

Broken and Beautiful  
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### **Introduction – The “Golden Repair”**

Often times in life, in an effort to avoid judgment, disgrace, or feelings of inferiority we are tempted, even pressured, to put up a front. “You maintain the status quo. You live up to expectations. Don’t disappoint me. Don’t bring shame into this family.”

We have a problem in our American culture. It’s that we are unbroken. In our culture brokenness and weakness go hand in hand. Therefore we work to cover up brokenness. We work to hide it deep inside so no one can see it and then we put up a beautiful exterior so people looking at us think that there is nothing wrong anywhere in our life.

I would argue that this culture has permeated the church. Where we are tempted to pretend that there is no brokenness here. Everything is ok.

When it comes to living a Christian life we are tempted to put up a front when it comes to our spiritual lives, our pursuit of God, our love for him, but also our own brokenness and our own struggles with sin issues. And further this type of behavior might be an inadvertent byproduct of our theology. It’s not bad theology, but it is a misapplication of that theology in the life of a person.

Kintsukuroi = actually incorrect theology. When it comes to our lives God doesn’t take the broken vessel and patch it up, giving it more worth. God replaces the broken vessel with a brand new one. That’s the good news: the old has gone, the new has come. Cleansed by the blood of Christ and without spot or wrinkle. Good theology.

But here is the misapplication of that theology. We say, “Christ has made me perfect. So I should be perfect. But I’m not. So I’ll cover it up and pretend to be perfect, so I can save face and others don’t judge me or see me as immature.” Sound about right? But we have a word for that, it’s called hypocrisy. And hypocrisy is a sin. And because it’s a sin it drives our hearts away from God and the longer we keep it in our lives the farther our hearts get from God and the more his spirit is quenched within us.

Are you getting it? We put our best foot forward. We say the correct things, do the correct things, but our hearts are far from God.

“We acknowledge Jesus with our lips, but our hearts are far from him.”

Outside – good Christians/inside – our desires have very little to do with Christ. Jesus calls these people whitewashed tombs. Beautiful on the outside – but carrying inside them death, not life.

That is why we need to create a space for brokenness in our lives and in the church. This is where I love the imagery of kintsukuroi – the “golden repair”

***We don't understand that brokenness and an encounter with God go hand in hand.*** Before God can use us, he needs to break us. Before God can heal us, he needs to tear us up.

Hosea 6:1-3

Illustration: Getting shot, the bullet represents sin in our life, in order for the wound to properly heal the bullet must be removed. Sometimes that is a rather uncomfortable/painful process

As humans none of us are perfect. We each have sin lodged in our lives. You say, "Doesn't Jesus make us perfect? Yes" "Doesn't the blood of Jesus cover our sin and make us white as snow? Yes." "Then how does brokenness fit into the New Covenant? It shouldn't have any place." Incorrect.

Using the analogy, once a person gives their life to Christ, Jesus becomes the Master Surgeon. He says, "I have all the skills, equipment, and power to remove all of your sin." But the sad truth is that sometimes we don't want Jesus to heal us. In some cases the bullets of sin are lodged deeply in our lives to the point that we think that they are a part of who we are, indispensable to our life or happiness. And not only do we allow it, we make excuses for it.

Illustration: Anger - I can't tell you how many times I've heard "He just an angry Irishman, he just a hot headed Italian." No it's sin, and last time I checked anger wasn't a fruit of the Spirit. And God needs to break us apart in order to remove it. And the longer we let it sit and fester there, whatever it is, the more the work of the Spirit is quenched in our lives.

Let me tell you, I desire God to be living and active in my life, in our church. I desire his healing presence. Because in his presence the work he has in and for me is accomplished. I desire him. But how badly do I desire him? This is where the verse: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength" keeps refocusing me. And this question that Jesus asks keeps coming back to me – Do you love me?

The process of being broken is a difficult journey. We have to let go of things, precious things to us, things that we love, we've used to fill our lives, to give us our identity, to make us whole. We have to expose things, shameful things, selfish things, prideful things, broken things. That's hard and it's not safe! Is that cost worth it? And the question that God keeps asking us is "do you love me?"

I have **a story** to tell you this morning – I figure that if Jesus told stories to give people a word from God then I can too.

### **Peter's Story – a disciple of Jesus**

It's the story from which this question, "Do you love me?" comes. I love Peter, he is such an honest picture of a passionate disciple. Sometimes a man of great faith, sometimes he says or does really stupid things. But always honest, always passionate.

Peter was a fisherman. In fact that's what he and his brother were doing when Jesus called them. Jesus told him that he was going to fish for people now. Peter was like, "Great, let's do it!" And he followed Jesus, I imagine Peter's eyes, as he walked with

Jesus, talked with Jesus, and saw the miracles Jesus was doing, I imagine his eyes just getting wider, and wider. And he begins to see Jesus is special – asking, who teaches with such authority?, begins to see that Jesus is powerful – who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?, And finally he sees Jesus as the anointed one. It was Peter who said, “You are the Christ! The Son of the Living God!”

It was Peter who was one of the three disciples that were especially close to Christ. It was Peter who said “Lord, if it is you tell me to come to you on the water!” It is Peter who when he hears about Jesus’ resurrection bursts into the tomb to see if it could possibly be true. It was Peter!

But it is also to this Peter that Jesus at the end of his earthly ministry has to ask this heartbreaking question, “Peter, do you love me?” What happened?

In John 13 we see Jesus gathered around a table with his disciples. Peter was there. Jesus does something strange. He gets up from the table and begins to wash his disciples feet. He comes to Peter and Peter asks a revealing question, “Lord, you wash me?” You see in Peter’s mind loving the master equals serving the master, doing his will, washing his feet. But in Jesus’ mind loving the master means allowing the master to wash you, to make you clean. Do you understand what I am saying to us this morning?

Jesus says to Peter, if you don’t let me wash you, if you don’t let me clean you, if you don’t let me remove the filth, you have no part with me. And Peter the authentic disciple responds, “Then not just my feet but my hands and head as well!” A sincere response by a passionate disciple but he doesn’t get it yet. He doesn’t understand that Jesus is working to remove something in him.

Jesus says to us, “No servant is greater than the master.” He is saying, You cannot wash yourself. You cannot serve me. You cannot have fellowship with me, you cannot love me, if you don’t first allow me to love you, by exposing your brokenness, and mending your wounds.

Do you hear me this morning? Jesus wants to mend our wounds.

At the end of the dinner in John 13 Jesus knows he is going to the cross and Peter wants to follow him there. Peter doesn’t understand but he thinks that the coming of God’s kingdom would be dependent on the strength of his own hand. Peter believes that he is stronger than he actually is. But Jesus being God knows what is in humans and he tells Peter, “No, actually, instead of dying for me, you are actually going to deny me three times. You’re going to turn your back on me, Peter. You are going to fail.”

I imagine Peter trying to process that statement. I’d imagine it was somewhere between being deeply offended and absolutely devastated.

But Peter still didn’t understand. He set out to prove Jesus wrong! “I’ll show him. When the time comes I’ll be ready.” I wonder if Peter’s actions in the garden make more sense now. When the Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Peter must have thought to himself, “My time has come!” That’s when he takes out the sword and slices off the servant’s ear.

That's when Jesus rebukes Peter, "Peter, it's MY work to do. You can't be the hero. It's not about you Peter, it's about me. I AM.

I am the same I AM that created the world, that has loved you from the beginning of time.

I am the same I am that chose Abraham out of the nations and made him into a people to show my blessing, my love, my faithfulness to the nations.

I am the same I AM who spoke to Moses in the burning bush telling him that I would bring deliverance, salvation to my people.

I am the same I AM that provided for my people in their wandering through the desert,

who stayed faithful even when they prostituted themselves to other loves,  
who remained strong even in their weakness,  
who remained patient even in their rebellion, who binds up the brokenhearted, heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, and pronounces the Lord's favor. I AM! I am, Peter. Not you.

Peter needed to hear this. His heart needed to know this. And that night he follows the great I AM to his trial and is asked three times "are you with him?" and he says, "I am not." And just as he speaks this reality the third time, Jesus looks at him as if to say, "Now you understand." Jesus had to fix Peter's brokenness. But to do so was an operation, he had to wound him, he had to expose him, before he could accomplish his work in him.

That was the process of tearing Peter down. Now comes the process of binding him up. Jesus after his resurrection is walking on the beach with Peter. He turns to him, looks him in the eye, and asks him, "Peter, do you love me?" A defeated and humbled Peter looks at the Lord and responds, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus didn't ask Peter if he loved him because Jesus doubted that he did. Jesus knew his heart, his desire to serve him. Jesus asked Peter because Peter needed to know. He was telling him, Peter, everything you need to know is rooted in this one thing. Do you love me?

If you love me then nothing can stand between you and me.

If you love me, then the sins in your life which separates me from you becomes something that you seek to remove.

If you love me then your obedience flows from that love.

If you love me, then my love will flow from you.

If you love me then you will never be content to stay complacent in your pursuit of me.

IF you love me.

Do we love Jesus this morning? Or do we have other things that we love more? (wife, kids, friends, job, possessions, status, money, safety, what people think of us – these things become idols, golden calves, brokenness in our lives if we love them more than Christ).

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 tells us, "That if we are able to do some really cool things like speak in tongues, or prophesy, or have all kinds of faith or selflessness, but have not love, we are nothing and we gain nothing."

In the book of Revelation chapter 2 in God's letter to the church at Ephesus he says this, "You've done all the right things, you've patiently endured the Christian life, you've even kept yourself from sinful behaviors, and you've held fast to truth. But I hold this against you, you have abandoned your first love. And because of that I will remove my presence from among you...unless you repent."

Unless you go after the thing you had at first,  
unless you let me break you,  
unless you let me wash you, you have no part with me.

God is telling us that we have some work to do.

I have a great deal of respect for churches that have created a space to be broken before the Lord and then meet that brokenness with grace.

My prayer is that we would be willing to do the same.

The last several weeks we have attempted to create that space here.

That we would give people a chance to respond to the promptings of the Lord.

I'm not going to call people forward this morning because we have The Lord's Table.

At the Lord's Table is a great time to discern where we are at with the Lord and how he's been pursuing us. In him is life and life to the full. And he desires to give you that life. If you are not a Christian this morning the Bible tells us that it is by grace we are saved through faith. I invite you to put your faith in Christ this morning for your salvation. To everyone this morning I would invite us to bring our brokenness before the Lord. Do not take the bread and cup unless you are willing to let him wash you, for if we aren't we have no part with him.