Dangerous Prayers – Part 2

# Break Me

# (Luke 9.23-24)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. It’s good to have all of you with us this morning and those of you watching online this week welcome. We are in part two of a three-part message series entitled “Dangerous Prayers.” And last week, we talked about David’s prayer in Psalm chapter 139, “Search me, Oh God, and know my heart.” And some of you committed to praying that every day and I’m believing that your preparation will bear fruit and have a significant impact on your receptiveness to today’s message.

You see that prayer was crucial because today is going to be the most difficult and probably the most dangerous of all three prayers we are going to discuss. In fact, this prayer has the potential to open your heart to the work of God like nothing else. And so, this message today is going to be deep and the title of this message and the prayer I want to ask you to pray is “Break me,” because if you want to be whole in God’s kingdom you must be willing to be broken.

*Jeremiah said, “I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own…” (Jeremiah 10:23).*

And so, we must acknowledge that if Jesus Christ is the vine, and we are the branches, then apart from him we can do nothing. Therefore, it’s in that place of brokenness, offering ourselves as living sacrifices, that we all must come to Jesus. He said,

*“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).*

And so, Jesus invites anyone who wants to follow him to deny themselves, to lose their lives, and to experience the blessing of brokenness.

Now, I know “God, break me,” is a difficult prayer, but the reality is that brokenness is all around us. In fact, the apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8, that all of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:22). And so, Paul tells us that even the earth is crying out, groaning in its brokenness and he says,

*“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).*

We too are groaning inwardly, because we want to be closer to God, we want to be in his presence, we want all the distractions removed from our lives, but honestly we just don’t feel comfortable praying, “God, break me.” It’s a scary prayer, we don’t really want to pray that prayer, because it’s a dangerous prayer, it requires us to trust God more than we ever have before. But I want to encourage you to give God permission to break you because of the blessing of intimacy with him that you’ll discover on the other side of that experience. You see, the Bible tells us that,

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

And so, I’ve been praying for enlightenment, that we’d welcome some crushing, some brokenness, because I believe that through that experience God will make us a fruitful church. As we pray this prayer, “Break me,” God is going to take you and I, these fruitful branches laden with ripe grapes, and he’s going to crush us and make sweet wine. And yet, even now some of you feel like you’re failing, that you haven’t been fruitful, and many of you don’t know your potential, but the apostle Paul said it this way,

*“What you sow does not come to life unless it dies” (1 Corinthians 15:36).*

You see, fruitfulness is not always based upon what you can see on the surface, because at the moment a seed goes into the ground it starts doing what it was created to do. And so, Paul says, “When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed…” It’s just a seed, but it dies, and it begins to break apart and changes form so that it can produce what’s in it “…perhaps of wheat or of something else” (1 Corinthians 15:37). And it’s in that moment, at that very instant of realizing its great potential, that the seed is both broken and hidden from sight. But God, verse 38 says,

*“Gives it a body just as he has determined…” (1 Corinthians 15:38).*

And so, sometimes in our lives when God is growing us the most, when we’re maturing the most, and he’s making a difference through us that there are going to be moments, days, even seasons, when we feel like we’re breaking, like we’re hidden, but what really matters is that you know what’s inside of you.

The apostle Paul understood this, and he welcomed this process saying, “Even if I am being poured out like a drink offering,” it’s just a little bit of suffering. And he recognized in second Corinthians, chapter 4,

*“Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Corinthians 4:17).*

And I know “break me” is a dangerous prayer, but I wonder if some of us don’t need to put on a little bit of weight, maybe a little bit of glory. You see, it’s in this hope, the Bible says,

*“In this hope we were saved…” (Romans 8:24).*

It’s in this hope that we eagerly wait for our adoption. It’s in this hope that we long for the redemption of our bodies. But the problem is that for some of you, the moment something goes wrong you start praying for God to take it away. You see, sometimes you need a little bit of brokenness, you need to go through something, and so God will allow the pressure to increase so that you have a testimony to his faithfulness. He’ll allow you to carry some weight, you’ll feel that crushing, that pressing down, and it might become uncomfortable, but he’s making something new in you, and it comes number one through brokenness.

## 1. Broken

In first Samuel we find the story about the prayer of a woman in her brokenness. This woman of God whose name means “favored” didn’t feel very favored at all. In fact, Hannah felt broken due to her inability to have children and the Bible says in verse 10,

*“In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:10).*

In other words, these were prayers of anguish and brokenness made to the only one who could meet her most desperate need. And God did, he met Hannah at the point of her brokenness, he heard her whispered prayers, he heard her prayers expressed in groanings too deep for words, and in her brokenness, he not only blessed her, but he blessed all generations. Out of her prayer, it was her son Samuel who was born that would eventually anoint King David from whose lineage our Lord Jesus Christ was born.

There’s another story of brokenness in the New Testament, this one about a different kind of woman, a woman who had experienced a different kind of brokenness. We find her story in Mark’s gospel and beginning in chapter 14, the Bible tells us that while Jesus was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the leper,

*“A woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard…” (Mark 14:3).*

Now, we know that this was a different kind of woman from Hannah who we found worshiping, because Luke tells us that this woman had “lived a sinful life” which explains why she would have this very expensive perfume. You could say it was her calling card, her smell said that she was available, but now she no longer had a use for it because one day she met Jesus and for the first time maybe ever she was loved appropriately and treated with dignity. And it was that encounter with Jesus that had broken her and totally transformed her, and so when she heard that Jesus was in town, she honored him in the most sacrificial and extravagant way that she knew.

