



Lesson 5: The God Who Uses Broken Pieces

1. If you've ever submitted a resume for a job, you'll typically highlight the brightest points of your education and career to date. What are some of the highlights you'd focus on your own resume?

Answer:

If you were to apply for the job as a disciple of Jesus, would you highlight similar or different things?

- ☐ Similar
- ☐ Different

Share some examples:

2. Through the first five episodes of *Story Encounters: The Chosen*, we met Simon, who is at the end of his rope. Through gambling and brawling, he is so behind on his taxes that he is in danger of losing his boat, house, and even his life.

His desperate attempts to fish every day including on Shabbat yielded nothing. His idea to doublecross the Romans did not go well either. And now with his sick mother-in-law moving in, Simon is fast running out of options. If Simon knew that the Messiah was taking applications for the role of being a disciple, I'm sure that at this point of his life, he would think he is the last person who would get the job.

Scan the code on the right to watch a video.



3. Much of the backstory of Simon in *The Chosen* is fictionalized. However, we do know that the idea that God calls people when they are at their lowest isn't a new idea in scripture.

About 40 generations prior to Simon, the father of the Israelite nation found himself running for His life in a lonely desert. Jacob fled his murderous brother but he couldn't as easily flee the knowledge that he had deceived his aging father and stolen his brother Esau's birthright (see Genesis 27:42-43).

Keenly aware of his failures, Jacob was exhausted, crushed with guilt, depressed and discouraged. Let's read Genesis 28:10-11.

“*Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.*”

4. I'd like to invite David Asscherick to share with us some thoughts on this:

“*I like the language here in verse 11, “when he reached a certain place Every one of us in our life—when we're wrestling with guilt, when we're wrestling with our failures, when we're trying to reinvent ourselves, when we're trying to make a wrong right—we come to a place emotionally where we just say, I can't do this anymore. You come to a place of decision, a place of pivoting.*

Jacob here comes to a certain place and he stops for the night. He is in a dark and hard place emotionally and literally—I mean his head is on a rock pillow! Fear and exhaustion and guilt and regret and loneliness all threaten in this moment to overwhelm him.

We all know what it is to feel a certain way about our failures, about our mistakes, about a giant miscalculation. We've made a mistake in a relationship, we've said something we shouldn't have said, we've done something we shouldn't have done. We all know what it is to feel estranged, distant, lonely.

Jacob knew—as we always do when we’ve failed and fallen—that all of this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course and that’s the rub. He knows that it’s his own decisions that have brought him to this certain place.” [1]

- DAVID ASSCHERICK “FROM PILLOW TO PILLAR” SERMON.

“*He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray. But he was so utterly lonely that he felt the need of protection from God as he had never felt it before. With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin, and entreated for some evidence that he was not utterly forsaken. Still his burdened heart found no relief. He had lost all confidence in himself, and he feared that the God of his fathers had cast him off. **But God did not forsake Jacob. His mercy was still extended to His erring, distrustful servant. The Lord compassionately revealed just what Jacob needed—a Saviour.***” [2]

- ELLEN WHITE, “PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS”, P. 183

5. It is here, at his lowest and most broken point, that God spoke to him and gave him the most powerful promise ever given, the promise of His presence. Let’s read Genesis 28:12-15.

“*He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to*

the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

What an incredible vision! With the striking imagery of a ladder reaching from heaven down to earth, God comforted and encouraged Jacob in his distress and loneliness by assuring Jacob of His continued presence and blessing.

What do you think the ladder represents?

- ☐ Friends sent from God
- ☐ The Bible
- ☐ Visits from angels
- ☐ Jesus

6. In the gospel of John, Jesus refers to Jacob’s ladder as Himself!

“*Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”*
Jesus said, “You do not believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.” JOHN 1:49-51, NIV.

7. Jesus is that Ladder who connects humans in their weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power! ^[3]

“*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* 2 CORINTHIANS 19:9-10, NIV.

Why is God's power made perfect only in our weakness?

Answer:

We are at our strongest when we are at our weakest, because it is only when we are at our lowest, most broken state that we rely completely on the grace, merits, and power of God.

“ *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

ROMANS 3:23,24; 5:6-8

8. God desires to pour out on us the fullness of His spirit, but He can only do so once we have emptied ourselves of all our own efforts. Scan the code on the right to watch a video.



Why does God use empty vessels?

Answer:

9. Knowing what you know now, what kind of resume would you submit to Jesus to consider you as a disciple?

Answer:

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When I turn my attention and my trust, the entire weight of my dependence, away from myself to Him, new things begin to happen—liberation from guilt and victory over sin. I give myself to Him, broken, fragile, self-serving—just as I am—and He turns right around and gives myself back to me, mended, empowered, indwelt by His Spirit, and actuated by His selfless love.” [4]

- TY GIBSON, “PSYCHIC CIVIL WAR” (BLOG)

10. Today, how would you like to respond to this reality that God is the One who uses broken pieces and empty vessels? Choose all that apply:

- ☐ Today, I acknowledge that I am broken and empty.
- ☐ Today, I would like to open my life to be filled by Him and be put back together by Him.
- ☐ Today, I would like to truly become His disciple.
- ☐ I would like more information about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

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When it comes to our sins and our failures God orients us more to the Future than to the Past because what lies ahead supersedes our past missteps.” [5]

- DAVID ASSCHERICK, “FROM PILLOW TO PILLAR” (SERMON)

[1] David Asscherick, “From Pillow to Pillar” (sermon). <https://youtu.be/ZC4xTnqeJXE?t=962>

[2] Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 183.

[3] David David Asscherick, “From Pillow to Pillar” (sermon). <https://youtu.be/ZC4xTnqeJXE?t=2058>

[4] Ty Gibson, <https://lightbearers.org/blog/psychic-civil-war/>

[5] David Asscherick, “From Pillow to Pillar” (sermon). <https://youtu.be/ZC4xTnqeJXE?t=2058>