

I. Set Up:

A. Psalm 11: 3 asks: “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” We are gathering to talk about just that – about how to move forward when life stops working and the foundations are being destroyed.

B. This series is entitled, “Broken: Preparing for the day when life stops working and your faith is tested.” My name.. / welcome / special welcome to those of you who might be new. Right now...

II. Transition into sermon with Video of Storm at Sea

A. Boaters have a little saying, “any port in a storm.” When storms are coming you want to flee. But sometimes you cannot. We were going to open with a clip from Perfect Storm – high winds and rouge waves. We decided to set things up with this instead.

III. Introduction

A. I’m not sure how we ended up with a clip of bloopers to the theme from The Love Boat. I think it had something to do with the idea that during this series there will not be many opportunities for levity. We better take advantage of everyone we have.

B. As was already mentioned, when you’re sailing, you do everything you can to avoid a storm. You keep the weather channel on. You watch the horizon. If one starts to roll in you race to shore. “Any port in a storm.”

C. But sometimes that doesn’t work. Here is a picture I took about 30 miles out in Lake Michigan. It got bad in a hurry. Two of my boys and I were crossing Lake Michigan. When we headed out the weather report gave a 15% chance of showers. We were 30 miles out and suddenly the winds were blowing 45 mph and the waves are crashing over the bow. Storms bring high winds and rogue waves. You get tossed about. You might end up wet and cold or worse. And all of that brings fear.

D. The goal is to avoid storms. But sometimes you cannot. In this series – Broken – we are going to talk about how to survive the storms. How to move forward when life is full of high winds and rogue waves.

E. I hope that by now you’ve read the first small book. In it I made four points

1. Trouble knows our address and one day it’s going to ring our doorbell.
2. Americans are particularly bad at suffering.
3. The time to prepare for trouble is before you get knocked down.

4. Getting knocked down just might be a really good thing. We can grow – get better. It doesn't happen automatically. Not everyone who grows old grows wise. Plenty do not. And it is not easy. There is no growth without change. There is no change without loss and there is no loss without pain.

IV. As we get started let me say a few general things

A. There are sermon series I am excited to preach because they make people happy. Telling you that you are going to get upended by life is not fun. I'd rather say things like, "the sun will always shine, your cholesterol is going down, you'll get a big raise and life will work." But that is not what the Bible says and that is not the way life works, and someone needs to tell you the truth.

1. I started working on this series before my stroke or my Dad's death, chiefly because I felt bad about how many people were surprised by suffering. And being surprised makes it worse.

2. This is not a fun topic – hearing that life contains trials, missteps, pain, heartache, loss – is not fun, but it's important, helpful and necessary.

B. The books and the sermons are related – they are all about being broken. But they are different as well. In the sermons we are going to look at the path we can travel when we come through a major loss. It's similar to the stages of grief that were first proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. There she noted that when we are facing our own death or working through some significant loss that we move through five stages. The exact time and order we go through varies from person to person. But generally they are: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

1. In our sermons we are going to walk through the same six stages that Rick Warren talked about when he came back about six months after the suicide of his 27 year old son, Matthew. They are: Shock, Sorrow, Struggle, Surrender, Sanctification and Service

2. The first three will happen with a major loss: shock, sorrow and struggle. I guarantee it. The last three can happen. We want them to. We want to move past struggle to surrender, sanctification (that's a theological term for spiritual growth) and service. Not everyone does, but you want to and helping you get there is big part of this series.

V. I have four points today.

VI. One: You will be surprised.

A. Ecclesiastes 9:12 reads: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them

B. I had two big, unpleasant surprises last year.

1. The first was when The Call came. As I wrote in the book, I knew ‘the Call’ was coming. And I even suspected that something was up when my parents called at a time when my parents didn’t usually call. I was not shocked by the news that my Dad had cancer. I knew that something like that was going to happen and cancer is often what that something is. I was not shocked to hear that my Dad had cancer. I was shocked when he said, “They tell me I have 4 – 6 weeks to live.” I remember starting to cry when I tried to repeat 4 – 6 weeks.

2. The second was the stroke. I had had a physical the day before. At that point I had asked to go on a Statin – like Lipitor – because so many of my friends are on them and when we go out to eat get burgers and fries and I was getting a salad. The doc said “No.” He said I was fine without and sent me on my way with a clean bill of health. Twenty-four hours later I stood up in my office and felt dizzy – for about 3 seconds. That was it.

a) What I had happen to me is pretty rare. I spoke with a neurologist last week and he said that in his practice he has only ever known of two others. Both were young men. One died and the other has locked-in syndrome. Where the only thing he can move is his eyes. What happened to me was rare and bad. I am very thankful that I am recovering so well, but it has taken most of the last six months. And it came as a total surprise.

b) You will be surprised.

