace.” P. 468 *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions*

But that's hard to do.

- It's hard to leave a broken heart alone
- We think that God surely would not be interested in getting a messed up, broken heart from us

So, we try to piece it back together ourselves and God gets a heart that has been patched up but not healed. We think we can fix our heart by...

- Looking for a new relationship
- Doing some good work
- Seeking revenge on the one who hurt us

Offering God a heart with a patch job is like a husband giving his wife a broken vase that has been repaired with Elmer's glue and Scotch tape. It's repulsive and tragic.

How futile and pathetic it is when we try to fix our broken hearts.

- It can't be done
- We can't put back what sin destroys
- We can't mend our broken hearts

God will only receive hearts that are broken. God treasures broken hearts.

Again Luther says: "...Confessions consists of two parts...I lament my sins and desire comfort and refreshment for my soul. The other part is a work that God does when he declares me free of my sin through His Word...this...makes confession so lovely, so comforting." P. 468 *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions*

Remember that necklace with the little rounded hollow heart? Remember how the babies crushed and bent that little rounded heart? Even though the children are grown now, the mother still wears that heart around her neck.

It's still bent, smashed and badly misshapen but it's the most precious piece of jewelry that she owns. Now it is a reminder of the 3 children who each left his or her mark on that heart.

The very beauty and value of that heart is in its brokenness.

Fix it? No way!

A broken heart before God is a precious and beautiful thing.

- God treasures our broken hearts
- He doesn't want our heart after we have tried patching it up to make it look right
- He wants it broken.
- He wants it as it is---shattered by sin, bruised and torn by other people.
- He wants our heart like that - broken.
- A broken heart is beautiful to God.

We are broken people because of sin.

But God receives us just that way and in no other way.

- It is a blessing to be broken
- A broken heart is a precious thing because it is broken.
- A broken heart becomes a wonderful tool in the hands of God

He uses a broken heart in his work of healing and restoration.

- A broken heart has value because it is helpless and humble
- A broken heart has value because it is ready to receive what God gives
- Broken hearts are hearts that know their need
- They are ready for what God gives.

Luther says: "What I am saying is that you are to concentrate on the Word, on the Absolution, to regard it as a great and precious and magnificently splendid treasure, and to accept it with all praise and thanksgiving to God." P. 469
Concordia The Lutheran Confessions

Does God just snap His divine fingers and make our hearts instantly whole? Will our broken hearts be made whole and perfect in this life? Will every hurt be gone, every broken relationship be restored, every sin be wiped out so no more brokenness?

God takes broken hearts and comforts them with the promise that they will be healed and whole again. And it will happen when God makes all things new at Christ's return.

- Sin will be finished and hurts will be wiped away
- All will be restored
- But until then we still live in a broken world.
- We still live with broken hearts

But remember God does not despise a broken heart...He welcomes our broken hearts.

It's our broken hearts that God wants.

Luther: "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for You, O God....as a deer with anxious and trembling eagerness strains toward a fresh, flowing stream, so I yearn anxiously and tremblingly for God's Word, Absolution, the Sacrament, and so forth...Let us...lift our hands in praise and thanksgiving to God for having graciously brought us to this our understanding of Confession." P. 470 *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions* Psalm 42:1

- Don't worry about fixing it
- Only God can do that and He will and He has

Rejoice in God's grace. He gives His grace to broken hearts.

A broken and contrite heart God will not despise.

- He receives our broken hearts
- He redeems our broken hearts
- One day He will fully restore our broken hearts

Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Luther: "If you are poor and miserable, then go to confession and make use of its healing medicine." P. 470 *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions*