



BROKEN AND CRUSHED

July 2017

*The LORD is close to the broken-hearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18

Have you ever felt so bad, so ashamed about how you behaved, you find it hard to live with yourself? You couldn't help what you did. It just happened, and you wish you could go back and undo it. This has happened to me—more often than I would have liked. As a result, I was broken—remorseful beyond words. Yes, it has occurred many times.

To be broken means to humbly accept what you've done wrong. And to be crushed in spirit (or having a *contrite heart*, as David described in Psalm 51:17) means you're ashamed of yourself, recognizing your wrongdoing and begging God for forgiveness and a healing of the soul. It

© marja Bergen

Copy to your heart's content. Share. But don't sell.

means you're submitting to God in repentance. You want to change. How you'd like to change! If only you could!

When David talks about being broken-hearted I know exactly what he means, and it's a comfort to know that someone else—even a "man after God's heart," as the Bible calls him—could have sinned and had emotions like mine. It's good to be understood. Not to be alone.

But heartbroken is not only the result of sin. It can also mean you were wounded in some way, through rejection or deep loss of something precious to you. The grief and sorrow is hard to withstand. When your heart is broken, your spirit is crushed, you are emotionally damaged. The hurtfulness becomes unbearable. There is a suffering far greater than the physical pain of a broken bone. This kind of pain might fade with time, but never goes away.

However, as the Scripture above tells us, not all is as bad as we might think. "*The Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit.*" In fact, the painful state of brokenness is the means through which God performs some of his deepest work within our hearts. God has given us his son Jesus whose power to heal is greater than all medicines combined. His power can give us peace even during hard times.

You don't have to face your pain alone. No one on earth can utterly understand how you feel or the pain you suffer—but Jesus does, and he's by your side! Isaiah 53:3 tells us this about Jesus: "*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*" Doesn't that sound like someone who would understand you? Someone who's where you are? Jesus is close to you, even now.

And there's more good news: God can use your suffering:

Author A.W. Tozer wrote, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply." Likewise, evangelist and author Alan Redpath wrote, "When God wants to do an impossible task, he takes an impossible individual—and crushes him."

Is your heart broken? Your spirit crushed?

God could be working in your life today. He might very well be using your pain to develop you into the person he needs to do something special for him. Bend humbly before him. In your pain, he will bless you.

marja