VII. Two: Some surprises will put you into shock

A. Not every surprise is a bad one and not every bad surprise is so bad that you can’t immediately roll with it. But when the news is really bad and really big sometimes we cannot process it. By the way, the term *shock* is also used to describe a life-threatening medical condition that happens as a result of insufficient blood flow throughout the body. It often accompanies severe injury or illness. I’m not talking about that. I am talking about what is being referred to in multiple places throughout the Bible.

1. Jeremiah says, “A horrible and shocking thing has happened.”

2. Ezekiel: “I sat for seven days, shocked at what had happened to me.” I sat for seven days. I didn’t move. I was paralyzed.

3. Isaiah: “I’m in terrible pain. I’m shocked and I hurt so much that I can’t hear or see. My head spins. Early evening...[he says that was my favorite time, cause he likes to watch TV] my favorite time, has become a nightmare.” He says I’m in shock, my head is spinning. I’m numb.

4. David says in Psalm 143, “I’m in total darkness, as someone long dead. My heart is heavy and I feel numb all over.”

B. These guys were experiencing the first stage of getting through whatever you go through.

C. You've heard this before, but it bears repeating. Right now you: Either know someone in a crisis, or you are in one, or you are getting ready to go into one. They come in a variety of forms:

1. A financial crisis: You lose your job and for the first time ever you don't immediately bounce. About 18 months ago, I went four months where I averaged one meeting per week with a family from the church that was going into bankruptcy. In most cases the situation had been made worse by paralysis and denial. By people being in a state of shock.

2. A health crisis: Some dreaded test comes back positive. At some otherwise routine checkup the doctor says, "I don't like the looks of that. We need to run some tests and in a surreal moment a day or two later you hear cancer, stage four, ALS. Tim Shaw, a former player for the Bears who attended Christ Church a bit while he was here, recently learned that he had ALS. He just watched his sister-in-law die from it.

3. Maybe it's a relational crisis. You thought your marriage was good, and then you hear that your partner wants out, or has been cheating on you. And you think, "this kind of thing doesn't happen to me."

4. There are all kinds of crisis.

#### VIII. Three: There are things you can do – and should do – to help others who are in Shock

A. It may be that you're not in crisis at the moment, but you will soon know someone who is. What do you do? Galatians 6:2 says, "By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ." And the law of Christ is to love your neighbor as yourself. And by the way, one of the ways you may help them is by helping them navigate the very crisis you went through.

1. There are six stages here: Shock, Sorrow, Struggle, Surrender, Sanctification and Service. The best help is often offered by people who have been through the exact crisis someone is in. The best people to help addicts are recovered addicts. The best people to help parents cope with the special needs of their child, are those who have raised – or lost – a child with those same special needs. Sometimes about the only good you can ever see in a trial is, "Well, I can help others going through this trial."

2. Not that that is necessary. We do not have to have gone through something to be able to help. And we need to try to help others when they are in shock.

B. How do you help a friend in shock? Let's pause here for a few minutes more and consider the three things that friends do – or that small groups need to do – when someone has just suffered a major loss:

C. First: Show up.

1. Don't remain on the sidelines. When someone close to you has been thrown to the ground, just show up. Do not wait for an invitation. If they are in shock – if they've just lost their job, discovered they've got breast cancer, a family member has died – just show up. You do not have to say anything. In fact, it's probably a really good thing not to.

2. My Mom told me that a couple weeks ago my Dad – who had a great fourth quarter of life. Spiritually speaking he went from negative 2 to about 3. He came to faith late. My decision to go into the ministry caused about ten years of tension in our family. To be fair he did not cut me off, but for a while I'd hear things like, "you'll starve. You will not be able to take care of your family. My secretary makes more than you will." I avoided him and he avoided me. And I prayed that he'd meet someone who would lead him to faith. And he did, while on the golf course. And he grew a lot. He really changed. In fact, sometimes he'd say and do things and my brothers and sisters would ask, "Who are you and what did you do with our Dad."

3. Anyway, what I heard from my Mom was that a few weeks back my Dad was mentioned in a sermon for showing up. A person from church lost his wife. My Dad called and called and never got an answer. Word was, the man would not come out of his house – he was too depressed. So my Dad left a message that he was coming over and he would not leave until he saw his friend. He said, "I'm not leaving until I know you are OK." The man was despondent and in shock." He finally came to the door and that was the start.

4. Job's friends showed up. Now, as you probably know, they become a model of how not to help. They are mocked for the bad counsel they gave to Job after he lost everything in one day: his health, his family and his wealth. Well, here's what happened in Job 2: "When Job's three friends... heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him." They didn't wait for an invitation. Their friend was in pain so they went to his house.

5. After Rick Warren's 27 year old son committed suicide, his Rick and Kay's small group was in the driveway of Matthew's home within minutes. And I heard him talk about this and he said, "They didn't say anything and I didn't need them to say anything." When you are in deep you don't need words you need touch.

**6. *LORI G VIDEO HERE***

7. Job's friends got it right for a while. They just say with him. The problems came when they tried to explain to Job what God was doing and got it all wrong. People in crisis don't need insight or answers as to why this happened. Answers don't help.

a) Supposed you know exactly why their child died. It doesn't bring their child back to tell them. Now is not the time to have that conversation. They may be asking you point blank, "Where is God?" Do not answer that question. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has a great line that I included in book two. "Where God tears gaps it's best not to try to fill it with words."

b) The greater the pain, the fewer the words. If someone is having a bad hair day you can talk with them about that for thirty minutes. Offer all the comfort you can. Advice on which conditioner to try. If they have just lost a child, your assignment is to show up and shut up. Give them a hug and cry. Romans 12:15 says, "weep with those who weep."

c) I will occasionally get a call, "My neighbor's young son just died. I don't know what to do. I'm scared to say the wrong thing." Go. Go. Go. Show up and cry. That is your assignment. Give them a hug but do not offer any advice. Words are not going to help.

D. Which leads to point Two: Shut Up

1. Now, let me say, "I don't say 'Shut Up.' But it works well here. I think you'll remember it: Show up and Shut Up."

2. By the way, never say to someone in shock: "It's going to be OK," or "I know how you feel." No you don't! Or, "Don't worry, God is in control," or "God is doing something special in your life." Who wants that!

3. Now, you do have to keep your wits about you. You might have to stop the person who is in shock from doing something stupid.

a) I went to the hospital by ambulance at around 4 a.m. Around 10 a.m. they transferred me downtown to the neuro-ICU unit. I was in sorry shape. For starters, I was in denial that I'd had a stroke. I didn't accept that I'd had a stroke for the first four days I was there. On the first evening I asked my youngest son to help me get up and walk out of the hospital. "They are going to try to keep me here overnight. This is nonsense. Just help me walk out." At the time I was having difficulty not falling out of bed. He said no. The next day (on Easter) I asked the neurologist if I was cleared to fly, explaining that on Monday night I needed to be in Los Angeles for a meeting and on Wed I was supposed to fly to Memphis for a conference. I couldn't fly. I was not thinking clearly. Thankfully others were.

b) So you show up, you share their pain. Then here's the third thing you do...

E. Third: Take some initiative.

1. Be practical. Bring food. Mow the lawn. Take in the mail. You need to step up because they are not likely to be thinking clearly.

2. Proverbs 3:27 says, “Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it.” Do good means anything. Run an errand; take the kids; bring a meal, mow the lawn. If this is a close friend, do not say, “Call me if you need anything.” If they are in shock they are trying to check themselves out of the hospital. It’s helpful if someone is thinking clearly; they will not be, so you need to take the initiative. When there is a major crisis – a death or something severe – and I show up, I try not to leave without identifying who is in charge. Someone from the small group will likely pull me aside and say, “We got this. We’re here until Friday when so and so will arrive.”

3. By the way, do not overlook the family. It may be that a health crisis hits a husband. Do not overlook the needs of the wife and kids. The one in shock may not be the one with the health problem.

IX. Four: Here is what to do if you are in shock

A. If this is you and you are just clued in enough to know that you are in trouble. You need to think of a couple things.

B. First: Call out to God. However you want to do that. In Psalm 50:15 God says, “Call to me in your day of trouble; and I will rescue you, and you will honor me.” Lamentations 2:19 says: “Get up, cry out in the night. Pour out your heart like water in prayer to the Lord. Lift up your hands in prayer to him.” (Why at night? Because you can’t sleep. Right? When something horrific has happened you wake up and your brain engages with the crisis and you are up. It’s horrible. It hasn’t happened to me very often, but when things are really bad it does. God says “cry out in the night.”)

1. What do you cry? “God, I’m hurting. God, I’m sad. I’m sick. I’m devastated.” Pour out every emotion you’ve got to God. That’s what God wants you to do. Pray.

C. Second: Let others help you. One of the things I do when I’m leaving a hospital room is say to the patient, “you know, you are going to have to let people help you.” And what I often hear is, “that’s hard. I like to be the one who helps, not the one who is helped. I have a hard time being helped.” Of course you do. We all do. We all want to be the one in control. That’s because of pride. As I was being placed on the ambulance I remember a few coherent thoughts. I remember thinking, “I don’t believe I am going to die, although Lord, if I am going to stay this dizzy for long, take me now.” I also remember thinking, “one of the reasons this is happening is so I learn to model weakness. I am going to need to let others help me.”

D. There is some other counsel I would offer to those in shock: go easy on yourself. get more sleep if you can, let others help you, do not make any major decisions for at least a year. A key one is: try not to be too hard on others, especially those who are not shows. It's interesting who shows up and who doesn't. Try not to judge those who do not, because they may be in their own kind of pain. Scripture says, "A brother is born for adversity... a friend loves at all times." But some friends get paralyzed. Another key one is: do not hide. Our natural reaction when we are hurt is to hide, withdraw. You get laid off? You don't want to talk to anybody. You just find out you've got breast cancer? You don't want to talk to anybody. You just had a miscarriage; you don't want anybody to know about it. Our reactions at those moments are often the opposite of what we need. In shock you need fellowship. In sorrow – which we're taking up next week – you need worship, but in shock you need fellowship. You need people. You don't need people to talk to you. You just need people to show up in your life.

E. If you are in a crisis right now, you need to let someone know.

1. If you are in a small group, you need to let them know. If you end up in the hospital you have to call and let people know. You have to let us know. (It used to be that the hospital would call us. Not anymore.)

2. We have pastors on call. We have grief groups, cancer support groups, divorce recovery groups. And we have prayer teams. Give others the privilege of praying for you.

X. Every week we invite people up for prayer, but not many come forward. The reason for this is not that everyone has their act together; the reason for this is because many allow American culture, especially the culture of the North Shore – which says, "Do not show weakness, go it alone" – to trump God's invitation to grace. The reason people do not come forward is pride.

A. So let's try something different right now. I want everyone who can to stand up. In a second I am going to invite all of you who have everything together to sit down. But if you are facing any struggles right now - aging parents, troubled children, cancer, unemployment, loneliness, depression or despair – if any of those things, or three dozen other things are true and you'd accept prayer, please remain standing. In not, go ahead and sit down.

B. Time of Prayer for those standing

C. END SERMON / Final Worship Song(s)

XI. TO BE DONE BY CAMPUS PASTOR IN WRAP UP: Let me close with some counsel for your small groups.

A. Most of you are in a small group. We have over 100 groups working through Broken. If you are not yet signed up – today's the day.



B. Well, there are four levels of interaction in a small group. Most groups start at a very shallow level, but our goal is to go deeper so you can be there when people need you and so that people will be there when you need them.

1. Level One: The shallowest form of interaction is the fellowship of sharing. How was your week? What did you do? How's work? Did you watch the Bears? There is nothing wrong with it. It's not bad just shallow. Hey, we can't be deeply connected with many people.

2. Level two is a bit deeper. We'll call it the fellowship of study. When you dig into the Scriptures together it draws you closer together than simply sharing. If all you do is share you don't go that deep. You've got to study.

3. Level Three: The fellowship of serving. When your small group serves together – at PADS or Love Inc. or goes on a mission trip together – you move to another level. Doing some kind of ministry together draws you even closer. Fellowship of sharing, the fellowship of studying, the fellowship of serving.

4. Level Four: But the deepest level of fellowship is the fellowship of suffering. That's when you enter into other people's pain. I used to wear a watch, that was shock resistant. I want you to be shock resistant. I want you to be able to handle the shocks of life better than most people. How do you improve your resistance to shock? The first thing is, you cultivate stronger relationships.

5. God never intended for you to go through life on your own by yourself, handling all your problems without any support group. In fact, God created a spiritual family. That spiritual family is called the church. And your spiritual family is going to outlast your physical family. Physical families do not last. People grow up, they move off, they get married, there are divorces, people die. Physical families don't last. But the family of God is going to last forever. Your spiritual family will actually outlast your physical one. So you need to cultivate strong relationships. And the best time for you to build a safety net for the crises that are going to inevitably happen in your life is before they happen. You need the safety net now.

6. If you are not in a small group, there is still time. But you need to act now.

a) Ecclesiastes 4, "Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one... and if one falls down, then the other can pull him up; (That's why you need a partner. That's why you need a group.) ... if one falls down the other can pull him up; but if a man falls when he's alone, he's in trouble!... One person standing alone can be attacked and defeated,

7. These small groups are not a life-long commitment. The commitment we are asking for right now is 8 weeks.

C. The other thing we need to do is grow spiritual roots so when trouble hits you don't become a tumble weed. So we look forward to seeing you each week of this series.

## XII. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. This week your small group meets to talk about this sermon and book one. We'll post a 3 minute video intro, where I highlight the main points from both the sermon and the book. There will be some questions for you to talk through.

B. At your small group you will also be given book two, which you are supposed to read chapters 1-3. It's a bit thicker.

C. Next weekend Mike will be preaching on sorrow – think grief and despair. Bring a friend. Bring someone who is in despair.