

## Creation: Broken Part 3 - *Fractured Relationships* Genesis 3:14-19

**Introduction:** A young couple gets married after months of dating without having much of an argument, but within the first few months of marriage they grew frustrated with each other, did not communicate well, and began resenting each other. Another couple has been married for decades, but their marriage lacks intimacy, active pursuit, and though they spend time together, most of it revolves around the kids. One other couple has reached the end of their rope. They tend to fight all the time, have not enjoyed being together for years, and are ready to be done with the whole thing.

Marriage and relationships are hard, and we go into each of these with the cards stacked against us. EVERY marriage faces challenges. The only way you do not struggle in your marriage this morning is if you are NOT married. I remember a neighbor couple who was living together and trying to raise their son used to ask me, "We fight all the time (which we would hear through the walls). How is it that you and your wife don't do that?" The answer was simple: we face all the same issues that they did, we simply had a different source of dealing with our conflict. Every relationship faces fracture since we bring in a big problem in every one: our sinful selves.

If there is one thing we have seen in Genesis 3 it's the fact that every one of us feels the effects and consequences of sin. We are born depraved with a sin nature. We looked at how easily we are deceived, how quickly we rebel, and how passive we can be in leadership. Last week we looked at the fact that sin brings about issues of **guilt, shame, wrongful fear of God, and blame shifting** away from taking responsibility. These are built into our DNA and become our default setting. This morning we will look at how the consequence of sin affects our relationships, and how the gospel restores these.

### Fractured Relationships of the Serpent (14-15)

*"The Lord said to the **serpent**, 'Because you have done this, **cursed** are you above all livestock and above all the beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.**"*

### Reminder and Symbol

The first thing we notice about the consequences levied by God on each from the first human sin is we get them in the same order as the story - serpent - Satan - woman - Adam - the same order they spoke in 3:1-6. The animal that was used by Satan, the serpent, felt the brunt of consequences first. Now an animal is not self-aware, meaning it could not have made a conscious choice to aid and abet Satan in his plan, so the animal itself is not judged. However, the animal's curse is one that leaves it as a **symbol** or **reminder** of what Satan had done in the Garden. Perhaps the serpent would have had legs to stand before when talking to Eve, since Satan is called a dragon in Revelation 12:7. What is clear from the curse is the fact that snakes would now be those who slither, who cannot walk but who move on their belly. Later when the Law was given to Israel any animal that went around on its belly should not be eaten since it was deemed **detestable** (Lev. 11:42).

Does this mean snakes are not beautiful or to be admired? By no means. They are still part of God's creation and thus have inherent beauty. Some love to handle and study snakes, while others of us cannot find a caliber large enough or a cache of explosives big enough to dispose of them. Its interesting that though the symbol of the snake today can represent fertility, creative life force, or even healing. snakes have often been used by the occult as a symbol representing evil (and Slytherin...am I right?). Snakes are a reminder not of the danger of the animal (although I choose not to get close to the

poisonous ones), but rather a reminder of how they were used in a deceptive, demonic scheme or our arch enemy.

### Enmity and Judgment

Moving beyond the animal, God moves beyond to the one who embodied the serpent, Satan himself. Now this curse is telling of the Satanic plot. Satan is NOT omniscient, meaning he does not possess all knowledge. We know that Satan was a created being that rebelled, desiring to take God's place on the throne of heaven (Isa. 14:12-14). His pride caused him to revel in his created beauty and demand worship from others. In his rebellion, he convinced 1/3 of the other angels to follow him (Rev. 12:4), prompting God to cast them out of heaven and onto earth. Now locked out of heaven without hope of redemption (see Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12 - angels longed to see and understand the redemption brought in Jesus Christ), he now approached the woman and man with clear intention.

It's clear that Satan's goal was two-fold: **1)** Lead these new humans down a path of disobedience, turning their backs on God in rebellion, **2)** Get them to follow him. Satan hated Eve and Adam. He hated that there was someone else created by God who would worship Him. The level of pride that Satan possesses squeezes out love for anyone else, with all that remains are **murder, denial of truth, and lies** (John 8:44). Satan clearly accomplished his first goal, but fell woefully short of his second. The **first consequence** to Satan was **enmity, or conflict, between he and Eve**. In other words Eve was not going to be a follower of Satan, was not going to be like the other fallen angels, but was instead going to be set against Satan. This would have been a knock to Satan, his pride, and his plan. Notice that this hostility was **God given**, that He would not allow him to rule the way he hoped. This is the first glimpse we have of **sovereign grace**, as God could easily have given Adam and Eve over to their sin by killing them or writing them off, allowing them to move to the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). God will provide skins to cover them up and a place for them to live. God did not let Adam and Eve go but saved them from the consequences that they seemed destined for.

