
A Lost Hope

1 Peter 4:12-14

“Losing the race”

Heading for home in his pick-up, Paul Broken Arrow hoped for the best. Tomorrow was the state championships for the 10K. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and there were no second chances. Paul was probably the fastest runner in the state. He'd already won state once, and he'd beaten runners at several regional levels. But this time, he was competing for a place on the Olympic ticket. He wasn't doing this to provide a way out. No, Paul liked living in this little town with his family. This was Paul's chance to make a name for his family and people—that was why he was preparing.

Paul had been training for this race for a year now. Sacrificing lots of free time, he'd committed to an austere diet and weight training program. Most of his friends and family knew of his commitment, and they were all behind him. But not one of them knew of his 4 a.m. exercise sessions. Not one of them knew of the extent of his sacrifice.

He planned to get a good night's sleep before the Olympic preliminaries. He ate well, exercised, and headed for bed. At three in the morning, he woke in a cold sweat. It wasn't nerves. Paul's appendix was inflamed. As he rode to the hospital in despair he held the pain in his side, but felt it in his heart. A broken man with a broken heart—he'd been banking his all on this one day.

Reflection

There are two kinds of brokenness—voluntary and involuntary. Most of the time, people experience involuntary brokenness. We don't willingly ask for it or welcome it, but it breaks us just the same. It comes when we have tried everything else to make life work. Hopefully, when life bottoms out, we turn to the Lord in our despair.

Voluntary brokenness involves viewing yourself undone in God's sight—in desperate need of him.

Accountability and Application

My challenge to you is to choose brokenness, today, voluntarily.

If it comes to you involuntarily, without your invitation, accept it—even embrace it. For in brokenness you will find your wholeness in Christ.

Have you found insurmountable problems that bring brokenness your way? How do you respond?

Do you submit to brokenness voluntarily, allowing your “self” to be lost in Christ? In what way?

PRAYER: Lord, I fight it when bad things come my way. Instead of responding rightly, I become angry. Help me to allow myself to be broken, leaning on you. Let me respond with a broken and contrite heart.

1 Peter 4:12-16

Suffering for Being a Christian

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.