

What's up, the Village? When I get up at Philly, I always say, "What's up, people of God?" I'm going to say it here. What's up, people of God? Oh man, that's lovely. I greet you from Philadelphia in the name of His Imperial Majesty, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who created all things seen and unseen, the one who is above and beyond all of our comprehension, the one who is 100% God, 100% man, unintermingled, united, in one Person, eternally as the slain Lamb who is the only way to God. I greet you.

Well, I'm going to pray, and we're going to dive in and get started. Alright, "Lord, the gospel truth, the one who hung the curtains of eternity, we love You, God. We love You. We believe that You're life, we believe that You're light and that there is no darkness in You, no none at all. Lord God, we pledge ourselves to you over and over again by the blood of Christ, which is the red carpet into Your presence. Lord God, we pray to You because we need You. We pray to You because without You, nothing is possible, nothing at all. And so God, as I proclaim the word to Your people and as Your people hear the word, help us to be not just hearers of the word but doers of the word. May the words of my mouth, may the meditations of my heart be absolutely, unadulteratedly acceptable in your sight. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen."

Hello, my name is Eric Mason. We just planted a church in the northern section of Philadelphia, three blocks from Temple University, a church by which the Village has actually been in partnership with. And so, we just want to say thank you. Thank you for your support. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for all your help. Our passion in Philly, our model, our vision statement is "Showing off the glory of Christ in every area of life," in other words, every area of life being unveiled by the gospel and the gospel getting to every area. Our passion is to see the unreached hip-hop generation, global generation, not just people that sag their pants and turn their heads backwards but a group of people that were socialized during the era when hip-hop gained its prominence. So if you've got a little bit of salt and pepper in your hair, we're not leaving you out. Amen. Or if your hair is running away from your forehead, we want you too, we love you too. So we're not fronting on people because of age. However, we just feel like the generation that MTV loves a whole lot, that BET loves a whole lot, that VH1 loves a whole lot, VH1 Soul and the whole line love a lot, we want to see Christ get to them, see them redeemed, transformed by the gospel, bring everything in their lives, our lives under subjection, under Jesus' feet, so that they can become global missionaries to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so, that's what we exist for. And that's multi-ethnic. That's not just black or whatever, it's a group of multi-ethnic people. So again, thank you so much for your support, your prayers and your help.

I want to dive into a subject tonight that is what I call the other B-word. It's a word that's extremely scary to anyone that hears the word, especially if you're a believer and you've kind of been exposed to the biblical nutrition of this word. The word's "brokenness." I want to talk about brokenness tonight. Brokenness is probably one of those words, the other B-word, that you wish no one will ever tell you God's doing to you or for you to find out that He's the one actually doing it. You know, a lot of people blame a lot of things on Satan. And I always say to people, "It's easy to deal with the reality of the fact that Satan's against you and all of that stuff and he's your problem, but there's a whole other category and issue to let soak into you when it's not Satan who's your problem, but God who's your problem." Many times in our life, we construct our lives and rig it for our own comforts, rig it for our own passions, rig it for our own journey, rig it for our picturesque, but what happens when God says that's not the same time line or epoch or chronos that He's on? And what if God said, "Listen, the picture that you've painted of your life..." I don't care what preacher said that God loves you and has a plan for your life and usually the plan brings up a picture of two people running after each other and the music's

playing and the violin's playing and it pictures this life that, if you ask any seasoned veteran in the Christian faith, their stomach is hurting laughing at the picture you have because they know God...Not that Christians, we're masochists and I'm going, "God, when are You going to break me?" Like, we're not masochists, but we do kind of have a theology of brokenness. Listen, if you're going to be a Christian, if you're going to walk in the implications of the gospel, then you're going to have to be married to the understanding of the principle of brokenness.

Before we dive into 2 Corinthians 4, I want you to turn to the Psalms so that we can get a working definition of brokenness. Psalm 34:18, "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Hold your finger there and turn over to Psalm 51. Look at verse 17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Beautiful. What these passages are talking about is God likes people who are broken. The question is: What does it mean to be broken? The word there says He loves those who are brokenhearted. It's interesting in the Hebrew mind what heart meant. Heart meant mind, emotions and will. Mind is where your value system is, emotion is where your passions are, will is what you actually act on based on your value system and based on your passions that come from that value system and things that you actually do based on those two things. And so, the Bible says through the psalmist that God likes people whose values are broken, whose passions are broken and whose will is broken. God's near to people, not who have a broken values system, passion and will based on His rule but based on us. He loves people who are personally broken in their values, personally broken in their passions and now personally broken in their will.

