

# Dangerous Prayers – Break me O Lord!

## 1 Corinthians 11:24

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

Last sermon we focused on the first of three dangerous prayers taken from Psalms 139 entitled “Search Me.” From this prayer we learned that the cure for safe, lukewarm prayers that



focus on maintaining a bubble of spiritual safety is to approach God’s throne of grace not with mere platitudes of self-indulgence but with honesty, desperation, fierceness, unrelenting faith, and unbridled Spirit led power and boldly ask Him to search and reveal any fears and sins that can be confessed and turned away from. If this were not difficult enough King David then asked God to lead him in the way everlasting that would not only “change eternity, shake hell, and scare demons”<sup>1</sup> but would also invite trials, tribulations, suffering and tremendous persecution. In the following sermon we are going to look

at the second of Groeschel’s dangerous prayers, “Break Me” that is based on Jesus’ breaking of the bread in 1 Corinthians 11:24.

### Break Me

While it makes perfect sense to pray for safety and comfort one should also pray for hardship and struggles. While this seems counterintuitive, Groeschel suggests “if we pray only for protection from trials, then we rob ourselves of our future maturity.”<sup>2</sup> James 1:2-4 states:

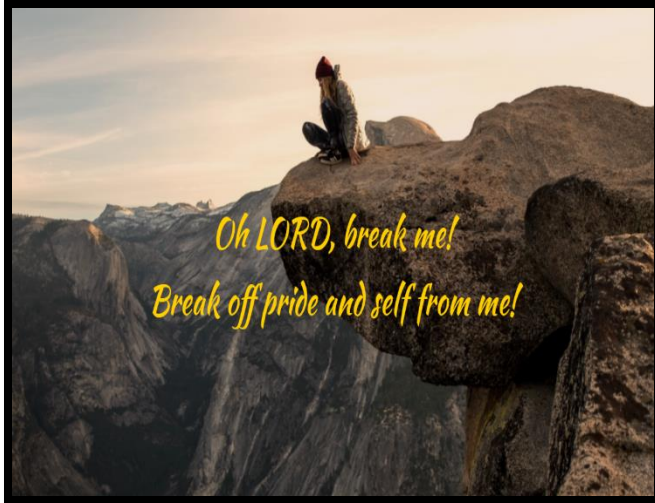
**“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”**

It is fine to pray for safety and blessings but if you want to see the Spirit’s power perfected in weakness then “Break me” is the prayer for you! After having opened a new church Groeschel’s mentor Gary Walter gave him the following promise, “God will break you.” In response to the betrayal and confusion on Groeschel’s face, Gary quoted A. W. Tozer who said, “it is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt Him deeply.” Gary reminded Groeschel

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<sup>1</sup> Kindle Location 217.

<sup>2</sup> Kindle Location 591.



that out of love God would do what was necessary to break him of pride, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and anything else that was an idol in his life.<sup>3</sup> Groeschel shared this advice with the members of his small church but most were afraid to make such a bold request. One by one they opted out of praying such a prayer and yet they could not help but feel that there would be a great cost for remaining so committed to avoiding any pain and discomfort in their lives.<sup>4</sup> Would you pray such a dangerous prayer?

## Broken and Released

In playing it safe Groeschel states we are missing something far more precious than our security and comfort, for when we are broken



something else far more wonderful is released.<sup>5</sup> For example, let's look at what happened when a woman crashed Jesus' dinner party at one of the Pharisees' house named Simon the Leper (Mark 14:3-9). Luke described this woman as being known as one who lived a "sinful life" (7:37) which in those days was a nice way of saying she was a prostitute.<sup>6</sup> Breaking with the social customs of the day in which women were not allowed to attend a formal dinner unless serving the meal,<sup>7</sup> she took out an alabaster jar of awfully expensive perfume and poured it onto Jesus' head. This does not sound like a big deal, but this perfume costed about a year's worth of wages. While this perfume could have been a family heirloom<sup>8</sup> Groeschel suggests it was likely an advertising tool to tell the people she met her body was available for hire.

Groeschel suggests that her act of breaking the bottle of perfume was not just an incredible act

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<sup>3</sup> Kindle Location 634.

<sup>4</sup> Kindle Location 662.

<sup>5</sup> Kindle Location 683.

<sup>6</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 309.

<sup>7</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 231.

<sup>8</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 413–414.

of worship but was also represented her desire to forever give up her past profession that had caused her so much shame and humiliation. It was precisely in Her brokenness Groeschel suggests that she was able to totally surrender her life to Christ whom she had obviously given her heart!

