

Lessons From a Broken Chandelier

By Pastor Greg
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Isaiah 9:1-2

Bunkertown COB

There hung a fancy chandelier in the dining room at my childhood home. It was quite delicate and hung just a bit too low from a brass chain that was attached to the ceiling. If you were not careful, you could bump it with your head and rattle the glass globes. I had this terrible fear of one day knocking it too hard causing it to fall from the ceiling.

One Saturday my parents were away and my younger sister and I spent the day at home alone. Let me first say that for most of the day we were well behaved. I can't stress that enough. But for a brief moment, we started to horse around. I started chasing my sister around the house for some reason I can't quite recall, and as she headed into the dining room, she threw a chair on the floor hoping to slow me down (please note that my sister THREW a dining room chair ON THE FLOOR!). That chair was nothing more than a small hurdle for me. Gracefully I launched myself up and over the chair, intending to hit the ground running and continue the pursuit. But the moment I became air born, I knew I was in trouble. Looking back, it was probably not a good idea to flail my arms in a futile attempt to change my trajectory.

You know how time seems to freeze when something terrible is about to happen? I remember thinking, "I wonder if the spanking is going to hurt". Not only did I break a couple of the globes, but also the whole chandelier broke loose from the ceiling.

As I stood there looking in disbelief, my sister comes back into the room. Now, she and I have always had such a loving, caring relationship with one another. I've helped her, and now here was an opportunity for her to help me. She took one look at the chandelier swinging back and forth on the electrical wire that had been pulled from the plaster and at all the broken glass, and lovingly said "Boy, you're really gonna get it when mom and dad get home".

What a troubling turn of events that day. Did I mention that we mostly were well behaved? But because of a series of unfortunate events, I now found myself

awaiting my father's wrath. And my sister was not any help at all. "Mom and Dad are going to be sooooo mad," she would say. "You really messed up this time". I actually got the impression that she was excited I would soon be in big trouble, because she was watching the clock hoping for their early return. She was hoping for wrath while I was hoping for mercy.

God mentions many times throughout the Old Testament that one day He would send a king, a Messiah. Consider what God says through the prophet Isaiah. **¹Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. ²The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. ¹** (Isaiah 9:1-2) The reference here is to the coming invasion by the Assyrian army. Soon Tiglath Pileser III would invade the northern part of the kingdom and carry his captives back to Assyria. Now although this will be a dark time for the people in this part of Israel, a time will come when from out of them will be seen a great light. Today, we know this to be a clear reference to Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in Galilee. The prophecy continues by saying that **"He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity."** ² (Verse 7)

The hope was that this Messiah would show grace to the people of Israel but the wicked would feel His wrath. He would reestablish David's kingdom and drive the wicked people from the land. But the problem is that this coming Messiah, this Prince of Peace, is not just theirs. God intended this Wonderful Counselor to be for all nations and for all people. One day, God would offer the grace and mercy of Christ to those who had no hope. But instead of rejoicing for those who lived in darkness, most Jews were watching and waiting for this Messiah so that those who had been bad would really get what they deserved.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

When my parents came home that night, the first thing I did was beg for grace. I told them that it was an accident and that I was sorry for what I had done. My father surprised me. He wondered if either of us was hurt. Then he offered me grace, which really disappointed my sister.

I meet many Christians who are more interested in seeing God's wrath poured out upon the people of this world instead of the Grace of God that is offered through the Messiah; this Child that will be given to us. But I'm beginning to learn that to be a true follower of Christ, we need to be praying that a person may find God's grace, not His wrath.

Isn't it ironic that we pray so fervently for God to grant us mercy, yet never do the same for others? Isn't it sad that as Christians we want grace for ourselves, yet never desire that same level of grace for others? What do you suppose Jesus meant when He said, "love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven."³ (Matthew 5:44-45). I believe Jesus expects us to be praying for those who have done wrong. I believe He expects us to realize that no one is beyond the grace of God. As true children of God, I believe our hearts should be tender toward those who do not know Jesus as Savior rather than the flippant attitude that says they'll get what they deserved. Our hope should be that they find grace before it's too late.

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mt 5:44-45). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.