And everybody in this room within the sound of my voice, you're either going into being broken, you're currently being broken or watch your watch, because you'll be broken pretty soon. If you're really walking godly in Christ Jesus, brokenness is a normal attitude of the believer in Jesus Christ. And over in 2 Corinthians 4, Paul gives the M.O. of his ministry. Paul begins to talk about how brokenness is the mark of a person that is qualified to be used by God. He says that if you're not broken, then you're using yourself for your own personal efforts and own personal dreams and own personal passions, but at the end of the day people that are actually being used by God, in a crazy way, in an off the meter way, are people who have been cracked up, who have been lunged at by God and God has done something to them. The word broken over in Psalms can mean shattered, crushed, maimed, devoid of arrogance, wounded, contrite, injured, smashed, grieved, distressed, crippled, wrecked, demolished, fractured, handicapped and disabled. Develop the working definition from those synonyms. Brokenness, based on those Scriptures - The spiritual state by which one is disarmed of one's self-dependence and pride, therefore leaving one disabled and in desperate need of help, thereby making one a viable conduit for the glory of Christ. What happens is that God wants people that have been totally smashed of their own personal pursuits and are now pursuing vastly the passion and heart of Him.

Now, these are the signs that you need to be broken. Now I know some of us, we're so cute and we're so cool and we're so fine, we're so fly, we've got so much, you don't need to be broken. I mean, you're good, right? You know, you look at you and go, "I'm a pretty humble person." You just lost it when you said that. But the signs of a person that needs to be broken: a life that's marked by independence. Independence, a person that's a loner, that's secretive. Even those who are over-dependent are in a need to be broken. Because some people are so needy and dependent on others that they never want to stand, because there are two ways in the Bible where it talks about, "Bear one another's burdens" in Galatians 6, but it also says, "Everyone should bear his own burden." So there's a sense of both. Prayerlessness. If you're always rushing and you never have time to get it in with the Lord. Prayerlessness. If you're not praying, that is a signal that you don't need God and that you need to be broken. Dry eyes, you never cry. You know us as fellas. You know we're like, "I'm alright. I don't need to cry. I'm good." Our eyes, burning up from the salt of tears that need to come out of your eyes. Isolation. The Bible says in Proverbs 18:1 that if a person isolates themselves, they will not find favor. Unteachable, ain't nobody can teach you nothing. I mean, every time someone tries to tell you something, you have a rebuttal before they finish telling you something about yourself. Unteachable, you a good candidate for brokenness. Unsynchronized

life, life is all over the place, sporadic, you can't get it in with Christians, you can't get it in with the people of God, everything is not under a roof where you can synchronize your life like you do your phone to your laptop. Busyness, busyness mistaken for diligence and productivity. Some people, you always talk to them, "What are you doing?" "I'm busy. I've got to go here." "Where are you going?" "I'm going over hear. Man, I'm doing this. I've got this..." If you take God's rule and put into the anatomy of that busyness, you'll find out that there's very few kingdom endeavors laced in that busyness. Need to be broken.

And so, we come to Paul where Paul says, "I'm an apostle." And he's talking to the believers in Corinth because they are absolutely, unadulteratedly into superstars. They love the icons of their society. And Paul begins talking to them because they like super-apostles and God's way, the way God does things, they don't like it too much because it's too gritty, it's too grimy, it's too low to the ground and it doesn't have much shine to it. And because of that, he has to educate them on God's kingdom economy. God is a backwards God in the eyes of men. If you take the will of man and reverse it, nine times out of ten you get the will of God. So what Paul does is something powerful. Paul gets in this passage, and he begins to say, "Listen, let me give you the biblical and kingdom lay out of what it actually means to be an apostle." But this is not just for a person to be an apostle, it is the state and nature of every Christian who wants to be a conduit for the glory of Christ. In verse 7, he says, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

That brings me to my first point: God put power in the vessel. He says here that we have this treasure in earthen vessels or jars of clay or baked clay or clay pots. Well, to understand what he's talking about, we're going to chop up a few things. Back in that time, there were several types of vessels. There were gold vessels, with rubies and diamonds and pearls all encrusted into them. There were silver vessels, bronze vessels and then there were clay vessels. Clay vessels were used for the clay bathroom and just for any old kind of use. But they were easily disposable and they weren't worth much. Paul likens this to the Christian. Paul says, "We are worthless vessels." But then he says, "We have this treasure." So it's kind of crazy. If you have a jacked up vessel, why in the world would you put something of value in it?

Well the question before we talk about that is: What is the treasure? I'm glad you asked. Paul, as he walks through 2 Corinthians, begins to lay out in chapter 3 the beauty of the old covenant but also the surpassing beauty of the new covenant. And as he talks about the nature of the gospel, the comprehensiveness of the gospel, he talked about the fading glory of the old covenant. He talked about how Moses, when he came off mountain, out of the presence of God, how the presence of God faded off of him because it wasn't a long-term glory. But then he comes into this text, and he begins to talk about eternal glory. In verse 18 of chapter 3, he says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." So God, in the life of the believe, even though we are positionally glorified with Christ, we have to go through life where our lives God saved you to rig our lives to maximize the amount of glory He can get our of us. I like the way Peter says it in 2 Peter 1. He says God called us according to His glory and excellence. Oh that's beautiful. Because God was in eternity past, He was just walking around, chillin' all by Himself with His triune fineness, and He looked at Himself and said, "Man, it don't make no sense to be that fine." God said, "I'm so fine, I'm going to make some people. Now, when I make these people, they can't be Me, but what I'm going to do is I'm going to have a dumbed down glory that they'll be able to express. And when people see them, they'll catch a glimpse of Me, but it's not Me so that my people can actually point to me. So I'm going to create a cruel people." Some people say, "If I were just only..." God didn't call you for you; He called you for Himself. So God is so in love with Himself. Somebody said, "That's so selfish." Well that's selfish if it wasn't true. But see? God is the only one that can be in love with Himself and have a right to be and have it impact others. And so he says we have this treasure in earthen vessels, the glory of God. We're tabernacles, the new community, the gathered and dispersed people of God.

But what he says here is interesting because the treasure is not just the glory itself but the glory shows itself up in a particular way, the gospel. What's the gospel? He says the surpassing greatness, the ESV says the "surpassing power." The surpassing power belongs to God, not us. This is powerful. What is the gospel? The gospel is the power of God, Romans 1:16. The gospel is the capsulized omnipotence of God, the all powerfulness of God. So God has placed that inside of us, but He has not placed His full omnipotence in us because that would make us gods. So there's an expression of His omnipotence that through the power of the gospel. Now, He has this treasure in earthen vessels, the omnipotent power of the gospel in a worthless piece of clay.

And what's interesting about Paul saying this is how does this have to do with brokenness? Well in their time, thieves would come into their house, and they would rummage everything looking for things of value. And most of the time, you would put valuable items into a gold vessel, a silver vessel or a bronze vessel. But the rich people or the middle class people got smart. They started putting their jewelry in earthen vessels, clay vessels. So that when a thief came in, he wouldn't bother the vessel. But Paul is using this illustration to show that God loves to weakness to express His glory. But how does He do it? Well you've got to understand that the people of this time, when they wanted to access their treasure, they break the vessel, and that's God's way of working in our lives. God is consumed with His glory. He's consumed with the gospel. He's consumed with Himself. And with that in mind, God sovereignly uses brokenness as the way in which He brings about the maximum amount of glory that He wants to get, because it's not going to happen until we get out of the way so He can get in the way.

And this brings me to my second point. Not only does God put power in the vessel, but God puts pressure on the vessel. Look at verse 8. He says, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" God puts pressure on the vessel. Paul now begins to lay out to the Corinthians the way in which God accesses His glory from the vessel, the gospel from the vessel to get the maximum amount of potent global influence through His conduits who are human beings, who are sub-tabernacles of His presence. He says, "afflicted in every way." The sense of this term means to be surrounded by crowds. The sense has to do with everything going wrong. Have you ever had a day where you woke up and you just said, "Something's not right?" Stuff just starts not working, the car doesn't start, all this other stuff, and you're just, "Aw, this is going to be a bad day. I can just feel that this is going to be a terrible day." And everything begins coming upon you, this thing comes upon you, that thing comes upon you, this thing presses upon you. Afflicted in every way. God uniquely uses everything in our life. Just because we're in a fallen world that was initiated by man through Satan, doesn't mean that God is still not in control of this faulty world system. And He uniquely uses it sovereignly to make sure His people are kept at bay. And what He does is allow a multitude of things to happen to us because we have been bought with a price. I can remember seven years ago, when I was in seminary and I was going to class, and this was the first time I didn't go with my wife to her appointment with our first child. She was six pregnant. I'll never forget it. And she called me and said, "Baby, you need to get here to the hospital." And I got there, and our child's heartbeat was over. And the doctor said, "The baby has passed. Do you want to induce labor or do you want to wait until it naturally happens? Because she's going to have to pass the baby. I can't just take the baby." And this happened and that happened. The next thing you know, my wife need to get a liver transplant. And after that, she got cancer three times and had to have eight surgeries. Our life is not our own. Some of us are saying, "I can't relate to that." Well keep on living. I'm not trying to exalt our circumstance, but listen, God does not need our permission schedule an appointment for brokenness. What if God told you that He is going to break you next week at 4:00 on Wednesday? God just said, "Four o'clock. Have some fun between now and then. Get it all out, because at four o'clock next week, I'm going to tear your life up." I mean, I would be paranoid. But God doesn't do it that way. He schedules an appointment and doesn't tell you when the appointed time comes. But the issue is the appointed time will come, and the question is: Will we misinterpret the affliction that God allows on our lives for hate or for love? Keep listening. We'll talk about that in a minute. "afflicted in every way, but not crushed." "Crushed" here in this text just points the fact that it doesn't have it's full work on us.

But then, he says not only afflicted in every way, but he says "perplexed, but not driven to despair." Interesting terminology. Perplexed but not despairing. Powerful. Perplexed is where we'll go through something and God is breaking us. Perplexed means, "I don't really know what's going on right now." Perplexed means you've just been taken by surprise and you're kind of confused and dismayed because God has allowed something to happen to you. You can even have a fuzzy sense of God's grace during that time and begin to ask God crazy questions like your man, Habakkuk in Habakkuk 1. Perplexed, "God, I thought we were boys. Why You going to let this happen to a brotha?" Perplexed. Peter says, "Do not be surprised by the fiery trial." However, Paul does say that there are times when the fiery trial comes that there's perplexity. It's, "God, why are You fretting on Your blessings right now?" Perplexed. A perplexed person says, "Lord, I don't know why this is happening, but You've got a track record and I trust You." Despair is the antonym to perplexity. Despair is a whole nother game, family. Despair is when you lose hope. Despair is the cousin of apostasy. Despair is when you begin to back up from the people of God, you begin to hate Christian terminology, you don't want to hear what God has to say because you think God is so foul that He allowed this to happen to you that He can't be the good and merciful God that those guys told you about. "You told me that God is gracious. You told me that was merciful. God, You're supposed to be merciful. Why are You allowing this to happen? You make me sick." Despair. See, when you lose hope...you've got to understand, hope is one of the ingredients of faith. Faith is not just saying, "It can happen," but it's believing that it actually will happen. When you lose hope, you cannot have faith. And so, what happens to the despairing person is they begin to cringe at the things of God because God allowed something to happen to them, beyond their control, beyond their comprehension, frustrated. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1, "At one point, I admit I was even despairing of my own life because of God's trials on me." But then he says, "God reorganized my soul to be perplexed but not to despair." That's what we have to be as Christians. Listen, I don't care how cute your crib is, how nice your car is, how much jewelery you got around your neck, there is nothing that can shield you from God's breaking you. There is nothing that can block a tackle coming from God. No matter how you set up your life, no matter how you've rigged your life, no matter how far your office is back from the front where people are, it does not matter, God will come through your place and wreck shop. How will you respond? Perplexed but not despairing.

