

5. Jesus Bound Up the Broken

In Ezekiel 34:16, we read, “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.” In this verse, we see that one of the ministries of Christ, to the nation of Israel, would be to bind up the broken. The word that is translated “broken” means *to break, to crush or to shatter*. This is an important ministry for every spiritual leader, whether that person is leading a Bible study, a Sunday School class, or an entire church.

Today, we have many Christians whose lives have been broken and crushed. Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 17:22, and Proverbs 18:14 talk about those whose spirits have been broken or smitten. When people spirits are broken, it causes them to lose hope. Scripture gives a variety of reasons why the human spirit may be smitten or broken. Some of the many things that can break the spirit include:

- ◆ our own sin - Genesis 3:7-13
- ◆ sins of others - Genesis 3:16-19
- ◆ death - 1 Corinthians 15:55-56; John 11:21
- ◆ disabilities – John 5:1-7, 9:2-3
- ◆ sorrow of heart - Proverbs 15:13
- ◆ doing things in our own strength - Romans 7:14-25
- ◆ conflicts with others - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
- ◆ deception by false teachers - Ephesians 4:14
- ◆ our own dullness of hearing - Hebrews 5:11-14
- ◆ lack of growth to spiritual maturity - 1 Corinthians 13:11

As we study the ministry of Christ, we see that He took time to bind up the broken many times. Many times, we see that Christ extended forgiveness to those who were broken by their own sin. In Mark 2:1-12, four men brought their paralyzed friend to Christ. Mark 2:5 says, “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’” Christians are often smitten by their own sin. James 5:16 tells us how we can bring spiritual healing to such Christians. That verse says, “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Here, we see that we are to pray with them and help them come to the point where they are healed of their guilt.

The sins of others often break the spirits of people and cause them to lose hope. In John 9, Christ healed a man who was born blind. However, just a short time later, he was kicked out of the synagogue for speaking about Christ. John 9:34-35 tells us, “They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’ And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’” First, this man was accused of sin. Second, he was expelled from the synagogue. Christ ministered to him by coming to him when the religious leaders had rejected him. We also minister to others by going to those people when others have rejected them.

Christ also ministered to others when their spirits were broken by the death of relatives. In John

11, we read about the death of Lazarus. Christ ministered to his sisters in several ways before He raised Lazarus from the dead:

- He ministered to them by going to visit them – John 11:17
- He ministered to them by listening to them – John 11:21-24, 28-32
- He ministered to them by weeping with them – John 11:33-35
- He ministered to them by going to the grave with them – John 11:38

We can also minister to those whose spirits are smitten by the death of those they love very much. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Here, we see that we can comfort others with the comfort God gave us in our times of trouble.

Doing things in their own strength can also cause Christians to break their own spirits and lose hope. Romans 7:19, 24 tell us, “For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice... ²⁴O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” The disciples also did things in their own strength, and failed. Probably the best example was the night Christ was arrested and tried. Notice what happened in the life of Peter:

- Peter was warned that Satan wanted to sift him – Luke 22:31-32
- Peter said he was ready to go to prison or even die with Christ – Luke 22:33
- Peter was told he would deny Christ – Luke 22:34
- Peter, and the others, slept when they were told to pray – Luke 22:40-46
- Peter tried to defend Christ in his own strength and all he succeeded in doing was removing the ear of the servant of the high priest – John 18:10 (Jesus did take time to heal the ear so that Peter would not be charged with attempted murder – Luke 22:51)
- Peter and the others all forsook him and fled – Mark 14:50
- Peter later followed afar off – Luke 22:54
- Peter later sat down among those who had Christ on trial – Luke 22:55
- Peter denied Christ three times – Luke 22:56-62
- Peter felt like a failure, and later, went back to fishing (he also took six other disciples with him who were probably having the same feelings) – John 21:2-3
- Peter was a man with a broken spirit who had lost any hope that the Lord could use him.

Christ did several things to bind up Peter and the other disciples who were broken by their own failure. In John 21, we see that Christ did the following things to bind up the broken spirit of Peter and help him realize that Christ still could use him in ministry.

- Christ went to Peter and the other disciples – John 21:4
- Christ spoke to them with words of kindness – John 21:5
- Christ gave them a great catch of fish – John 21:6-11
- Christ invited them to eat a meal with him – John 21:12-14
- Christ asked if Peter loved Him more than the fish – John 21:15
- Christ questioned Peter three times – John 21:15-17
- Christ told Peter three times that he still had a ministry – John 21:15-17
- Christ told Peter how he would glorify God in the future – John 21:18-19

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Leaders Who Are Becoming Like Their Shepherd 5. “Jesus Bound Up the Broken” Updated October 2025

Copyright © 2002, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

- Christ renewed His invitation to Peter to follow Him – John 21:19

In these verses, we see that Christ took time to go to the disciples and brought healing to them in their brokenness. He ministered to them with love and compassion. He did not condemn them for depending on their own strength. Instead, His focus was on restoration. He helped them to see that their lives would again be useful.

Christ also tells us in Galatians 6:1, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” In this verse, we see that Christians can be broken by their own sin, or by depending on their own strength. Our first concern should be to help them restore their relationship with Christ. We are to do this with a spirit of gentleness. Otherwise, we will be tempted to sin ourselves. Galatians 6:2 adds, “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Here, we see that we are to follow the example of Christ, and exercise the law of love, by loving our brothers and sisters in Christ as Christ has loved us.

Christians can also have their spirit broken by people like Diotrephes. 3 John 9-10 says, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.”

Christ ministered to people who had been broken by people like Diotrephes. The common people had often been hurt by the pride of the Pharisees and Sadducees. One day, Christ was teaching in the temple. The Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees had all tried to trap Christ in His words, but Christ continued to teach. Right in the middle of His teaching, we see a very important statement. Mark 12:37b says, “And the common people heard Him gladly.” The religious leaders did much to cause the common people to be smitten and broken by their proud attitudes. In contrast, the common people loved Christ, and were eager to hear Him, because they knew that He accepted them. In the same way, we want to help people know that we love and accept them.

One of the key ministries of any group leader is to bind up those who are broken in spirit. It does not matter whether they were broken by their own sin, the sins of others, or by the circumstances of life. We need to show all developing leaders, by our example, how to bind up those who are broken. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to follow the example of our Great Shepherd and bandage the wounds of the broken.