**The second consequence** to the serpent was conflict and hostility between the seed of the woman and his seed, meaning offspring. Now, Satan cannot procreate nor are there more angels being born. But Satan does have seed. In John 8:44, Jesus called the religious leaders of the day "**You are of your father the devil**" and in our unredeemed state we are "following the prince of the power of the air", making us "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:1-3). There will be constant friction between the sons of God and the sons of the devil, from Satan's attack on Job to his harassment of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12:7) to his blinding of the minds of the unbelievers we share the gospel with (2 Cor. 4:4). We are engaged in that battle today, though we cannot see it. Satan is scheming against us (Eph. 6:11) as he prowls around looking for people to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Because his weapons of warfare are based on lies and deception, we fight temptation with the truth, knowing that he will not win, he is not sovereign, and he is already defeated.

The **third consequence** moved to an individual, from plural offspring to ONE in particular. This seed would come from the woman and would deal a fatal blow to the head of the serpent. The idea was that Satan would inflict damage on the seed, but it would not be fatal, but in turn, the bruise would be for the serpent. When Jesus marched to the cross, the pride of Satan must have swelled. The Son of God writhed in agony on the cross, a disfigured mass of blood and pain, given over to human judges and captors. But in the midst of the seemingly greatest defeat, it was the singularly greatest victory this world has ever known. Satan was defeated (Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14) and he is awaiting the day that he will be bound for a 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3), to be released and then cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

### Divine Grace

In the midst of divine judgment we see divine grace. The seed that would come from the woman would be the Messiah, God born into humanity to redeem those under the curse. He is the answer to our denial of God, our concealment of sin, our running in fear, and our shifting of blame in victimhood. He not only saves us by bearing our shame and God's wrath, He actually reverses the nature that we are born with. We are born rebellious, selfish, prideful, and lovers of self. But He causes us to be born again to new life, a new nature with new desires and new hatred for sin, evil, and lies. We will come back to this again at the end, but we **MUST** keep this in mind as we walk through the next **2 consequences**.

### Fractured Relationships of the Woman (16)

*To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'*

#### Multiplicity of Pain

Pain is associated with sin. Sin brings pain at all levels. It fractures relationships, it causes sorrow, it divides, destroys our joy, and brings physical pain. It is fascinating that through the birth of an offspring or seed of the woman the Messiah would come to save, yet it is through childbirth that women have to endure pain. Even Mary, Jesus earthly mother, would have experienced the normal birth pains that every woman everywhere has faced. Pain was not the design but is part of divine judgment on humanity (but praise the Lord for epidurals!)

But there is also divine hope in childbearing. Not only was there a pointing to Jesus, but at the end of pain is the precious life of a child. Jesus compared the process to the pain we face now on the earth as we await His return:

*"When a woman is giving birth she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for **joy that human being has been born into the world.**" John 16:21*

#### Reversal of Roles

The second consequence is felt much more deeply. We remember that when Eve was created she was given a clear divine purpose. She was to help Adam with the task he was given by God, to fill the earth, have dominion over it, and image forth God throughout the world. He could not do it without her. She was loved, honored, protected, cared for, and cherished by her husband and she responded by helping and following him. In all of this, there was no selfish feelings, no sense of inadequacy, or resentment in rolls. However, the Fall changed that for Adam and Eve, every woman, and every marriage today. There are **two parts to this consequence: 1)** Her desire would be for her husband; **2)** He would rule over her.

***What does it mean that her desire will be for her husband? That doesn't sound like a bad thing.***- Some have taken this to mean some sort of sexual desire, meaning that sex within marriage is a corruptible thing and the desire for it is a result of sin. This is not true since we already saw that God created sex within marriage to be held in high regard and honor (also see Hebrews 13:4). To understand the meaning of this verse we have to understand a **key word**. That word is translated "for", which is a confusing one. Look over at **Genesis 4:7**, where God calls out Cain on his anger and the consequence that would follow if he acted on it: "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is **FOR you**, but you must rule over it." The idea that sins desire was *for* him is the idea of **against him**. A better translation for each verse would be the idea of "set against". For Eve, her desire would be **set against her husband**.

Sin not only brings pain but confusion. It offers joy but gives misery. It holds out happiness and produces hopelessness. Eve was created to help Adam. Now sin would cause her to want to **lead him**. This is not built into the DNA, our depraved wiring from birth to go against God's design. That means that it is built into mind and heart of women is to push against God's design, to not only be autonomous but also to be **in control**. No woman NATURALLY likes the idea of having someone else leading them, and in the absence of leadership, leadership will arise. The ground was fertile for Eve to take Adam's role since he was passive, and the consequence of that sin has continued to perpetuate today.

the second part of the **consequence was directed at the man, in how he would respond to her desire to take the lead**. It is clear that Adam was passive even in his innocent, perfect state. He did not protect his wife but instead allowed her to take the lead and plunge into sin. Men today STILL STRUGGLE with passivity when it comes to leadership. In the face of passivity, leadership arises. Now Adam did not know what to do when he lost control of leadership, and his response is the same as men today: **he would try to rule with an iron fist**. He would try to control by force, to use physicality or manipulation to gain back what he lost, even willing to abuse to gain it back.

