

It Is Real Worship to Be Broken Before the Lord

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our brokenness before God as a form of true worship and service, rooted in Christ's sacrifice.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23

Topics: "True Worship", "Brokenness"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of recognizing our brokenness before God, particularly in relation to the Lord's Table. He explains that Jesus, who was without sin, took on our broken humanity and was broken for us, symbolizing our need for redemption. The act of communion serves as a reminder of our own brokenness and the necessity of humility in worship. Sparks illustrates this through the Old Testament scapegoat, which represents the separation from God due to sin, and highlights that true worship comes from a contrite spirit. Ultimately, he encourages believers to acknowledge their brokenness and rely on Christ for wholeness in their relationship with God.

Transcript

I want to say just a brief word again about the Lord's Table. I would like to read three passages of Scripture:

"For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me" (I Cor. 11:23-25; ASV).

"Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21).

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14).

HE WHO KNEW NO SIN HE MADE TO BE SIN. He offered Himself without spot unto God. Here are two statements which seem to be a direct contradiction of each other. They both refer to the same time. That

is, they both refer to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. One statement is, that He Who knew no sin was made to be sin. The other statement is, that He offered Himself without spot unto God. It looks like a contradiction, but there is no contradiction. They are only two sides of one thing. That is, two sides of Christ's work on the Cross. One is what He was in Himself, that is, a Lamb without spot. One Who knew no sin. That is what He was in Himself. Absolute sinlessness, without a spot of sin.

The other is what He was made to be on our behalf. He was made to be sin although He knew no sin. There is an Old Testament type of this twofold work of the Lord Jesus. You will find it in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus. It is the account of the two goats. These two goats were brought before the Lord by the priests. They were both without spot or blemish. One of them was offered to God a burnt offering there on the Altar. The goat without spot or blemish offered to God. But there was the other goat. That goat was equally without spot or blemish. But the priest laid his hands on the head of that goat, and confessed the sin of the people over that goat, and in figure transferred the sin of all the people to that goat. And then the priest took the goat and led it out through the camp, right away from the Presence of God, out beyond the farthest bounds of the people of God, right away unto the wilderness. The people all turned to watch the priest leading this goat away. They watched it until it had gone right beyond their sight. And then the priest let it go. He drove it away into the wilderness. And he returned to the Presence of God without the goat. That is the Old Testament illustration of this very thing.

On the one side, Jesus was an offering without sin, acceptable to God. On the other side, He was made sin for us, and was driven out far from the Presence of God. He cried in that moment, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If that scapegoat could have spoken far away into the wilderness, it would have just used one word, he would have cried, "Forsaken." 'I am forsaken: I am driven far from the Presence of God and man. I am despised and rejected of men.' That is the other side of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus in His Cross.

Now, I am just going to speak about one thing in that connection. When Jesus on the night of the passover sat down at the table with His disciples, He took a loaf and He broke it. He tore it to pieces, and He said, "This is My body which is broken for you." And then He took the cup, and Matthew tells us that He said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you." My body broken, My blood poured out. What did that mean? I am only speaking of this one side of things just now. Jesus had taken the place of our broken humanity. Sin is that which breaks our humanity. It tears our human nature to pieces. Sin disintegrates us. That is what happened at the beginning.

After Satan had done his work and Adam had accepted the temptation, the humanity of Adam was no longer whole. It was a broken humanity. Before that, it was complete, it was just one thing. But after that unbelieving disobedience, that humanity was torn asunder. It was just broken to pieces. And that is how God views humanity now. When Jesus was broken, He was just taking the place of our broken humanity. He was saying, 'I represent the whole human race in its broken condition. I enter into the brokenness of the world's humanity. My life is no longer in Me, it is poured out unto death.' That is the effect of sin and Satan's work. And in that day at the Cross, on that one side, that is what Jesus meant by, 'My body broken, My blood poured out. I represent the state of all men, no longer whole, no longer complete.'