But then he says, "persecuted, but not forsaken." Persecution means to experience hostility or harassment in order to drive you and me away from someone, some place or something, in this context: God. Jesus tells the apostles in Acts 1:8, "In a few days from now, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will receive power and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Sameria and the outermost parts of the world." So God blessed Peter to preach one sermon, three thousand people came, they were like, "Oh God's blessing the ministry now. Oh, look at what God's got going." They start chillin' in Jerusalem, having outdoor picnics in chapter 6. Then all of a sudden, ol' boy named Paul came through, a young buck wanting to prove himself. He's a rookie Pharisee ready to wreck shop. He came up and tore Jerusalem up and down, and then they have to go from Jerusalem to Samaria, to the outermost parts of the world. You don't know why God is breaking you. Your comfort zone is thick. Our comfort zones are so thick. I remember when I first started walking with the Lord Jesus and I sensed the call to ministry. I said, "Well God, You know what? Let me just throw this at You. I don't know You're going to feel about it, but I think I'm bred to be a youth pastor at a nice megajoint. You know what I'm saying? So, I'm going to speak a little bit, write a little bit, You know, a little something something, maybe teach here and there. God, that's what I'm doing." And I said, "Now, let me just tell You now..." I didn't say this with my lips, but I said it with my heart. Because you know sometimes our spiritual prayers with our mouth are different from what's really in our heart. And do you know what I said to God in my heart? I said, "God, there are four or five things that You had better not call me to do. You had better not call me to be a leader of a church, You had better not call me to be plant one, You had better not call me to the inner-city, You had better not call me to raise money and when I get married, in Jesus name, I am not washing the dishes. That's it." My wife's sitting there; she understands how I've been broken. I'm putting dishes in the dishwasher every other time. God bless you, wife. Got bless you. But all of us, "I have behind my back, my will." Like with my mouth, "Oh God, I bless You in the name of Jesus," uttering all of these theological underpinnings and beautiful sayings unto the living God around the people. "Oh listen to his prayer.

Oh how broken..." And in my heart, I'm holding hostage areas of my life. Everybody has an area of hostage. Nobody can front. No matter how young you are in the faith and how old you are in the faith, everybody has something that they are wishing God doesn't say to them. And you know. As soon as I said it, it came to the front of your mind. It doesn't mean that God doesn't give wisdom when we go through. The question is: Will we let our perplexity turn into despair, and will our persecution, what we go through that God uses to crack the crevices of the vessel...because the enemy will use persecution for one thing; God will use it for something else. The enemy will use persecution to pull us away from God; God uses it to pull us closer. The enemy uses it to weaken our walk; God will use it to strengthen our worship. The enemy will use it to cause us to sin; God will use it to call us to sanctification. The enemy will use it to push us into complacency; God will use it to bring us out of our comfort zone. What is your comfort zone, family? What's your comfort zone today? What are you holding hostage that God can't get to?

I remember my uncle was rejecting being broken in the area of his teeth. He grew up, he would eat a lot of candy. He loved to eat candy, I mean eat candy. He got a little toothache, scared to go to the dentist. He'd be like, "I'll be alright. I ain't going to no dentist. They be trippin' at the dentist," eating more candy, cake, everything, hitting it up. And all of a sudden, dude had a headache that split from here all the way back down to his corns. And he said, "Hey man, I got to go to the dentist." And by the time he got to the dentist, the dentist said, "Man, you should have come to me a long time ago. We could have saved your teeth. Now I've got to pull all these jokers out." And many times in our life we're rejecting the early stages of brokenness, and the more you reject the early stages, the harder God has to break you. The more we go spiritually, we'll say, "God, You're breaking me right now. I know it's happening. Lord, I'm really not feeling being broken, but Lord, I cry these worship songs saying 'I praise Your name...I want to be close to You...thank You for Jesus' and all of this stuff. Here I am, Lord. Commence to the ripping."

