

WHEN GOD BREAKS YOU

Leader Guide



Speaker: Pastor Casey

Text: Ezekiel 8:1-18; 9:3-6; 11:17-20

Series: Hardheaded (Part 3)

Big Idea: You can get a new heart when yours is broken by that which breaks God's.

Introduction:

This sermon explores how God breaks our hearts with the same things that break His heart, using Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem's idolatry and coming judgment as the primary text. Pastor Casey emphasizes that God wants His people to be "hardheaded" (stubborn in faith) but "softhearted" (broken over sin).

Pastor Casey opened with Dr. Mary Poplin's experience caring for a deformed infant while serving with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. Through this encounter, Dr. Poplin discovered the depths of sin in her own heart, by her resistance and impatience in caring for the infant and then relenting to the transformative work of Christ in her spirit. Has God allowed your heart to be broken for a moment by the things that break His? We see God break Ezekiel's heart with the things that break his as we read Ezekiel 8:1-18; 9:3-6; 11:17-20. In chapter 8, God is like, "You think that's bad? Look at this! Oh, you think that's bad? Look at this!" Over and over and over again this happens! Why? Because God wants his prophet to be hardheaded, but softhearted.

WHY does God want us to have a heart broken by that which breaks His?

Three Reasons Why God Breaks Us

1. To Root Out Idolatry in Our Life (Ezekiel 8:1-18)

- God shows Ezekiel progressive idolatry in the temple
- The "idol that provokes to jealousy" is in the temple. According to the second of the Ten Commandments, any image that was the object of worship would provoke Yahweh's/God's jealousy.
- The word "detestable" (abhorrent, an abomination) appears 6 times in Ch. 8, 117x in OT - describing things that offend God's moral order
- God wants you to be as disgusted by the sin and idolatry in your own life as His is. When your heart breaks over your own sin, it becomes more like His heart. One reason why God breaks us is to root out idolatry in our own life.

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2. To Grieve for Those Who Oppose God (Ezekiel 9:3-6)

- He wants us to learn how to grieve and lament for those who embrace the very things that God finds detestable.
- God spares those who grieve for sin in their community, those who reject wickedness in culture and been faithful to God (Ezekiel 9:3-6; Revelation 7:2-3, 9:4, 14:1).
- God would use other people (nations) to execute judgment on the Israelites. The only escape is for those who grieve and lament over their community who oppose God, to be hardheaded but softhearted.
- Application to recent tragedies (Charlie Kirk assassination, school shootings). What Ezekiel is teaching us is that part of having God's heart is to grieve over the detestable things that oppose Him and His mission to redeem the world through Jesus. We are to grieve and lament over the sin in our world, and get to work with the Lord to redeem the world!
- Challenge: Are we more upset about political differences than souls going to hell?

3. To Be a People Who Have New Hearts (Ezekiel 11:17-20)

- Ezekiel finally breaks when he sees death of priest Pelatiah
- God promises "undivided heart" and "new spirit" to the remnant, the exiles in Babylon.
- "Undivided heart" literally means "one heart", wholeness! God's plan will lead to His people having new hearts. It is a full integration toward God, not divided in loyalty with idols. They need new hearts!
- "They will be my people, and I will be their God." God breaks our hearts so He can give us a new one, one like His.

Conclusion

- Ezekiel wants his readers to know how detestable sin is to the Lord, and how He is absolutely unafraid to break you of your sin, so that He can restore you into His image and give you a heart of flesh.

"He will not rest content till he has seen all his people, from all ages, from all lands, gathered in his church around his throne. This is his work of sanctifying them, making them holy, and he will carry it on to completion—at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to him."-J.I. Packer

- Jesus took our detestable sins on the cross, so you could get a new heart.

5 Head Questions (Understanding/Knowledge)

1. What does the phrase "undivided heart" mean in Ezekiel 11:19, and how does it differ from group unity?
2. What was the "idol that provokes to jealousy" mentioned in Ezekiel 8, and why was it particularly offensive to God?
3. How many times does the word "detestable" appear in Ezekiel 8-9, and what does this Hebrew word specifically mean?
4. What is the significance of the mark placed on foreheads in Ezekiel 9:3-6, and how does it connect to Revelation?

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5. What is the covenant phrase that appears 15 times in the Old Testament and connects to Revelation 21:3?

5 Heart Questions (Attitudes/Affections)

1. When was the last time your heart was truly broken by something that breaks God's heart? What was that experience like?
2. Are you more grieved by political disagreements with fellow believers or by the reality that your neighbors may be going to hell? What does this reveal about your heart's priorities?
3. How do you honestly feel when you consider that God finds certain things in your life "detestable"? Do you share His disgust over your own sin?
4. What idols in your life might be provoking God's jealousy? What competes for the affection and worship that belongs to Him alone?
5. How does your heart respond when you see sin and rebellion in your community - with grief or indifference?

5 Hands Questions (Application)

1. What concrete steps will you take this week to address areas of idolatry or spiritual compromise that God has revealed in your life?
2. How can you practically develop a heart that grieves for the sin in your community rather than just judging or avoiding it?
3. How will you practically demonstrate both hardheaded conviction and softhearted compassion in your relationships with those who oppose God's ways?
4. What steps will you take to ensure your political views don't overshadow your burden for the lost?
5. What is one practical way you can demonstrate that you're seeking an "undivided heart" this week? How will you integrate your faith more fully into all areas of your life?
6. What specific ways will you demonstrate that you are marked as one who grieves over sin in your community, and how will this influence your relationships and witness?