

Title: **ACTS — *The Unfinished Story***
Text: Acts 1:1-5
Subject: *Christ's Work on Earth by His Church*
Date: Tuesday Evening — March 9, 2004
Tape # Y-5a
Readings: *Lindsay Campbell & Rex Bartley*
Introduction:

Some things are finished. How we ought to rejoice in that blessed fact! **When our Savior cried, “It is finished,” all the work he intended to accomplish on earth was finished.** Nothing was left undone that he came here to do.

“Nothing, either great or small; Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all, Long, long ago!

When He, from His lofty throne, Stooped to do and die,
Everything was fully done; Hearken to His cry -

‘*It is finished!*’ Yes indeed, Finished every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need. Tell me, Is it not?

Weary, working, plodding one, Why toil you so?
Cease your doing, all was done, Long, long ago!

Till to Jesus’ work you cling By a simple faith,
Doing is a deadly thing. Doing ends in death!

Cast your deadly ‘doing’ down, Down at Jesus’ feet.
Stand in Him, in Him alone, Gloriously complete!”

James Procter

Since Christ died and rose again for all God's elect **righteousness** is finished, — **sin** is finished, — **atonement** is finished, — **satisfaction** is finished, — **the law** is finished, — **the curse** is finished, — **judgment** is finished, — **condemnation** is finished! Our all-glorious Christ has put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. "*By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*"

But the work of Christ as our Mediator and Surety is not yet finished. It will not be finished until he has brought all his sheep into the fold of his grace and presents all God's elect unto the Father, holy, unblamable, and unreprieveable in everlasting glory. His work will not be finished until the Father has put all his enemies under his feet, until every knee bows and every tongue confesses, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

It is this ongoing work of the risen Christ in the earth that the Book of Acts describes. In his Gospel narrative Luke told us all that our Lord Jesus Christ "*began to do.*" Here, in the Book of Acts, he tells us what our risen, exalted Lord and Savior continues to do in the earth through his church, by the preaching of the gospel and the power and grace of the Holy Ghost.

(Acts 1:1-5) "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, (2) Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: (3) To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: (4) And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. (5) For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

The Book of Acts is **an inspired history** of the apostolic ministry of the early church, covering a period of thirty to thirty-five years. The central theme throughout the book is the ascension and Lordship of the crucified Christ, our Savior and King.

TWOFOLD WITNESS

Peter declares, in Acts 5:32, — "*We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*"

- Throughout these 28 chapters, we see the mighty work of the ascended Christ in this world, by the gospel through the twofold witness of his church and

his Spirit. It was Christ who shed forth the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:33).

- It was Christ who chose the men who were sent forth to preach the gospel and chose their various fields of service.

Our Savior's last words to his church before he ascended into heaven were, — "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (1:8). But those men, as is so often the case with God's church today, failed to see the breadth of the work the Lord had given them to do. And, again, as is so often the case today, their unwillingness to put aside social, racial prejudices, greatly hindered their usefulness.

Though the Lord Jesus plainly told them to carry the gospel to all men, they confined their preaching of the gospel to Jerusalem until the Lord graciously forced them to obey him by sending persecutions that scattered the disciples everywhere. — "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word*" (8:4).

The blood of the first New Testament martyr, Stephen (chap. 7), proved be, as our God assures us that all things are, according to his purpose for the salvation of his elect (Rom. 8:28-30). It was one of the means used in preparing the great Apostle of the Gentiles (8:1-4).

PREACHING

The Book of Acts tells us much about preaching. Those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.

- Philip preached Christ in Samaria. And the Lord gathered many sheep into his fold.
- Caesarea (8:40), Phenice, Cyprus, Anitioch (11:19), and Damascus (9:2), heard the gospel.

The disciples went everywhere preaching the Word; but what does that mean? **What did these disciples preach?** The words "preach," "preached," and "preaching" are used thirty-seven times in the Book of Acts. It is not insignificant that every time they are used the subject preached was Jesus Christ and the resurrection! **If the Book of Acts is to be taken for our standard, it must be concluded that unless Christ has been preached no preaching has been done.** The Book of Acts demonstrates that our Lord Jesus Christ was the singular subject of preaching in the earliest days of Christianity.

We see our Savior's direct, sovereign intervention in bring chosen Gentiles into his kingdom (chap. 10). Peter carried the Gospel to the Jews at Pentecost (ch. 2), and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (ch. 10), and so fulfilled his promise concerning "*the keys of the of the kingdom of heaven*" (Mat 16:18-19).

If you read the Book of Acts in one sitting, you will find that the history recorded here moves rapidly. **It is simply exhilarating to read**, to see some of our God's

wondrous works set before your eyes, one after the other, in city after city. On one day the Lord graciously added about 3000 souls to his kingdom, all confessing Christ in believer's baptism (2:41). On another day there about 5000, hearing the gospel, believed on the Son of God (4:4).

WITNESSES

In Acts 1:8 our Savior tells us plainly what the lifelong work and responsibility of every believer is. — "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me*" (Isa. 43:10, 12; 44:8; Lk. 24:48).

(Isa 43:10) "*Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*"

(Isa 43:12) "*I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.*"

(Isa 44:8) "*Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.*"

(Luke 24:48) "*And ye are witnesses of these things.*"

Notice two things in this eighth verse.

1. "*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*" — Without question, this refers to the special, apostolic power that came upon those men chosen to be our Lord's apostles. Yet, it certainly has meaning for us today. No one can ever be saved, serve God, or lay down his life in the cause of Christ as his witness until the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit comes upon him in regeneration. "*Salvation is of the LORD!*" It is by God's grace alone (Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9).
2. When the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit comes upon you, the Son of God says, "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me.*" A witness is one who accurately and honestly relates to others that which he has heard with his own ears, seen with his own eyes, and felt and experienced in his own heart. He does not relate secondhand information. He declares only what he himself knows to be true (I John 1:1-3). It is the privilege, responsibility, and honor of every believer to be a witness for Christ in his generation. This is every believer's calling and vocation in this world. Every true Christian is a missionary. Every true believer is an evangelist. Every true follower of Christ is a preacher. Every true child of God is his witness. The word witness is the word from which we get the word martyr. Christ's witnesses are his martyrs, people who lay down their lives in the cause of Christ! Go ahead and work your job, so that you can pay the expenses of life; but do not forget that

your calling, your life's work is to be his witness. Let nothing interfere with that!

After making that great promise of grace that is given in verse 8, promising to immerse his church and kingdom into his Spirit, promising to give his church the abiding unction and power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus ascended up into heaven before the eyes of his disciples, as if to say, “I am going to my throne, be assured of my promise.”

FAITHFUL, BUT FALLIBLE

The very next thing we see in the Book of Acts is the fact that God’s servants, his witnesses in this world, all of them, are sinful, fallible mortals. As someone said, “the best of men are only men at best.”

Acts 1:12-26 covers a brief waiting period (just 10 days) between the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The things that are recorded here were written by Luke, by divine inspiration, for our learning and admonition. If we are wise, we will lay them to heart.

First, the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled every prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures relating to his incarnation, life, earthly ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (v. 12). When Luke tells us that the disciples returned from the mount called Olivet to Jerusalem, he is, almost casually, telling us that Christ

stood upon Mt. Olivet when he ascended to heaven, just like the prophet Zechariah said he would (Zech. 14:4; Ezek. 11:23). The mount had been divided in two parts by a great earthquake in the days of Uzziah. Our Lord ascended from that part of it which was near Bethany (Luke 24:50). It was there that he began his sufferings (Luke 22:39). It was most fitting therefore that he should cast off the reproach of his sufferings there by his glorious ascension.

Second, the path of blessedness and usefulness is the path of obedience (vv. 12-14). The disciples returned to Jerusalem because the Lord commanded them to do so (v. 4). There their enemies awaited them. There they were most likely to suffer and be persecuted. But the Lord's commandment was clear. So they returned (Pro. 3:5-6).

There in a large upper room, they met together in prayer, united in heart, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Much needed to be done. They had a message to proclaim. Sinners were perishing. But the Lord had commanded them to wait. So they waited. They were waiting upon the Lord, waiting for God to move, waiting for God to come upon them, waiting for God to open the door before them (Psa. 27:15; 62:5-7; 1Chron. 15:13).

We must obey his Word and wait for his direction. In all things, the point of our responsibility is the commandment of God. We must obey him. Obeying his

Word, the disciples were filled with the Spirit and greatly used of God for much good.