Everybody in here, all of us need to be in a place where we're allowing the reality of God's work in our lives to impact and affect us. But what's powerful about this is God has a simple statement between each one. "Afflicted but not... perplexed, but not...persecuted but not...struck down but not..." A "but not" is God's backstage pass to your soul. A "but not" means that there are limitations on how much He'll allow to happen to us. Ask Job. When Satan went before God and said, "Listen, You've got all this power, but you got this cat out there, he's just enjoying life, chillin', kicking back. Let me get to him." God says, "Okay. All that he has that is in his possession is yours, but do not touch his life." Satan goes crazy on everything around Job. And he's still worshiping. "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Satan goes back before God. He says, "God, I want more access to him. You have a hedge of protection around him. I bet You if You let loose on him, he'll front on You." He said, "A'ight. You can touch him, but do not take his life." But not. "But not" is God's sovereign prerogative to strain out through His sovereign fingertips what gets to you. Some of us, many times, will allow the hurt and pain of our brokenness to overshadow the reality of God's love for us. I always tell my son when I'm spanking him. Yes, I whoop my son. And what's interesting is, when I talk to my son, I say, "Manny, when daddy spans you, what does that mean? Do I hate you?" He says, "No." I say, "What does it mean?" He says, "You love me." And it always cracks my soul when I hear him interpret a spanking in relation to love. And in some of us, our brokenness is several things. God is moving us to a different place. For some of us, it's just flat-foot discipline. For some of us, we have so many crevices of our lives that are packed with the nutrition of sin that God has to crack us to get to it. But it's not because He hates us; it's because He loves us.

There are several areas that God will break you in. God will break your plans, number one. The Bible says, "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Our Bible also says in Proverbs 16, "Many are the plans of a man's heart, but the Lord weighs his motives." What God does is, He has us in an eternal scale where on one side are His plans and then He takes our heart and He takes the part of it that has our plans in it and sets it on the other side of the scale. And what God always wants to check is whether or not the plans that we have for our life are weighty to equal the plans that He has for our life or that particular area of our life. And usually, nine times out of ten, it's always going to outweigh in

some way, shape or form. Some of you all said, "I want to be married by the time...right after I get out of college, I'm going to do this...I'm going to get my masters, and then I'm going to do this...I'm going to get on the fast track at the firm and then I'm going to do this..." And God's sitting up there going, "Do You hear them? Man Jesus, it always trips Me out when people..." "I know, Father. You know I'm trying to intercede for him, but he's still just trippin'. I'm trying to do some work. Alright, We have no choice. Holy Spirit, tear their lives up." Plans, I like the way the Bible says it in the beginning of Proverbs 16. It says, "Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established." The Hebrew word for that commit means "roll." Take your blueprint for your life and let the divine editor get to it. Don't make plans, start moving on them and get frustrated with God and become despairing because you didn't take it to Him in the first place. I used to hate when my English professor in undergrad would get to my paper. I mean, I didn't see my words on the paper anymore, there was so much red on it. But when I corrected it and rehanded it to her, she accepted the paper. God only accepts His plans. He only accepts His plans. That doesn't mean that He doesn't use our culture and where we grew up, all that stuff in the matrix of them, because He blew the breath of life into us and we have the blueprint of the Scriptures in us. But some of us have become crafty. You kind of pray God's plans but do your own thing. And it doesn't work like that.

The second thing God will break is relationships. Now let me qualify this. That doesn't mean that He stops us from being missional, but God does break up that don't maximize our ability to glorify Him. If you were on drugs, you can't hang with the same drug addicts if they're still on drugs. That's what I tell guys all the time. If there are certain people you cannot be around because you know you're going to be running right back out where you used to run. So you need to let somebody else minister to them. Because some relationships need to be broken up. Some people have dated for so long and marriage was never the goal and they're wondering why God's hand is not on that relationship, because it doesn't have His goals in mind.

Not only will He break up your plans, not only will He break up your relationships, but He'll break up your will. Ask Jonah. Jonah got a word from God. He's like, "You want me to go...Oh, You want me to go to Nineveh?!?" He put some money in his wallet in his pocket and went down to Joppa and paid the ferry and went down to the bottom of the ship and went to sleep. And God was like, "Aw Jonah, you think you can run from your buy, huh? A'ight." God blows a storm in His hand and the Bible says, "The Lord hurled a storm." The Hebrew literally means "He threw it at the water." And the Bible says that the ship began to break apart. He was putting his trust in the ship and it taking him away from the will of God. But be careful, Jonah. Because there's no telling what type of storm God will throw at your ship. What is your ship? What is your ship that God is hurling at to break?

