

## Hope When You Are Broken

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Rich Nathan

January 27-28, 2001

"I Believe in the Church" Series

Ephesians 1:15-18

I was gone last week to North Carolina to do a conference for a pastor who used to be part of our fellowship – a guy named Mike Nelson. It is a great encouragement to me to see leaders raised up through this church pastoring now all over the country. I heard Eric did a fabulous job in my absence.

I want to start by sharing a story I found to be extraordinarily encouraging. I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that I get to be in a unique position here in getting literally dozens of emails and having lots of contacts with folks who tell me about the change that has occurred in their lives as the result of the ministry of this church and what Jesus has done in their lives through the church. I want to share one of these stories with you. I am going to share it anonymously.

There is a guy in the church, who I will call Dave. He was raised in a large Roman Catholic family, one of nine kids. Dave's dad was absent a lot while he was growing up. He was very involved in the church, serving on various kinds of committees, very involved in the community. Dave went off to Catholic seminary when he was in High School. While he was there, very tragically, he was molested by a teacher. Dave went to speak to the rector, the head of the Catholic Seminary. But what he didn't know was that the rector was, himself, a pedophile.

The rector decided to head Dave off at the pass by calling his parents and saying that he had real concerns about Dave – that Dave was delusional and that he was making up stories and that he has seen some other real problems in Dave's life. Sadly, Dave's parents believed the rector and so when Dave came with the story of the abuse that he was suffering, they thought he was delusional.

He went off to college and tried to repress what had happened. He moved here to Columbus where Dave became totally immersed in the whole gay scene. He was cruising the parks and going to all the gay bars, meeting men. He had a four year relationship with a guy. They lived together until one day he discovered that this other fellow was unfaithful in their relationship from the beginning. Unfaithfulness is one of the hallmarks of gay relationships.

In any case, Dave decided that he was going to go back to church. He was tired of the whole gay scene. He was empty and broken. So he went back to the Catholic church and got involved in the choir and helped around the church. One day he decided to come clean with one of the priests and confess to him that he was struggling. He asked for a recommendation of a therapist or someone who

could assist him in dealing with his past and his current struggles. He wanted to get his life turned around because he didn't like the way he was living.

Well, the priest told Dave to leave the church and never come back. He simply didn't want him there. Dave tried to explain that he wasn't asking the priest to be able to solve his problems, but just could he recommend someone to help him? He was told "go away and don't come back."

A few years later Dave's life seemed like it was back on track. He had a nice apartment, a good job. Dave discovered the one thing that could bring his plans for his life crashing to an end. He was diagnosed with the HIV virus that leads to AIDS. Shortly after that, a former college roommate and his wife moved to Columbus. The college roommate used to be an atheist, but now had either become a Christian or was in the process of searching for God. The roommate asked Dave if he would help him search for a church in town.

Dave was no expert on churches and had a very negative experience of church. The college roommate described the kind of church he was looking for. Dave thought to himself about three years before he had gone to the Vineyard, which he described as a warehouse with purple awnings. For those of you who weren't around in our purple awnings day, the entrance to our old building used to have purple awnings. Now they are painted a boring white. But he told his former roommate and his wife, "Hey, you know the church you are describing sounds a lot like Vineyard." So they insisted that Dave come with them to check the church out.

The first Sunday that he was here there was an announcement made about Project Compassion, which is our ministry to folks who have the HIV virus and who have AIDS. Dave said he was just dumbstruck. He couldn't believe that a church would so openly have a ministry to people, who in his experience, the church just threw away. They said, "Leave and don't come back." So he went home and cried uncontrollably for hours. While he was in church he kind of held it together, but when he got home he just cried and cried and cried.

A couple of weeks later here at the church, he gave his life to Christ and so did his college roommate. Here is a very neat part of the story. Dave got involved in a men's group here in the church – not a group focused upon homosexuality, but just a group of guys who got together to help each other to try to have authentic Christian lives in this world. These were guys who had no experience with the gay lifestyle, but Dave said they were really honest about their own brokenness, their own stuff. They were struggling with their own sexuality and issues from their past.

The more they opened up, the more Dave felt free to open up about his life. And in the environment of acceptance and love, these men helped each other to walk out of their brokenness. Dave said, "I've totally left the homosexual lifestyle

entirely behind. That's not who I am anymore." Now Dave leads a ministry in this church to men and women who are struggling with their homosexuality and with homosexual desire and temptation. He calls the ministry "Gideon's Call" – Called out from the gay lifestyle. Three of Dave's friends who he knew from his days of hitting the bars and so on have come to Jesus through the ministry and the power of what was done in Dave's life.

I asked Dave, "What would you want to say to people?" He gave me two really interesting responses.

He said, "First of all, it is important for people in the church to understand that we are all broken. I discovered that in that men's group. I thought I was the damaged goods. I was the broken guy and everyone else had their stuff together. But I discovered in that men's group that we are all broken, not just homosexual people. We need to stop judging each other for our particular variety of sin."

"And the second thing I would like to say, especially to homosexuals, is that it is possible for you to change. The biggest lie of the enemy and the media is that you must accept your gay identity – that that's just the way it is. If I could change by connecting with God and with other men and women in a place of love and acceptance, you can change too."

Powerful stuff. Just to close the story off, dozens of former students from Dave's seminary came forward a few years ago and told their stories of molestation that occurred over several decades of time. The seminary's cover was blown. Several of the teachers were prosecuted and are now serving prison sentences. Dave's parents just a little while ago came and asked Dave's forgiveness for not believing him when he was younger.

I love stories of changed lives. I love when someone drops me a note or writes me an email and says, "Rich, here is what God has done in my life. Here's where I was and here's where I am now."

I am doing a series that I am calling "I Believe in the Church." One of the reasons that I believe in the church, what we are doing here in Vineyard, what God's people are doing around the world as they gather together in various denominations and locations, the reason I believe in the church is because the church offers hope for broken people and broken lives. Friends, Dave has it exactly right. We are all broken. We all have a story. We all come in to churches like this one, at least in part, as damaged goods.

Today my message, which I pray would be relevant to you, is titled "Hope When You Are Broken." Let's ask God's presence.

Ephesians 1:15-18 – *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...*

Now if you are outlining Ephesians 1, Ephesians 1 divides very neatly into two sections. The first is praise and the second is prayer. Ephesians 1:3-14 is praise. Paul is worshipping God. And it begins in verse 3, *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* It is an extended benediction. It is one long outburst of praise from the apostle Paul. So we hear this refrain three times over. *To the praise of his glory* in verse 6, *To the praise of his glory* in verse 12, and *To the praise of his glory* in verse 14. Verses 3-14 are Paul praising God.

And then verses 15-23, Paul prays to God. You see it in verse 15, *For this reason, [in light of my worship, in light of what I have been praising God about] ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you remembering you in my prayers.* And then he proceeds to tell the Ephesians what he is praying about. *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and so on...*

So first, he praises God for the blessings God has given us and Paul prays that eyes would be opened to grasp the extent of the blessing.

Now, my experience with most folks, including me, is that we often skip step #1; we run past praise, we run past worship and we wonder why our prayers are so ineffective and why we find it so difficult to make connection with God and why we are so lacking in faith. But until we immerse ourselves in who God is and what he has granted us in Christ, it is impossible to believe that God could take a broken person and change them. Until you immerse yourself in who God is and what he has done, it is very difficult to believe God for some breakthrough or some change that might occur as a result of your prayers.

It is like going to a bank, but being totally ignorant regarding the way banks work, about who you are, about what's in your account or what your authority is as a customer. You go to a bank and you are totally ignorant about how much money the bank has. Picture walking in to one of the local banks in town. You stand in line waiting for the other customers to do business with the teller. Your heart is beating very fast because you need money, but you don't know if the teller is going to give you any money. The closer you get up to the teller, the more uncomfortable you feel, and you are trying to think of a way to express to the teller how much money you need.

You go up to the window and you have these really sad eyes, with a pleading tone in your voice you say, "Please, I hate to bother you. You don't know me and you are probably really busy. I am sorry to take up your time. I doubt if you are really going to give me any money, but if you would give me some money today, I will promise you and swear that I will never ask you for money again. I just need money this one time."

"Please, please, please, if you will...give me some money. Of course, I don't even know if you have any money in your drawer or in the bank has any money or if you have given it out to all these others, or if you are closed for business today. But I have heard some stories from other people who have come to this bank and they say they have gotten money here. A friend of mine said he just walked in and you handed him a whole bunch of cash. So anyway, it would be really incredible to me, if there is any way that you could see yourself clear to meet my request. Maybe just give me half the money I am asking for...maybe just a quarter...if you could just give me a quarter, that would be amazing."

If you actually got money after that request, that would be amazing. If the teller didn't hit the silent alarm and had you hauled off for psychiatric evaluation, that would be amazing. But friends, this is really the way that most of us approach God in prayer. We don't know who God is. We don't know the resources that are available at his disposal. We don't know what God has done on our behalf. We don't know what he's called us. We don't know our authority before him. We don't know our position.

Praise puts us in the position to be able to pray. Praise reminds us of why we can be confident as we come before God with our requests.

Let me ask you a personal question. Just be honest with yourself and God. In this past week have you spent any personal time privately praising God? Can you point back to a 20 minutes slot, a 15 minute slot where you really did worship God privately – by yourself in your own room, as you took a walk. Was there any time this week that what you said to God sounded like Ephesians 1:3-14. *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* Praise you, Father, because you chose me before the creation of the world. Praise you, Father, because you predestined me to be adopted as your child. Thank you, God, that I am your son or daughter. Praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, that I have redemption through your blood, the forgiveness of my sins. Praise you that you have given me the Holy Spirit with whom I am sealed for the day of redemption.

Did you say anything to God this past week that sounds remotely like that?

I will tell you, friends, if you are going through a hard time; you experience the frustration of your own brokenness, you can't do a whole lot better than by

beginning to build a foundation in your life of worship. Pop in a worship tape when you are at home or a CD in your car and worship the Lord. Keep your eyes open when you are driving.

I watch folks every week come into church 20 minutes late and 25 minutes late. Obviously week by week different things happen. We get stuck in traffic. Your kid throws up on the way. But if it is your habit to miss worship, you just come for the message, you are keeping yourself from a foundational part of your spiritual growth. The pattern of the Bible is praise first, then prayer. It is not enough to hear the truth announced from the pulpit. You have to engage the one who is true, heart to heart, spirit to spirit. I would encourage you to be here on time.

And when you are here, instead of flipping through the bulletin, try to worship. Talk to God. Praise him. It doesn't matter if you aren't into singing. Lift your heart up and praise him. That's the first part of the healing of our brokenness.

Now, as we move forward in the text, the apostle Paul deals with the basic problem of living life well. The Ephesians, by the way, were broken people. Throughout the book of Ephesians we get the picture of what their lives were like. Before they encountered by the gospel, they were alienated from God. They had no hope. They were trapped in sexual sin. They were idolaters. They were into all kinds of magic. But they never quite connected with God. The women and men that Paul was writing to were broken people. They were very much like us.

And Paul deals in verses 15ff what are the basic problems that keep us from living well? What's in the way? What is blocking you, bottom line, from being and doing all that God intends for you to be and do? What keeps you stuck in your own brokenness? Why do you and I keep driving into the same rut over and over again? Have you ever asked yourself how many times am I going to have this same stupid conversation with my spouse, with my child, with my boyfriend or girlfriend or parent? You are totally stuck. Talking about it is completely unproductive. The same arguments, we could play it back like a tape recorder: You don't communicate. You don't show affection. You have completely blown it with the kids. When are you going to get involved around here and help me out?

You find yourself going through the same self-defeating behavior. You don't want to go along with the crowd or be a total people pleaser. But when push comes to shove you fall into that pattern again. You don't want to keep dating losers or losing your temper or falling into sexual sin, adjusting the sales figures to get higher commissions. Whatever it is that reveals your particular brand of brokenness, you are sick and tired of being sick and tired about yourself. You don't know how to change.

Well, how do you get unstuck? How do you get off the treadmill? What is your basic problem?

The apostle Paul, along with lots of other philosophers, said the basic problem of women and men is ignorance. We don't know what we need to know. Verse 17, *I keep asking that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Verse 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.* We don't have the wisdom, we don't have the insight, we don't have the understanding. You and I don't know what we need to know, so we keep doing the same dumb things and repeating the same dumb conversations and behaving in the same dumb ways over and over again.

The problem of men and women is ignorance. And Paul repeats that diagnosis of us in Ephesians 4. I just want you to see this. Flip over to chapter 4:17, *So I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.* He goes on to say, *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

Paul even traces sexual impurity in people's lives to ignorance. A darkening to your understanding. A cloud that's come over your mind.

Ignorance of what? If the problem is knowledge, what do you need to know to get unstuck, to begin to mend the broken pieces of your life? And it's here regarding the content of the knowledge that you need, that the Bible and the philosophers give radically different answers. The apostle Paul says, "I agree with you philosophers that the problem is ignorance and that the solution is knowledge, but I totally disagree with you regarding what the content of that knowledge must be." The philosophers and the therapists, the psychiatrists and the psychologists all say what you need to know is yourself. Know thyself has been the core advice of almost every philosophy, almost every psychotherapy, of almost all New Age thinking. Know thyself. That's the key.

So people spend years going into therapy, trying to unpack the meaning of their dreams, stripping off one layer of denial after another, plunging deeper and deeper into your psyche, into your own pasts, into your own hurts, into your own traumas. We are endlessly fascinated with ourselves. Men and women in our fallenness are incurable naval gazers. We love tests, books, counseling sessions that promise us insight into ourselves. What is your Myers-Briggs profile? We love taking tests like that – Myers-Briggs, or the Disc Test or some other personality inventory that shows us our patterns, our weaknesses, our strengths and our spiritual gifts.

Don't you love to find out more about you? Are you not endlessly fascinated by you? Don't you love getting together with someone who gives you a clear picture of you, even if it is a weakness, a pattern, a behavior, a way that you phrase

things. People around the office do imitations of me. My intonations, my pronunciations. I think, “Do I really do that? Do I really sound like that?” Women’s magazines know this. The endless number of tests to test your closeness in a relationship, to test your love life – we are endlessly fascinated with ourselves.

Now, that’s not all bad. I am not running down what the philosophers or therapists are doing in saying that you need to know yourself. It is helpful to know your patterns. It is helpful to gain some insight regarding your past and your hurts. But it is secondary. Knowing yourself, knowing your issues – that’s not at the top of the list. Lots of folks have gone through extensive therapy and extensive self analysis and they are no more mended than they were at the beginning because the Bible teaches that what must be at first place in your life, what you need to know first of all, is God.

*Verse 17, I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* Not know yourself better, but know him better. That’s the starting place. Not just knowing your spouse better. Not knowing the neglect you suffered better. Knowing him.

Friend, have you ever considered that the key to unlocking your problem would be found through knowing God better. That what’s been really missing, bottom line, is that you don’t know God very well? Have you ever thought that the most important curriculum for a child, for your child, is not what the state of Federal government says should be on some mandatory tests. That the most important lessons your child could learn is to know God himself. Before you teach your child anything, you have to teach them God. That God is the key to a successful life.

Now how do we come to know God? The apostle Paul is really clear that the knowledge of God is not something that is the result of just careful study and research. We come to know God in a way that is different than the way we learn other subjects. We say, “Well, I need to learn how to build a deck on the back of my house.” Or “I am going to take a trip and I want to learn about the place that I am going. I will pick up a book and do some research. I will surf the web and listen to a tape. I will watch a video and master what I need to know about this subject.”

The apostle Paul clearly tells us that this is not the approach you take with God. In Ephesians 1:17 he says, *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.* God’s spirit is mentioned in the New Testament as the key to coming to a knowledge of God. And if you are taking notes, you might want to jot down 1 Corinthians 2 and in Ephesians 5 where we read, *You will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men of other generations as it*



*has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.* The Holy Spirit is the key.

See, we are talking about an entirely different realm of reality when we talk about God and spiritual things. It is not a realm in which intellect alone will succeed. There are many extremely intelligent people, who when they read the Bible, can't make heads or tails out of it. It doesn't make any sense to them. You might have that experience where you try to read the Bible, but it just doesn't communicate. You are just reading a bunch of words. There are really bright men or women who listen to a sermon and walk out and say, "I didn't understand a thing that person was talking about." See, the Bible teaches that as a result of the sin of our original parents, our minds become darkened. We lack the faculty, the equipment to apprehend spiritual truths. We are like people who are colorblind. The color is there before their eyes, but because of their particular defect, they can't see the color. And without some operation or healing of the faculty of their seeing, they will never see color.

The same is true regarding God. You are colorblind regarding God in your natural state. Or rather, you are God blind. You are out of touch. You are disconnected. You are unable to grasp God or spiritual things. You can't figure out the Bible and you don't know the meaning of the cross. You look at the cross and it doesn't speak to you. You hear the doctrine of salvation; you hear the words "Jesus Saves" and it just sort of rolls off of you. Why?

Because you don't have the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit needs to operate on you to heal your God blindness, to heal your blindness toward spiritual matters.

And the only way you can come to know God – I don't mean to know about God, you can read books about God, you can read a book about President Bush, Michael Jordan or Garth Brookes, but you won't know them. You will just know about them. The only way you will come to know God is by God's Spirit giving you the faculty so that you can begin to get in touch with spiritual realities. Paul prays that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened. Right now the eyes of your heart are spiritually clouded over. But the Spirit of God can come and open your heart up so that you are in touch with God.

Is this just a mystical experience? Do you just wait for lightening to strike you? Well, in some sense the opening of our spiritual eyes is a pure mystical experience, a sovereign activity and choice of God. From the human side, I've watched the process of people coming to know Jesus Christ now for more than 25 years. And my experience with thousands of folks is that God's Spirit typically uses one of five different ways to heal a person of their God blindness. I am not saying that every single person fits into one of these five categories. And maybe you will find yourself in one of these five places.

Some people are seekers. They just seem to be born with a passionate interest in truth, in God. These folks are naturally idealistic. They have a spiritual bent to them. And there are folks in this church who looked into various religions. Maybe you were or currently are involved in some New Age spirituality. I have talked with seekers who have made pilgrimages and trips to the Andes and to India seeking some sort of answer or spiritual enlightenment. Folks who spent a year in a monastery. I've talked with folks who have been in Buddhist monasteries and Trappist monasteries. They took philosophy classes.

There are people who are always looking, always searching, always reaching out. And God makes a promise in Jeremiah 29:13 – a promise that I want some of you to hear today because you are looking for God. And Jeremiah the prophet in 29:13 says this: *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord.* Keep looking for God, the true God, the one God. Look for him with all your heart and you will find him.

Some people come to know God by being connected to a credible person, a person that you respect. A person that you trust. And they lead you to God. That person often is a parent or a grandparent. Many of you came to know Christ through your parents or grandparents or through another close relative. Some of you have come to know Christ through your spouse or through a roommate or friend. Maybe the relationship is more distant. Maybe it's through a pastor. But it is someone you respect. That person is there. God connects you up and he begins to open your eyes through another credible person.

I have seen God use pain very often to open the eyes of our heart to our need for him. God's Spirit often uses personal pain or failure over and over again. Personal brokenness is the vehicle. It is like the light of God shines through the broken pieces of our hearts.

Now the brokenness that we experience could be the discovery that you have AIDS or some other sexually transmitted disease. Or you have cancer. The brokenness can spring from a divorce or a separation. Marital failure is often used by God to communicate to us our need for him. The pain could be the result of an addiction that's ruled your life. Drugs, alcohol, sex or a major legal problem – a law suit, a criminal charge, a bankruptcy. Pain is one reason that the prodigal came home to his father.

And some of you today are prodigals. You have wandered away from your Father in heaven. You've been away from God for a long time. And often God uses pain to bring us back. You get to the point, as I said before, you become sick and tired of being sick and tired. And I have watched over the years, person after person come to know God in a real way as the result of having a problem that they could not solve on their own.

Then there are people who are empty. They aren't in pain. They aren't necessarily seekers, but they are empty. And I have watched God's Spirit use deep emotional or spiritual emptiness – a feeling of dissatisfaction, a void that we experience in our life especially the emptiness of success to open our eyes to God. You know, unless you've been there, you can't explain to someone else how the emptiness of success can feel like an incredible ache in your soul. The ache of the soul is worse than any toothache. The ache of the soul is worse than any backache. It just continues and continues to gnaw away at you. Something is missing. Something is wrong. I am not happy. I should be happy. I am in this marriage and I should be happy. I have all the gadgets. I have a great job. I can go anywhere I want to go on vacation. I have all the sports equipment. I have this great car. But I am not happy.

Underlying all of the stuff there is this question that keeps rising up inside. Is this all there is? Is this all that life is about? I can rattle off person after person who had their eyes opened to God by first experiencing the emptiness of success.

Finally, some people come to know God through a divine encounter. Some people literally are encountered by God as the result of his direct intervention in ways that he makes himself unmistakably real. I know people who have been healed of life threatening illnesses and someone came in and prayed for them and BANG - the illness stopped. No explanation. No place to put this, just God. I know someone who just tossed up a question. It wasn't even a prayer. It was just a question they were thinking in their mind. What would it be like to have a relationship with God where you are asking that question and you turn on the radio and that person on the radio said, "You are wondering now what it would be like to have a relationship with God. Well, here is how you can have one." It just blew their mind.

I know folks who, by all rights, should be dead and had another chance to live because of God. I came to know Christ in a fellowship that was led by a man who was an alcoholic for many years. One night after a fight with his wife, feeling the after affects of another bout of drunkenness, this man decided that he was going to end his life by driving his car into an oncoming freight train. He sat in his car, in total black despair, and waited for a train to come and then drove his car right into the train. A split second, before the freight train hit his car, this man cried out, "Jesus, help!" His car was sheered in two, literally severed in half, and he walked out of the car with some scratches on his hands. That night he came to Christ and God used him to bring me to Christ. Unmistakable divine intervention.

Why do I go through all of this? Because the way in is the way on. The various ways that people come to know God in the beginning, are the ways that God typically will use in your life for you to get to know him better. You want to know God better? You want to experience what Paul is talking about in Eph. 1:17, *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give*

*you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you might know him better.* I would expect that the way you are going to grow in the knowledge of him will be through one of the five ways I have just mentioned.

You are going to learn to seek him. Seek him in his Word. Seek him in worship. Seek him in prayer. *You seek me and find me when you seek me with your whole heart.* Jeremiah 29:13.

You want to know God better? Often it's going to be the result of some pain, some trial will enter your life. You have a parent with Alzheimer's or you have a troubled marriage or a prodigal child. And in the midst of your pain, in the midst of your difficulty, you will be presented with a question from the Lord: Will you trust me with this? Will you not run, escape or try to dull the pain? Will you trust me? Where do you think I am now? Will you trust me?

Or you might experience success. Everything at work or in your family is going well. But you aren't satisfied. It might be that you have all the outward trappings of spiritual success. You have given your life to Christ. But inside, more and more you are feeling an ache in your soul. You are dry. And you aren't conditioned. God will cause you to cry out like the psalmist did in Psalm 42: *In the desert as a deer longs for water, my soul longs for you, Lord. My soul is thirsty for the living God.* God will drive you to himself by causing you to experience the emptiness of success.

How do we get unstuck? We come to know him.

And in verse 18, *I pray also that the eyes of your heart might be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.* I am going to do a Part II on this message next week and we will tackle the rest of this text on hope when you are broken. But I think back to what Dave the fellow in the church who came out of a homosexual lifestyle wanted to say to other people who were struggling in similar circumstances and people, in general, who were broken. I said, "Dave, what would you want to say?"

He said, "What I want to say to people is that there is hope for change."

Paul writes, *That you might know the hope of your calling.* I pray not only that you would know God, but that you would know the hope to which he has called you. Certainly, Paul is speaking about the eternal hope. We are going to talk about that next week. But there is a hope right now for broken people in this world that God would fill your heart with faith now so that you could gain a vision of what could be. Whatever you are going through, whatever you've done, whatever's been done to you – that the eyes of your heart could be filled with faith regarding what could be true about you. That you could have a story like Dave's. That you could have a story of deliverance, a story of change, a story of God's intervention.

Frequently, God breathes a picture of a person's potential. He fills us with hope. He gives us a picture of what we could be like and that becomes a life line to us dragging us out of the mud of our own failures. That you might know God. That you might know the hope to which he has called you. This is what God offers through the church for broken people. Let's pray.

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## **Hope When You Are Broken**

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Rich Nathan

January 27-28, 2001

"I Believe in the Church" Series

Ephesians 1:15-18

### **I. Prayer and Praise (Eph. 1:3-14; 15, 16)**

### **II. Problems at the Core (Eph. 1: 17, 18)**

A. The Basic Problem of People is Ignorance.

B. The Basic Answer of Philosophy is Know Yourself.

C. The Basic Answer of Paul is Know God.

### **III. Pursuing a Relationship with God**

A. Some People are Seekers.

B. Some People are Connected to a Credible Person.

C. Some People are in Pain.

D. Some People are Empty.

E. Some People are Encountered by God.

### **IV. Problems and Future Potential (Eph. 1:18)**