Third, even the best of men are only men at best (vv. 15-26). So long as we are in this world we will be prone to error and sin. We stray in many ways and err in many things. Even true, faithful servants of God are weak, fallible men of flesh and blood. This is manifest in the fact that Peter led the disciples to choose an apostle God had not chosen.

Without question, Peter was a faithful man. He had the heart of a true pastor. On other occasions he acted rashly from bad motives, but not here. His motives were good. He wanted what was best for the glory of God, the people of God, and the gospel of God. The sin of Judas had made a vacancy in the apostolic office. Twelve apostles were originally chosen and ordained. As there were twelve tribes in Israel, descended from the twelve patriarchs, so there were twelve apostles. They are the twelve stars which make up the church's crown (Rev. 12:1). For them, twelve thrones were reserved (Matt. 19:28). Peter read Psalm 69:25 and concluded that it was the responsibility of the church to fill the vacancy left by Judas' apostasy. His error was an error of judgment, not of motive or principle.

He humbly recognized the sovereignty of God in all that had happened (v. 16). He understood that the death of Christ was the work of God for the redemption of his people (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). He realized that God

had sovereignly overruled the evil deeds of Judas to accomplish his own eternal purpose (Psa. 41:9).

Peter sorrowfully remembered the fall of his former friend and companion (v. 17-19). He said no more about the subject than was necessary. Though he and Judas had been close friends, he bowed to the will of God and honored the judgment of God upon his friend. Peter knew that the only difference between him and Judas was the grace of God (1 Cor. 4:7).

He revered and honored the Word of God (v. 20). Peter sincerely wanted to obey the Scriptures. He thought he was doing what God would have him do. He was motivated by an earnest desire for the glory of God. With genuine reverence, he sought the will of God (vv. 21-25).

Peter should have sought the Lord before he appointed Justus and Matthias. Never say to God, "Lord, I am going to do this or that, you choose which you want me to do." Rather, go to God and say, "What will you have me to do?"

When the lots were cast, Peter led the church to ordain an apostle God had not chosen (v. 26). It was true, the Lord's intention was for his church to have twelve apostles, twelve and only twelve. David's prophecy must be fulfilled. Another apostle must take Judas' place. But, like the others, he must be personally chosen and ordained to the office by Christ himself. The

Lord had not chosen Justus or Matthias for this office. He had chosen Paul (1 Cor. 15:8).

How could Peter have made such a mistake? He sought to determine the will of God by casting lots. Like David, he made the mistake of seeking to determine the will of God by seeking the will of the people (1 Chron. 13:1-4). He tried to accomplish the will and work of God by the wisdom and energy of the flesh! As a result, Matthias was chosen to do what God had neither called him to do nor gifted him to do.

Still, Peter was God's appointed leader for that early church. In spite of his many errors, faults, and falls, Peter was God's man, and the people of God rightfully submitted to his rule as their pastor (Heb. 13:7, 17). **Though he was a fallible man, he was a faithful man. He preached the gospel of Christ, sought the will of God, lived for the glory of God, and served the people of God. Blessed is that congregation who has been given such a pastor after God's own heart** (Jer. 3:15). Faithful pastors do sin. Faithful pastors do err in judgment. Faithful pastors do even err in doctrine. Faithful pastors do make mistakes. Faithful pastors need the prayers and the love of God's people (1 Thess. 5:12, 13, 25; Heb. 13:18).

PENTECOST

Acts 2 records the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2), of John the Baptist's message, and of our Savior's

promise in Acts 1:8. The Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for the annual observance of the Feast of Pentecost. That Old Testament, legal observance was highly symbolical. **The feast of Pentecost was a picture of the ingathering of God's elect by the mighty operations of God the Holy Spirit.**

On this day, the Lord Jesus immersed his church and kingdom into the Holy Spirit. This, Peter tells us, was God's declaration that Christ, of whom David was a type, had ascended to his throne as King in Zion. This signal event was identified, as Joel had prophesied, by the disciples proclaiming the gospel in the languages of those who heard them (2:5-11), and the resulting ingathering of souls was great (2:41). Those 3000 souls were but the firstfruits of that great harvest that is sure to come. When all the elect are gathered from all the nations of the world unto Christ, they shall be a multitude more numerous than the stars of heaven and the sands upon the shore.

