

Title: "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart"

Text: Psalm 34:17-22

INTRODUCTION

1. Pulpit theme: "God of all comfort"
2. How do we derive comfort when we go through afflictions?
 - a. We derive comfort when those we love draw near
 - b. How much more will we derive great and divine comfort when the God of all comfort draws near!
3. The focus of this message

*"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart
And saves such as have a contrite spirit" Psalm 34:18*

- a. To examine why we may struggle to find God near
- b. To show us how we may seek a restored relationship with God

THE PROBLEM OF A STRAINED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

1. An important truth-principle to remember

*1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.*

*2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden His face from you,
So that He will not hear. Isaiah 59:1-2*

2. There was a period when David was far from God
 - a. Although Psalm 34 has happy overtones
 - i. Blessing the LORD at all times
 - ii. Seeking the LORD
 - iii. Bearing testimony of the LORD's deliverance
 - iv. Speaking of the goodness of God
 - v. Teaching others to fear God
 - b. These lessons were learnt from a dark period in David's life
 - i. He once had a dynamic faith (facing Goliath)
 - ii. But his faith became defective and degenerated
 - iii. He committed disgraceful acts
 - c. The truth principle of Isaiah 59:1-2 would apply to David then
 - i. From nearness to distance
 - ii. From closeness to estrangement
 - iii. How did David return to God?

RETURNING TO GOD WITH A BROKEN HEART

"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart" Psalm 34:18

*"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart –
These, O God, You will not despise." Psalm 51:17*

1. Learning lessons from Psalm 51
 - a. Though this Psalm had a different context altogether
 - b. The lessons are applicable
2. There must be **candid admission of sin** (Psalm 51:3-4)
 - a. Acknowledgement of transgressions
 - b. Sinning against God
3. There must be thorough **cleansing** sought (Psalm 51:7-9)
 - a. Purge me
 - b. Wash me
 - c. Hide your face from my sins
 - d. Blot out all my iniquities
4. There must be a plea for God to **create a clean heart** in us (Psalm 51:10-13)
 - a. Create in me a clean heart
 - b. Renew a steadfast spirit within me
 - c. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
 - d. Uphold me by Your generous Spirit

RESTORED BY THE POWER OF GOD

1. In Psalm 34, we see how David was restored by God
 - a. He had a clean heart
 - b. He now had a steadfast spirit
 - c. His joy was restored
 - d. He learnt many lessons afresh and learnt them well
2. The result of restoration is righteousness (Psalm 51:15,17,19,21)
 - a. David could now speak of righteousness
 - b. He was now teaching God's ways to others
3. David had been wonderfully redeemed (Psalm 51:22)
 - a. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants
 - b. He would not be condemned for his sins

RE-DISCOVERING CLOSENESS WITH GOD

*"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart
And saves such as have a contrite spirit" Psalm 34: 18*

1. There was a fresh appreciation of the presence of God
 - a. God was close to him once more
 - b. There was no longer distance and estrangement
 - c. There was now nearness

2. God will save (deliver)
 - a. David now had this assurance
 - b. His spirit was humble and contrite

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL AT BETHANY

1. Return to God
There is a way back to God according to His Word
2. Be restored to God
God alone has the power to fully restore!
3. Re-discover the reality of a close relationship with God
He is all we could ever want
4. Find a sense of renewal
 - a. Of faith
 - b. Of strength
 - c. Of hope