

DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

We Believe...

# BROKENNESS IS STRENGTH

"GO THEREFORE AND  
MAKE DISCIPLES OF  
ALL THE NATIONS...  
TEACHING THEM TO  
OBSERVE ALL THINGS  
THAT I HAVE  
COMMANDED YOU"

MATTHEW 28:19, 20

By Dr. Lester Sumrall

**We Believe  
Brokenness  
Is Strength**

**by  
Dr. Lester Sumrall**

*All Scriptures are taken from the  
King James Version of the Holy Bible*

*Study Guides, Books, MP3s,  
CDs, and DVDs are available  
from LeSEA Publishing*

*Copyright © All Rights Reserved  
First Printing: April 2008  
We Believe Brokenness Is Strength  
ISBN No. 1-58568-465-1*

*LeSEA Publishing  
530 E. Ireland Rd.  
South Bend, Indiana 46614  
[www.leseapublishing.com](http://www.leseapublishing.com)  
A Division of LeSEA, Inc.*

# **We Believe Brokenness Is Strength**

Why must there be an altar? Why must we, as believers, go to the cross? Why must we sacrifice ourselves? The prophet Isaiah wrote, “. . . the lame take the prey” (Isa. 33:23). This is not regular. It is not the expected. The lion with the broken leg does not take the prey. The leopard with a broken leg does not take the prey. The incapacitated tiger does not take the prey. It is the well and the strong who take the prey.

But in spiritual matters there is something that human nature cannot understand, that there is strength in brokenness. Christ could not save the world, except on the old rugged cross. As we gain a deeper knowledge of Christ, we discover that in weakness there is strength, in brokenness there is

strength, that the lame actually do take the prey.

This concept of strength manifested through weakness is foreign to human endeavor. In the human realm the best salesman makes the sale. The early bird gets the worm. The one who is the strongest wins in the race. The one who swims fastest wins the trophy, and the one who hits the ball hardest makes the home run. In human affairs men always look for strength. In Christ, however, brokenness is strength.

The Bible says that Moses was the meekest man on earth. This was a paradox. How could a person be the personal guide and leader of at least two million human beings and yet be meek? Would not he need a whip to beat his followers? Wouldn't he need a stick to prod them? Wouldn't he need to scream and curse to make them follow? No! He was the leader of two million people in a desolate wilderness. He saw that their needs were met. Yet the Bible says he was the meekest man on the face of the earth. That is brokenness! That is strength! The Lord Jesus Christ is teaching us

that in the brokenness of Calvary there is strength to save the world.

## **HOW CAN WE KNOW THIS?**

God can take the weak things of the earth and do great things with them. We see in the Bible that Noah did not display phenomenal strengths, yet he was the one God used to preserve mankind. He depended on God. He trusted in God. Joseph, though a prisoner in jail, became the right hand of the king! In God's affairs there can come a time when weakness and brokenness become strength. The Word of God says that in Christ we are more than conquerors. How can one be *more* than a conqueror? A conqueror meets a strength supposedly equal to or greater than his own and overcomes it. He meets an adversary and subdues him. How can you become *more* than a conqueror?

We become more than conquerors when someone else wins the battle for us and allows us to possess the spoils of the victory. That is what

the Lord Jesus does. He wins the battle for us. In our weakness we have strength. In our weakness we have greatness. We are in Christ Jesus. We do not have to live by the brawn of the flesh or the wisdom of the mind. We can live by a Spirit so alien, so different from this world, that in our brokenness He gives us strength.

In the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel we find the story of Mary, who anointed Jesus with a special ointment. In Matthew's Gospel we learn that the ointment was kept in an alabaster box. The only way she could release this sweet spice was to break the box. With the breaking of the box the fragrance covered the Lord Jesus Christ and the one who applied it. It also covered all those who came near Him. The fragrance spread throughout the room but only because the box had been broken. As long as the ointment was in the box there was little fragrance. Only through the brokenness of the box could fragrance pour forth.

When my wife and I went to the Philippines, we had no real support of any kind except that

which came from God. In six months we had only five or six people who worshiped with us. We seemed to have failed. Our hearts were broken. Then, through a great miracle wrought by God, a little girl in Bilibid prison was suddenly healed. The newspapers carried the story, with our picture, on their front pages. Overnight we had a national image, and God saved thousands and thousands of people through our ministry. Out of weakness came strength. I had no pulpit from which to preach. We met in a small rented hall. We were insignificant, but in His great strength and power He produced tremendous, glorious, amazing life.

Even though you feel insignificant, broken with disease, broken with sin, God can do for you what no one else in the universe can do. Out of brokenness He can bring fragrance, life, and blessing.

## **PHYSICAL WEAKNESS, SPIRITUAL STRENGTH**

We can take this principle a step further by saying that the more broken we are, the more

sensitive we are to God and His Spirit. This breaking process might hurt some of us. You say, “I have already been crushed.” Yet if we are crushed again, we become more sensitive to the Spirit of God. We come to rely more on His strength, power, and anointing.

Learning to rely on God is what fasting is all about. We may wonder why a person should fast. In fasting we weaken the natural man, and in praying we strengthen the spiritual man. Where we have natural strength in our muscles and body, it is through fasting and denying our flesh of food that we weaken that natural energy while strengthening our spiritual man through prayer and reading the Word. When our spiritual man is stronger than our natural man we can do things for God we could never do before.

That is the reason Moses fasted forty days. Elijah fasted forty days. Jesus fasted forty days. They made the natural man subside in brokenness so that the spiritual man might stand up great in strength. God can do the same for us. He can

bring great strength to us through brokenness. I have known this from experience throughout the years. When we save ourselves and become strong in ourselves and sufficient in ourselves, we become spiritually impotent, useless, and helpless. If we wish God to do great things in our lives, we must realize that brokenness is strength.

This realization is central to Holy Communion. Christ was broken for us so that in His brokenness we might have strength. The strength we need is in the brokenness of Christ. His body was broken so that we might have healing. And in our brokenness we will have strength. That man who is unbroken and that woman who is unbroken is not strong in God. That strength comes only as we realize Christ dwells within us. All that we are, we are in Him. We have the strength that God wants us to have. So when we save ourselves by ourselves, we are living for ourselves instead of for God. When we are living by our own strength, we are not much use to God. When we cannot save ourselves, then Christ is able to

do something through us.

When we preserve ourselves, which most of us do, when we save our strength, when we don't give God our fullest measure of strength, and when we protect ourselves and conserve our strength, we deprive ourselves of spiritual strength and power. We deny the principle that the lame take the prey. When we preserve ourselves selfishly, we lose ourselves because we are not spiritually strong.

When I was dying of tuberculosis and the doctors unsuccessfully tried everything they could for me, Jesus came and gave me strength. I have had it ever since. In brokenness there was strength. It was God-given, preserved even at this moment by God, divine strength to carry on His service. We can all have the same strength through brokenness. Do not make excuses to God. Do not tell God that you cannot do things because of circumstances. Tell God that you are always ready to be anything and to go anywhere that He directs. Trust His strength, not yours.

It was in weakness that Jacob became Israel in the Old Testament. He wrestled with the angel because he was sick and tired of himself. On one side, rushing toward him was his uncle and his army, hating him. On the other side was his brother, seeking revenge. Jacob was between a rock and a hard place. He could go no further. His strength failed. He became weak. He wrestled with that angel until the angel touched him and put his thigh out of place. He had to limp back to his family. However, in that weakness he became Israel, a prince with God. When he met his brother, he was overflowing with such love that Esau's heart melted and his anger left him. Jacob was a broken man. He was no longer arrogant. He was no longer the supplanter. In brokenness, Jacob found strength.

Is it possible for God to teach us this? Must we go through life trusting in our own natural strength? Are we going to humble ourselves and say, "Lord, I can't make it alone. I can't do it by myself, but I depend upon You." In that kind of

brokenness there is strength, God's strength, divine strength. Jacob discovered this and lived with it the rest of his days. We can have this as well. We are the greatest hindrance to our own spiritual power, spiritual strength, and spiritual growth. When we are not broken we become like Lucifer. Seven times he said, "I will exalt myself to be equal to the Most High." God would not tolerate such pride in Lucifer. He will not tolerate it in us.

The greatest hindrance to spiritual power is that we are not broken. Our own natural strength cannot save us; only God can save us. He is our Savior. He is our Strength. If we insist on living by our own might, He will often allow us to do so. In fact, He may allow us to fail until that failure breaks us.

In spiritual blessing and spiritual power, we can only be useful through brokenness. Our usefulness to God and our fellowman is directly related to our brokenness. Jesus said in John 12:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone:

but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Here is our picture of weakness becoming strength. When we place the grain of wheat in the ground, it dies. But in that death it multiplies. In that death it becomes great. In that death it becomes a supplier of human need. In brokenness it becomes strong. Indeed, in brokenness we can become a supplier of human need.

We can only be useful for the Master, and to the multitudes of the world, if we come to a place of brokenness before God. Are you willing to be broken? If you are, God will bless you. Many of us fight and resist brokenness all our lives. But God will not overlook a contrite and broken spirit. They who are broken before the Lord take the prey. They get the good and the great things of life because they are moving in a different way—spiritually, not naturally or carnally.

## **Prayer of Salvation**

Lord Jesus I confess I am a sinner and I repent (stop sinning and turn away from my sins). Please forgive me. I accept you as my Lord, Master and Savior. I thank you for taking my judgment of death for my sin debt, by being nailed to the cross and shedding your blood for the forgiveness of my sins. I thank you for giving me your righteousness for my sins.

I promise to love you and with your help obey you all the days of my life. I will confess you before all mankind and never be ashamed of you. Please change me, and give me your grace and love for all people. Show me the plan you have for my life and help me to fulfill it.

---

Sign your name

(1) -Be sure to read your Bible daily, (2) -Pray daily, and (3) -Attend a Bible believing Church.

*We Believe Brokenness Is Strength*  
originated from excerpts from the book  
*The Stigma of Calvary*

**Table of Contents from**  
*The Stigma of Calvary Book*

Introduction .....	9
1. The Feasts That Jesus Gave .....	13
2. The Lord's Supper .....	21
3. What Mean Ye by This Sacrifice? .....	35
4. The Two Cups of Communion .....	41
5. Three Crosses .....	55
6. The Sins That Killed Jesus .....	71
7. Seven Saying, Seven Affirmations, Seven Words ....	85
8. Himself He Cannot Save .....	97
9. The Suffering Savior .....	121
10. The Stigma of the Cross .....	139
11. Brokenness Is Strength .....	155
12. The Sacrifice Bound to the Altar .....	163
13. Memorials .....	173

## **Dr. Lester Sumrall**

### **1913~1996**

The voice of Dr. Lester Sumrall remains prominent in the Christian world today. More than 65 years of ministry in over 100 nations made Dr. Sumrall a respected source of wisdom and understanding. He was an author, teacher, missionary, evangelist, and the pastor and founder of Christian Center Church in South Bend, Indiana.

Throughout his lifetime, Dr. Sumrall worked tirelessly to fulfill the Great Commission by carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth. In 1957 he founded LeSEA, a multi-faceted global outreach. Today, with the help of our faithful partners and friends, the ministry continues to blanket the world through television, satellite, FM and shortwave radio, LeSEA Publications, and LeSEA Global Feed the Hungry®.

[www.leseapublishing.com](http://www.leseapublishing.com)

[www.feedthehungry.org](http://www.feedthehungry.org)

[www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com](http://www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com)

LeSEA Publishing  
530 E. Ireland Rd.  
South Bend, IN 46614

[www.LeSEAPublishing.com](http://www.LeSEAPublishing.com)  
1-888-584-4847