DEACONS

Acts 6 records the next great event in the history of the early church. Seven deacons were chosen by divine order to take care of the carnal affairs of the church, so that the apostles could give themselves to prayer, study, and preaching. That this was done by divine order is evident from the fact that Paul was later inspired to instruct Timothy (1 Tim. 3) about the men and their work who are ordained as deacons. Though they may,

like Stephen and Philip be teachers and preachers, the purpose of deacons in the local church is to serve the Lord by serving his church and their pastor, relieving the pastor as much as possible of anything that might interfere with his labor in the gospel.

SAUL OF TARSUS

The offense of the gospel was so great and persecution became so intense that one of the first deacons, Stephen, was stoned to death while preaching the message of redemption and grace by Christ (7:1-60). Another deacon, Philip (chap. 8), preached the gospel in Samaria and saw many converted. Then, he was carried by the Spirit to proclaim Christ to a solitary Ethiopian. When the time comes for one of God's chosen to be called, he will by one means or another cause him to hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17). Our God works in ways beyond our imagination. By leaving the great scene of revival in Samaria and preaching Christ to this one Eunuch from Ethiopia, Philip was used of God to send the gospel into and through Africa!

Then, we come to chapter 9 and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, one of the chief persecutors of Christ, his church, and his gospel. Saul the persecutor was transformed by grace into Paul the angel of God by whom the gospel would be carried to the Gentles.

The apostle Paul tells us plainly that his conversion experience was an example and pattern of all true

conversions (1 Tim. 1:16). Because his conversion is the pattern by which all conversions must be examined, it is recorded in great detail three times in the Book of Acts (9:1-22; 22:4-16; 26:9-19). If you and I are saved by the grace of God, we have experienced the same thing Paul experienced on the Damascus Road.

- **A DIVINE ELECTION** (Acts 9:15)

(Acts 9:15) "But the Lord said unto (Ananias), Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"

Were there no election, there would be no salvation. We would not and could not choose the Lord, but he chose us, and his choice of us made certain that we would choose him (John 15:16). Election is the cause of faith, and faith in Christ is the fruit and proof of election.

- **A DIVINE REVELATION** (Acts 9:3)

(Acts 9:3) "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:"

Paul was made to see the Lord Jesus Christ and the glory of God in him (Acts 22:14; 2 Cor. 4:6).

(Acts 22:14) "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see

that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."

(2 Cor 4:6) "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

He saw how that God could be both just and the Justifier of all who believe through the substitutionary sacrifice and blood atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A DIVINE CALL (Acts 9:4-9)

(Acts 9:4-9) "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (6) And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (7) And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. (8) And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. (9) And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

Saul of Tarsus heard God's call! It was the irresistible call of grace. All the chosen, redeemed sheep of Christ,

at the appointed time of love, hear his voice and follow him. The call of the Spirit that comes to chosen sinners by the preaching of the gospel is always effective (Psa. 65:4). It causes dead sinners to live and come to Christ. This is the pattern of all true conversions. Do you follow the pattern?

CORNELIUS

In the 10th chapter the Lord God sent Peter to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile, and his household. When Cornelius and his friends heard the gospel to these Gentiles, the same thing happened in Joppa that he had preached at Jerusalem, God poured out his Spirit there, upon the Gentiles, just as he had in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (10:34-38).

- This was the second and last outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- It was done here to confirm to Peter and the Jewish believers with him that God is no respecter of persons, that his elect are found among all people.

This is exactly the meaning Peter gave of this, when he got back to Judea and found his friends upset because he had gone to eat with and preach to Gentiles, and that some of the Gentiles had received the Word (11:1-2, 15-18).

(Acts 11:15-18) "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. (16) Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said,

John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (17) Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (18) When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

PETER AND PAUL

The Book of Acts primarily moves around the labors of two men: Peter and Paul. The Lord Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus to make him "*a minister and a witness*" (26:16), to send him "*far hence unto the Gentiles*" (22:21). In Paul's three great missionary journeys, the Lord made his will known to his servant with unmistakable clarity.