## Breaking of Bread

Another example of brokenness releasing something extraordinarily precious is when Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper.<sup>9</sup> At this symbolic meal we are told the following:

**“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is My body.” Then he took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many”**

### Mark 14:22-24

In the breaking of the bread Jesus was symbolically showing that Christ would be broken, bruised, and crushed from the stripes, brutal scourging, piercing of the garland of thorns, nailing of both hands and feet, and being separated from His Father. Imagine how Jesus must have felt



knowing that Peter denied Him three times and Judas betrayed? And yet Jesus willfully allowed humanity to spill His blood so that He might atone for our sins! In the Gospel of Luke Jesus said we are to break the bread and drink of the cup in remembrance of His sacrifice (22:19). Groeschel suggests that remembering rightly Christ’s death does not just involve a ritual of bread and wine but once a month but “because Jesus’ body was broken, because His blood was poured out for us, we too should live daily for Him, broken and poured out!”<sup>10</sup>

While this sounds painful Jesus said if we want to be His disciples then we simply must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Jesus is not inviting us to a life of spiritual safety but one of surrender and sacrifice that will in turn result in pure joy of drawing nearer to Him.

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<sup>9</sup> Kindle Location 735.

<sup>10</sup> Kindle Location, 757.

## Jack in the Box

Remember the jack-in-the-box toy that you cranked the lever and while the creepy music played, and you waited in anticipation of Jack popping out of the box? Even and even though



you knew it was coming did not the suddenness of his appearance still scare you? It is at this point in the book Groeschel returns to the promise his mentor Gary Walter made that “God would break him.” Groeschel states as he went through many hardships at his first church start-up, he kept asking his mentor if he was “broken yet” but Walter kept saying “not yet.” One day Walter said “Craig, when you are broken, you will know it. There will be no question. You will not have to ask.”<sup>11</sup> Groeschel tells us a heart wrenching story of what his jack-in-the-box looked like.

His best friend Jason moved from the city where he was pastoring at to help Groeschel build his new church. After having made a bad decision Jason lied about it, became defensive and started yelling at Groeschel. The next two weeks Jason was not at church and since he had not tried to reach out and make amends Groeschel decided to call Jason to see if he could start the healing process in their relationship. As Groeschel went to pick up the phone he noticed a blinking light on the answering machine and to his horror the jack-in-the-box reared its ugly head of a sobbing wife who stated her husband, Groeschel’s best friend had committed suicide!<sup>12</sup>

Exhausted, overwhelmed, scared, shattered, scarred; Walter was right Groeschel new beyond a doubt “God had broken him!”

## Blessed by Brokenness

Groeschel still remembers the day when he broke down and cried in front of the church and asked them for not just prayer but their love, grace and friendship. He was absolutely shattered by the suicide of his best friend and the fact that the very last words exchanged between the friends were harsh. To heal Groeschel knew he needed the support of his spiritual family! What was revealed to Groeschel that day he broke down and cried in front of the congregation was truly remarkable for the church changed from being a “gathering of people to a family, a real grace-filled community.”<sup>13</sup> Just as persecution always unites, strengthens, and emboldens Christians who suffer together, Groeschel says so does brokenness create a bond that stands the test of time.<sup>14</sup> In our brokenness we often experience the greatest of God’s blessings.

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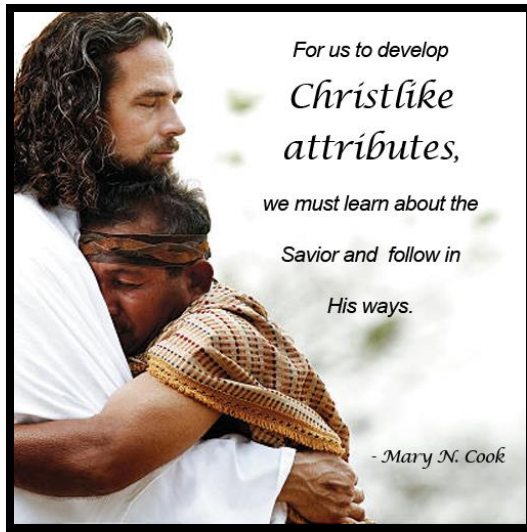
<sup>11</sup> Kindle Location, 820.

<sup>12</sup> Kindle Location, 845.

<sup>13</sup> Kindle Location, 882.

<sup>14</sup> Kindle Location, 889.

It takes tremendous faith to pray “God break me” but how much spiritual maturity and



opportunities to serve God do we miss out on when we pray for and live our lives in the safety of self-preoccupation? If Paul had refused to suffer greatly for Christ’s name sake (Acts 9:16) he would have missed out on three glorious missions and the opportunity to tell kings about Jesus. If Peter had not experienced the shame of denying Christ three times only to later be restored by Him would he have preached such a provocative message of repentance and forgiveness on the Day of Pentecost? We are each called to be broken and poured out daily (1 Corinthians 15:31) so that we might depend on God’s Spirit as our comfort, our guidance and source of power.<sup>15</sup> While praying for “God to break me” is certainly a dangerous prayer, it is also an invitation for God to adjust our hearts

and guide our steps in our weakness so that whatever we do will be through His strength and the praise of His glory! So, the question is: are you willing to pray “God break me”?

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<sup>15</sup> Kindle Location 952.