Verse three said, “she broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.” It was this simple act of worship, this breaking and pouring, that was so much more extravagant than any of those present could understand. Mark tells us in verse four,

*“Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor" (Mark 14:4-5).*

They didn’t understand the meaning of this, that the breaking and the pouring out of this most valuable possession was her literally giving Jesus her whole life. Not only was she prophetically preparing his body for burial, but number two, the pouring out of that perfume represented her leaving her past behind.

## 2. Pouring

And so, she broke that alabaster jar signifying that there was no going back, she was all in, and so she worshiped Jesus in this one selfless extravagant moment of worship. In verse six, Jesus said to those who were gathered,

*"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me" (Mark 14:6).*

He praised her, because she had done a wonderful thing. In her brokenness, in this act of worship, she had poured out everything she had much like Jesus was about to do.

In fact, Matthew tells us that just before Jesus died, as he was celebrating the Passover meal with his disciples,

*“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:26-28).*

Jesus was poured out as he gave his body, spilling his blood for the forgiveness of our sins, so that we too could be poured out in surrender.

You see, just like Hannah was broken in her infertility and continually poured out her prayers seeking the favor of God. Or the sinful woman breaking the alabaster jar and pouring out the expensive perfume on Jesus in worship, recognizing that she had been saved from her broken situation. We too need to be broken and poured out, and yet too many of us are consumed with entertaining ourselves, content with what we’ve got, and we’re oblivious to the world around us that is groaning in anguish. The Bible says that there’s an emergency, “the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22). And yet, we are sitting here watching our clocks, worried about what time the game comes on, when we should be broken over the lost souls around us.

I’m so thankful for Jesus, because he felt that burden, and the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 6,

*“At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8).*

Christ died for us, not for those who have it all together, not for those who think they’re better than others. No, the Bible says he died for the ungodly, he didn’t die because of what he did, but he died because of what you and I did. And yet, here we are watching the clock, worried about whatever, busy entertaining ourselves, when there’s never been a more urgent time in the history of the world.

The Bible tells us in first Peter,

*“The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray” (1 Peter 4:7).*

I’m believing that it’s time to rise up and pray some dangerous prayers. You know, we need to pray like Jesus did. In fact, on Thursday night when he went into the garden to pray, knowing that the next day they were going to take his life, he lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed,

*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).*

Jesus prayed a dangerous prayer, because he was committed, he was all in. And so, when they laid that cross on his shoulders, when he climbed that hill to Golgotha, he was willing to go the extra mile for the same people who’d shouted, “Crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:21). And so, Jesus was willing to fight for those who unfollowed him, those who tried to block him, and those who refused to believe in him. And in the same way, number three, we’ve got to be willing.

## 3. Willing

It’s time for us to pray a dangerous prayer; to be willing to pray “break me,” because the time is short. We don’t have time for games, it doesn’t matter what people say about you or think about you, it’s time to get real because the Bible says, is “This is the last hour….” (1 John 2:18). This is important, because you and I are living in the end times, this is the last hour, and we’re in a season of unfolding judgment. In fact, the Bible says,

*“It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).*

In other words, it’s time for you and I to get serious about the gospel because there are people all around us that are going to hell. In fact, some of you need to repent because the kingdom of heaven is near, you can see it in the news, it’s happening all around us. God is beginning to stir things, but it is going to begin in here, in the church, within the family of God.

You see, out there in the world, it’s just like Jesus said,

*“In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:38-39).*

Today, people are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, running around like God is okay with everything, but he’s not okay with everything, because if he was okay with everything Jesus wouldn’t’ve had to suffer and die. And so, all around us people are dying and going to an eternal hell and we’re sitting here looking at our watches, worried about something that doesn’t even matter, and so we need to repent and we must be willing to be broken.

Over the past 34 years, my wife Dana and I have been through so much together, we’ve been broken in countless ways, and yet we’ve never been more unified. In fact, this church began in the midst of our struggle with cancer and it was out of that brokenness, in that season of pruning, that God was preparing us for a greater season of fruitfulness. I don’t know what it is that you’re dealing with today, but if you want to be whole, if you want to be useful in God’s kingdom, you must be willing to be broken.

I believe God is preparing this church for a great harvest of souls and so I want to encourage your dangerous prayer, your invitation for God to break you, because we connect with others more deeply through our brokenness. Therefore, we want God to do that work in us, remembering that he was poured out, and being willing to respond to his invitation so that we might be broken and poured out too.

One thing I always found fascinating is that Peter was there that night when Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his followers. In fact, not only was he gathered around that table with the others, but he boasted that he would never deny Jesus. He said, “I am ready to go with you to prison and to death” but it was just hours later that he denied Jesus, not just once, but three times. And the Bible tells us, at that moment, the third time he denied Jesus,

*“Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:60-62).*

Peter was broken and there are some of you here that are hurting right now, you’re in the middle of something right now. Others of you are going to get to that place where your breaking and everything seems to be falling apart around you. That’s where Peter was, but that wasn’t the end of the story, because after the resurrection Jesus came to Peter and forgave him. He restored him to a position of leadership because he knows that those who have been broken will become so much more useful to his kingdom.

As we close, I would encourage you to pray a dangerous prayer like Jesus did,

*"Father, not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).*

Because when you are in that place of brokenness, you’ll learn to fully depend on God, and you’ll see him do a healing work in you that you’ll never discover any other way. When the woman broke open the alabaster jar and poured it all out, she was symbolizing giving her whole life to Jesus. Would you consider praying a very dangerous prayer? “God, break me so that I could know you intimately, break me of my pride, my self-righteousness, whatever sin there is, but break it all so that I can serve you with all of my life.”

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