

Broken Shells and Broken Lives

Many people enjoy scouring beaches for seashells. I've got a modest collection of these amazing creations and each illustrates God's creativity even in providing for creatures deep in the oceans rarely seen by humans.

Beaches, however, are cluttered with far more broken shells than complete ones. Except for rare specimens, most collectors aren't interested in broken ones, only the "good" ones. But each broken shell has its own story about its life, how it got broken, how long ago, etc.

Each of us also has a story that includes how we've been broken for we all are. Sometimes we've been cracked by others but most of our damages are self-inflicted.

As sinful human beings born in Adam's line, some of us are broken with addictions to drugs or alcohol. Others are broken sexually by adultery, promiscuity, or pornography. Those who appear to be "perfect specimens" are often damaged by greed, pride, worry, cowardice, or bitterness.

We can scour the world searching for a perfect human who is not broken in some way and we will come up short. Until we find Jesus. He is the only One who is unflawed, unmarred, and unbroken.

As we bring Him our brokenness and all our pieces, He is able to reconstruct something beautiful. He can fill in holes where parts are missing and recreate lives of beauty, purpose, and use.

As He does His renewal, He listens to our stories and heals us. He invites us to trust Him with our deepest secrets.

But even after He heals us, we must remember where we've come from. We must not forget what we were like when we came to Him. We should recall how we got broken, for those sinful tendencies remain. Where others hurt us, we must establish wise boundaries to prevent future pain, especially if those individuals are still in the breaking business.

Although Jesus was and is the only perfect human, He too knows what it's like to be broken. Throughout His ministry, His reputation was attacked, His motives were maligned, and ultimately His body was destroyed and broken by fists, nails, and staffs.

And yet His spirit remained whole as He blessed those who hurt Him and even prayed for those who nailed Him to His instrument of execution. Amazingly, though His body was cruelly broken, like a geode, His inner beauty then became even more apparent. After His resurrection, He was lovelier than before and remains so today.

My prayer is that those of us who have been reconstructed by Jesus will worship and glorify Him for His work. I also pray that we will value those around us who have likewise been broken including those who have been healed, those who are in that process, and those who are still lying in pieces on the beach.

The next time we go shell hunting, may those broken ones remind us of who we were and are, and may we cherish the most perfect One of all.

George Bowers – Executive Board Member

Weekly Prayer Points

Psalm 8:3-9

Our Father, this is the second Monday of a new year and we sometimes wonder if we can make it one more year. War is devastating the Holy Lands, floods, tornadoes, fires, and volcanos are taking a toll on your creation. But another part of your creation is coming together to help those in need, the human being. There are so many different groups that donate time and items needed to help when the chips are down. The human part of your creation does show the love of Jesus. Your creation is ours to protect for ourselves and future generations. We ask that you continue to show us grace and give us the strength and wisdom to do just that. Amen.

Please pray for these congregations and pastors.

- Kapernaum Congregation in Tanzania, with Pastor Elisha Rugigele Saudi.
- Sugar Ridge Congregation in Custer, Michigan, with no current pastor.

CBC Prayer Committee