Peter was, primarily, the Apostle to the Jews. Paul was, primarily, the Apostle to the Gentiles. He was the last apostle to be called. It was Paul, not Matthias who was ordained of God to take Judas' place. The Book opens with Peter preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem, the great center of the Jewish nation. It closes with Paul preaching the Gospel in Rome, the great center of the world-power.

MISSIONS

No book has ever been written about missions that compares with the Book of Acts. Those the Lord had chosen were recognized by the local church in which they served him, and were sent out by God through his church, without a mission board, without debutation (going from church to church begging for bread), and wherever God sent them, when they preached the gospel, “*as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” (13:1-3, 48).

(Acts 13:1-3) "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away."

(Acts 13:48) "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

The Lord opened the way before his servants, directed them to his elect, prospered his Word, provided for them and protected them, wherever they went.

- Lydia
- The Jailer
- Corinth (Acts 18:9-10)

(Acts 18:9-10) "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: (10) For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."

Directed by the Spirit of God, the early church pursued a definite program in its extension, going from one city to another preaching the gospel. — Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Cyprus, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome all heard the message of redemption and grace in Christ. Their methods were simple, straightforward, and successful. They went out in utter dependence upon the living God, with unquenchable zeal and undaunted courage. Their one aim was to fetch God's elect home to their Savior. Their only message was Christ and him crucified. The only weapon of their warfare was the gospel of the grace of God.

JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

In Acts 15 Luke gives us the historical narrative of the conference at Jerusalem. Paul explains the theological issues of it in Galatians 2. This conference was not a church council to debate doctrine. When Paul went up to Jerusalem his mind was already made up. He refused to budge an inch, or give any ground at all to the legalists (Gal. 2:5, 21). He went to Jerusalem only so that the doctrine of the believer's absolute freedom in Christ from the law of Moses might be publicly avowed, even by those whose primary sphere of ministry was among

the Jews. At the Jerusalem conference the apostles and elders, and the church as a whole, being led by the Holy Spirit (v. 28), publicly denounced legalism and stripped all preachers of law and legality of all credibility.

PREDESTINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

(Acts 27:21-25) "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. (22) And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. (23) For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, (24) Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. (25) Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

(Acts 27:31-35) "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. (32) Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. (33) And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. (34) Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. (35) And when he had thus spoken, he took bread,

and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat."

BROKEN PIECES

Would you be used of God as these men and women were? Turn to Acts 27:44, and let me give you one more lesson.

(Acts 27:44) "And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

God uses raging storms, wrecked ships, broken pieces and snake bitten men (28) for the building of his kingdom.

Brokenness, humility and contrition of heart are essential to usefulness in the kingdom of God. Only broken hearts know God and walk with God. "If you want to see the height of the hill of God's love you must go down into the valley of humility" (Rowland Hill). Brokenness, contrition, humility is nothing but a just estimate of ourselves. It is neither more nor less than an honest, heartfelt sense of our utter nothingness. Humility and contrition are the knees of the soul. Christ will never take us into his arms until we lay ourselves at his feet, as David did in this psalm, broken with a sense of personal sinfulness.

Pray for a broken, contrite heart. God uses broken things (Acts 27:44). Brokenness is the beginning of the life of faith. Brokenness is the root of all true revival in the soul. It is painful. Our flesh opposes it. But we must be broken. We will never break ourselves. We must be broken by grace. Our wills must be broken to God's will. Brokenness is dying to self. It is the response of the renewed heart to Holy Spirit conviction (Zech. 12:10). Because conviction is continual, brokenness is continual.

Brokenness is the spirit of Christ. Christ, who is God, took upon himself the form of a servant. He willingly gave up everything for us! As a servant he had no rights of his own, no home of his own, no possessions of his own. He did not have so much as an hour to call his own. When he was reviled, he reviled not again, but committed himself to God. He went willingly, but with broken heart, to Calvary, where he was made to be sin for us. — Brokenness is found only at the foot of the cross.

"Lord, bend this proud and stiffnecked I,
Help me to bow the head and die,
Beholding Him on Calvary
Who bowed His head and died for me!"

Brokenness means having no plans, no time, no possessions, no money, no life of my own. It is to be crucified with Christ. It is a constant yielding of ourselves to God. We must seek it; but only God can

give it. If we are his, he will. He receives none but those whom he breaks.

Only God can break us. And if he uses us, he will break us!