Now, when we come to the Lord's Table, we should always remember this. We should always remember when we take the broken bread, and the cup, we are acknowledging and confessing before God that in ourselves we are broken. There is no wholeness about us. Sin has destroyed that wholeness. We are broken in the sight of God. That is what we mean when we take the loaf and the cup. We are

acknowledging that before God in ourselves we are a broken humanity. We cannot stand up before God as something that is whole and complete and perfect. He was made sin for us. He was broken as we are broken. He took the place of our destroyed and disrupted humanity. And God had to turn His face away. Just as that scapegoat in the desert felt its utter desolation, not one eye to pity it, not one word of consolation, not one hand to help, alone, far away from the habitation of God and man. That is where the Lord Jesus went on our behalf, bearing the judgment of God upon our broken humanity. Before ever the other side can become true of us, the other side is that we are made complete in Him. All our brokenness is mended in Christ; we who were afar off are now made nigh. We can now, through faith in Jesus Christ, stand before God as those who have been made whole. But before we can do that, and have a standing in the Presence of God, we have got to recognize that naturally we are broken.

You see how these two things are blended in the New Testament? Take the great Apostle Paul, before he met the Lord Jesus, he thought he was a very whole and complete being. He thought that he could stand up in the Presence of God. He thought that there was nothing wrong with him but everything was right. There was no brokenness about Saul of Tarsus. When he met the Lord Jesus, it changed that situation. The first thing that he discovered was that he could not stand in the Presence of God. Before God, he was a broken man. There was nothing whole about him. That was one side of history; and he went all through his life keeping that always before him. How many things he said about himself referring to his own weakness. He said, 'I am weak, but I glory in my weakness.' I have entered into the brokenness of the Lord Jesus. I have shared His broken body. In myself I am worthless. I am like a shattered vessel. But on the other side, how the Lord blessed that man, how the Lord was with that man. Yes, he was now accepted by God. Now he could stand up straight before the Lord. Two sides.

If you and I want to stand well with the Lord, if we really do want to find favor with God, if we want to come onto the life side of the Cross, and come right into the Presence of the Lord, and offer our worship to the Lord, we must first of all be very conscious of our own brokenness. God only really uses broken men and women, those who have come to recognize that in themselves they are very poor creatures. There is about them a spirit of real brokenness. Such ones come into this wonderful word of the Lord, 'To this one will I look, even to him who is of a broken and a contrite spirit' (Isa. 66:2; Ps. 51:17).

Now you notice that this was all to do with the service of God. In the Book of Leviticus, it is the service of God; it is all service being offered to God. And that just means this: That before ever we can receive the blessing from the Lord, the Lord has got to be satisfied. It has first got to be unto the Lord before it can be from the Lord. This brokenness is our offering to the Lord. It is real worship to be broken before the Lord. The broken and contrite spirit is the spirit of true worship. That is acceptable service. That is the real service to God. And when God is satisfied, then we can come into the blessing. The proud man, the self-sufficient man, the man who stands up in his own strength, he is not the man who inherits the blessing. He is not the man whom the Lord will use. He is not the man who can really serve the Lord. But the man who dare not lift up his eyes to heaven, but with bowed head says, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:11-13). This man goes to his house justified. This man has the recognition and blessing of the Lord. Will you always remember this word when you come to the Lord's Table? When the loaf is broken, in your heart you say, 'This is my brokenness. He was broken for me. He was broken as me. In myself I am broken before God. He was broken in order to make us whole.'

So, when we take the broken bread, we are testifying and acknowledging our brokenness before God. But not only at the Lord's Table; the Lord's Table is the center of our whole life. Our entire life is gathered into the Lord. The Lord's Table has got to have a meaning every day and every hour, and this has to be the

meaning: I in myself am poor and broken before God. And I can only dwell in the Presence of God because Jesus makes me whole. "This is My body, broken for you."

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