But not only will He break up your plans, not only will He break up your relationships, not only will He break up your will, but He'll also break your theological confidence that is divorced from spiritual vitality. You know, it's interesting. You can listen to the radio, you're read all the new books, you listen to all the podcasts. "Man, are you up on this preacher?" "Yeah, I'm up on that preacher. Did you read this? Did you read Calvin?" and you've just got all of this information and that's bangin' that's dope because "I have hidden a word in my heart that I might not sin against You." But the question is: Have you hidden it in your heart or have you just hidden it? And God asks us to question. God says, "I want this to turn into spiritual vitality." Paul says, "Not that I have obtained it, but I press." He says, "May I obtain that which was obtained for me by Christ." In other words, Christ has obtained total perfection and Paul says, "I want to press." Paul says that it comes from sufferings and resurrections, in other words, being broken and being resurrected through our lives.

One final point. God pushes Jesus out of the vessel. Look at verse 10. Not only does God put power in the vessel but God puts pressure on the vessel and pushes Jesus out of the vessel, "...always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you."

Paul talks about the fact that, in our lives, we must be continuously in a state of brokenness. And what's so powerful about this is God doesn't just break us to tear us up just for fun, but He breaks us to build us.

In closing, it reminds me of a friend. A friend of mine was a star running back. And one time, he was in a practice and he got hit the wrong way and his leg broke in several places. He went to the doctor and said, "Can I play again?" He said, "Well, we need to look...you need to be in this cast for eight weeks. It's usually six, but this is a bad break and yours is going to have to be on longer." My man later on and asked the doctor. The doctor says, "Well, this is interesting. Whenever a bone breaks, if it heals right, it usually heals back stronger after it was broken than it was before." That's what God says to us. God says to us, "Listen, if you would allow for Me to get to your life, the life of Jesus is stronger than your personal life. And if you allow Me to get to your life, if you allow Me in your life to get to every single area of your life, I guarantee that you'll be stronger afterwards." But the issue is many of us, when we go through stuff, after we go through that particular season, we try to live like that season didn't happen, then God reschedules another breakage. Because we're supposed to live in brokenness. And the more endurance you develop in being broken, you will begin to get it faster and maybe get through the hot season of the brokenness a little bit faster. Now you may ask, "So what do I do?" Well, really there isn't an application point to being broken, you just got to handle it when it comes. Somebody says, "What do I do? What are the three points that I need?" Brokenness doesn't work like that..."To get broken you need to..." No, just wait until you get broken. Once you get broken, deal with it.

But just for those who need it, we'll say how. I'll just give you a couple of things. Never allow material increases to give you a false sense of self worth. Never allow it. For many of us, in our upgrades of our lives, those are more barriers to God needing to break us. Milk times of brokenness for all its worth. The Bible says that God is near to the brokenhearted. If you've never had your prayers answered, understand that, when you're being broken, God hears your prayers like He never has in Christ, not just because you're broken but because of Christ and through that brokenness under Christ, He hears your prayers. He doesn't hear your prayers no matter how broken you are apart from Christ, because true brokenness is in Christ. You got that? So milk times of brokenness, knowing that they are unique times of nearness. Keep a sense of brokenness when the eye of the storm passes. So pray today that, as we journey with God, I like the way Eugene Peterson says it in "A Long Obedience In the Same Direction." He says, "Discipleship is being apprenticed to Jesus Christ." But then he says, "Being a pilgrim is being apprenticed to Jesus Christ in such a way that you follow Christ to God." That's being a pilgrim. And know that there are divine land mines set up for the life of Jesus to be potently expressed in ways that your life can't imagine. And God wants to use those times in ways that are far beyond our comprehension to spread the news of the gospel to more and more and more people. We were bought for a price, so remember, He drafted us on His eternal team for his purposes and not our own purposes.

"Father, in being a draftee, the draftees that are in the room, God, we acknowledge that we're in desperate need of you. We acknowledge that brokenness is where we want to live, Lord. We want to live in a sense of being disarmed of our pride. Everybody has it. All of us have it. Even our false senses of humility are still faulty presentations of pride. God, I pray that You would cover our attempts at holiness so that even our ill motives would be broken. God, we need the light of Christ to blaze through our lives. We know that You want the light of Christ to blaze through our lives. Lord God, remove the clutter that is in our lives. Break every last one of us. Break us, God. Rip apart our lives. Uproot mess, replant life. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen."