

A Dearth of Broken Hearts

1. Sorrow for Sin: Where Has It Gone?

A. Jer 44:1-10 - Judah not yet humbled.

1. Jerusalem/Judah has been obliterated: starved, tortured, murdered, enslaved and deported.
2. The small remnant has ignored Jeremiah's counsel to stay in the land and has fled to Egypt, taking the aged prophet with them.
3. *"They have not been humbled, to this day"* - v 10. Their hearts have not yet been "crushed" or made contrite by all they have suffered.

B. Where has regret, sorrow, remorse gone in our society?

1. **Illus:** Girl at prom, has baby in bathroom, dumps in trash, returns to dance. Brothers murder parents and later go out on the town, party. Group kills ice-cream man, stand around laughing, joking while he dies.
2. A growing element of society is "in your face," callous, me-first/me-last/me-in-between, cold-hearted, cold-blooded, court-backed, calculated evil.
3. And what floods the culture eventually seeps into the attitudes of Christians.

C. Instead of remorse:

1. Self-deception - "I didn't do anything wrong." Spiritual/moral training is so deficient these days that some don't know that they've done wrong.
2. Self-justification - "It was wrong, but I was justified because ...". We creatively find reasons why the rules don't apply to us. We spend more time rationalizing, justifying and excusing and not enough time **agonizing**.
3. Self-assertion - "It was wrong, and I couldn't care less." This is evil in its most natural state, where individual conscience does not interfere with its full expression - 1 Tim 4:2; *"hardening of their heart ... past feeling"* (Eph 4:18-19).

2. "A Broken Heart ..."

A. Ps 51:17 - When sin occurs, God searches for a broken heart.

1. What made David different from Saul? David committed adultery, lied, mur-

dered a loyal officer (and other soldiers), and hypocritically judged himself regarding Nathan's parable. What made him different?

2. David understood the implications of his behavior before God: Ps 51:4; 2 Sam 12:10 ("*you have despised Me*"), 13 ("*I have sinned against the Lord*").

3. David confessed his sin and took full responsibility for his actions: Ps 51:3; 38:17-18; 32:3-5.

B. "*Godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death*" (2 Cor 7:10).

1. Godly sorrow does **not** lead to perpetual guilt, denigration of one's value, or a lifetime of vainly trying to pay for sins. *Jesus already did that!* Judas was sorry for what he had done but it didn't produce a useful life (Mt 27:3).

2. Godly sorrow **does** seek change, maturity, learning from one's failure and produces zeal and devotion via gratitude. Neither Peter nor Paul forgot their failures but each counseled others to seek God's mercy and grace.

C. A broken heart is the beginning of healing our relationship with both God and our fellow man.

3. Broken Hearts, Mended Relations

A. Godly sorrow actively seeks forgiveness of and reconciliation with those whom we have hurt. "*Confess your trespasses ...*" (Jas 5:16).

1. It confesses in **definite** terms; not some half-hearted "If I've done anything ...".

2. It expresses sorrow for the hurt done. **Illus:** Air Force officer who ordered the napalm attack against Vietnamese village. "This little woman lifted a huge boulder off my back which had been there 25 years."

3. Expressed sorrow is *relief*, it is a powerful "shoehorn" for eliciting forgiveness of others.

B. Such reconciliation is of the utmost priority - Mt 5:23-24.

C. We must maintain a sense of responsibility, regret and repentance toward the sins that we commit.

Conclusion: