

## A cracked wall

*This sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern. Isaiah 30:13-14*

This word picture takes my breath away.

Maybe you've had a high wall in your life that makes you feel safe and secure—like a good reputation, esteemed career, or financial success. Those things build high, coveted walls that others dream about. Behind those walls, you feel confident, strong, and secure. Your influence and insight drive you to be assertive and self-reliant. You believe in yourself, and it feels good. This wall stands tall and it seems strong.

The first cracks in your wall aren't a problem. Your heart races a little as you take the first inappropriate glance or the small amount of money that no one will miss. Your sense of entitlement grows, and your walls feel impenetrable. Recreational drug use becomes more frequent, or you experience the first moment you really need a drink. But your self-control seems unquestionable. One more click, just one more picture. In the false security of your high wall, it doesn't seem to hurt anyone. No one knows. You're still in control.

The problem is you don't see how deeply the cracks penetrate, or how far they reach. You don't even notice their spidery spread. By the time you do, it feels like it's too late. It feels like you can't stop even though you know the wall is bulging. Changing, turning, and stopping no longer seem like options. Just stay behind the wall and indulge yourself. Deny the guilt.

The poignancy of this picture is that it captures the moment your wall collapses. Instantly. Suddenly. Broken shards spewing in every direction, farther than you could've ever imagined. And then comes the soul piercing words that describe your life: "shattered mercilessly."

There are no pieces left to put back together. Not even a tiny sliver that has some small value or redeeming quality. Nothing. It is shattered. The merciless reality tightens around your chest until there is no breath, no hope, and perhaps for a moment you wish there was no life. It is an image of devastation and unimaginable suffering. The shattering cannot be undone. There is no mercy as those you love see your sin and shame, and they suffer heartache and disgrace because of you. There is no mercy as your respect and security become worthless rubble. No mercy in the guilt that is now displayed in broad daylight. The pain is unfathomable.

This is a true picture of sin.

*Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. Isaiah 30:18*

Yet. It says, "yet." Despite your sin and the ugly truth of what you've done, he will rise up to show you compassion. Listen to these words, "the Lord longs to be gracious to you." He has already done everything required to bring you forgiveness, and he can't wait to share it with you. As you sit in the shattered pieces of your life, God wants to be gracious to you. Hear the

richness of that word, “gracious.” He’s not just coming to your side to be supportive, he is coming to bring *grace*. He is Christ Jesus, your Savior from sin who suffered death and the pangs of hell for you. His blood has covered your sin and guilt. The sins which smother you in shame are forgiven; they are as far as the east is from the west. God raised Jesus from the dead to prove with his almighty power that he has accepted Christ’s payment for sin on your behalf. He longs to give you his grace because it is the precious gift he paid for with the blood of his Son.

Therefore, he will rise up. “Therefore” immediately points you back to grace. Because of his grace, he will rise up to show you compassion. God cannot overlook sin. He cannot simply come to you in your brokenness and be compassionate without a payment for sin. But because of Christ’s sacrifice, his complete and timeless payment, he will rise—he will come to you—to show you compassion. He will come. See this God who extends his mercy by coming to you as you suffer alone in your chards. He does not merely call out to you, he brings salvation and compassion to you. *He rises to bring it.* He is the one making the effort. This compassion comes from a Savior who has been a man and lived among us. Although he was sinless, he walked this earth in our place and took the punishment for sin in his human body. He understands what sin does and has felt the wrath of God demanding justice and extracting payment. His payment for sin means you are forgiven, fully and freely. He comes to you in his Word of Truth to be your Savior and God. He gives you freedom from your slavery to sin and makes you one who loves righteousness. His grace embraces you; it brings you into his arms, into his family. It is a washing, a cleansing; it brings a filling with the Holy Spirit and a righteousness before God. It brings the gift of faith and strength that will stay with you through all that is ahead. The commitment and hope of God are new every morning, even when you struggle. It is his commitment to you, a promise and covenant that he is your God.

He longs to give this forgiveness to you because it cost him so much. He rises to come to you. He is compassionate. He forgives you because of his love for you in Christ. He brings you grace. Full and free forgiveness in Christ—it is yours.

This is a true picture of grace.

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