Do you see how sin flips God's design on its head?!?!? Husbands who fail to lead out of love and service, a wife who will fill the void of leadership and try to take control, which leaves a husband to either go into stealth mode (super-passivity), or try to take back the reigns by force. **Have you experienced a level of this in your marriage?** *Wives, is it hard to follow an imperfect husband? Is it hard for you to NOT take leadership when there is a void left by a passive husband? Husbands, is it hard to love and lead a wife who is always vying for control? Do you lead in love and service or revert to passivity (I'll just stay away and work more overtime) or revert to controlling mechanisms?* This is a problem IN EVERY MARRIAGE!!!! **THIS IS WHY MARRIAGES BREAK UP, WHY THERE IS LOVELESS MARRIAGES WITHOUT COMMUNICATION, ADMISSION OF SIN, AND TRUE INTIMATE UNION**. Add on top of this **guilt, shame, fear and blame shifting** and we have a recipe for disaster. The problem is SIN! It is our denial of sin and dealing with the real problem that separates our joy in marriage from misery.

### Divine Hope

There is hope, however, for both men and women, for both husbands and wives. The answer is NOT to try to get your spouse to change. The answer is to embrace the ONE who brings change to your depraved nature. This is found in the book of Ephesians.

**1) Repent and Believe** - The whole of Ephesians is broken down into 2 parts: our position in Christ (chapters 1-3) and our practice of truth (4-6), characterized by the word "walk" (walk in a manner worthy of our calling, do not walk like those who do not know God, walk in love, as children of light, walk in wisdom). The promise of the first 3 chapters is that we can be secure in God by Christ since we are loved before the world began to be sons and daughters. God overcame our dead condition (2:1) by making us alive in Christ (2:5), and by grace He has given us faith to believe (2:8-9). The first step of any kind of healing in a fractured relationship is to realize that we are broken in our sin, to turn by grace from our sin to Christ, and follow Him. Whether you think you are a Christian or not, repentance is the first place to start: repent of our own personal sin receiving forgiveness through the perfect work of Jesus on the cross.

**2) Be filled with the Spirit** - "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery but be filled with the Spirit." (5:18) - This is not only God's will for us (5:17), but it is the source of power to fulfill the rolls that God has given us. The Spirit is who guides us in truth, convicts of sin and illuminates our mind (John 14:16, 26; 16:8, 13). When we are filled with the Spirit, we are controlled in the truth and can dispel the

lies and truly deal with the sin in our hearts. The idea of filling is that we can be more or less filled, so it our joyous pursuit each day to yield ourselves to the truth and follow the leading of the Spirit.

**3) Yield to the Lordship of Christ** - Out of the filling of the Spirit we are to submit to each other, and particularly wives to husbands. This is a **reversal of the curse!** This means that Christ gives wives the ability to follow, lovingly serve, and submit to their husbands. There is one huge reason they can do this: *they have first submitted to the LORD!* Submission is for every believer, that by faith and the Holy Spirit we understand that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). He rules everything, and we are now His slaves. A lack of submission in the home signals a lack of submission to Christ.

**4) Love God with all your heart** - "**Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her** (Eph. 5:25) - We must recognize that God's love for us unlocks our ability to love Him and others (1 John 4:10). We can only truly love our spouse if we first actively, relentlessly, and humbly love God first. We are called to love the same way that Christ loved us, which was sacrificing Himself to the point of death, and moving us toward sanctification.

**What is the hope for your fractured marriages and the sin that causes it? CHRIST!** This is not magical but frees us to submit to an imperfect, passive man and love an imperfect, unsubmitive woman. In doing this we trust God, submit to Him, and operate in the grace that God provides for us.

#### **Fractured Relationships of the Man (17-19)**

And to Adam he said, *'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you 'Your shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you; **in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the **sweat** of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'***

#### **Sweat and Pain**

Finally, we see the consequences given to Adam and by extension men in the world. In a matched way, men face pain on a daily basis. When the world was created, the trees easily gave up its fruit, yielding a bounty of beautiful, satisfying, and tasty fruit. **But the world itself was corrupted by sin.** Now there would be a fracture in the earth, where thorns and thistles would mean that the yield of food for everyday sustenance would come with much more labor for a fraction of the yield. Where work was a part of worship, work now would be laborious, causing the sweat of the brow, not simply enjoyable interaction. This would cause a reaction and response to men who now face the prospect of providing and care at the same time the earth works against them.

#### **Pressure and Death**

Death is not inevitable. Our bodies will return to the earth, back to the dust by which they were created. Between the prospect of death and the pain of provision, men have had to face daily **pressure. Pressure is now the natural outflow of sinful realities.** How men handle pressure will tell you much about him, including who he is living for and where his confidence lies. Because pressure is ever-present, men have historically turned to idols or god-replacements to deal with it: drinking, affairs, pornography, video games, leaving when it gets hard or simply shutting down when the pressure is on are hallmarks of dealing wrongly with the consequences of sin.

#### **Divine Provision**

In the midst of the pain and pressure, we remember that God was faithful to provide. God still brings sunshine on the righteous and unrighteous (Matt. 5:45), and still provides food out of the ground. Adam also was not killed right away, but was able to continue on as a husband, worker, father and worshipper. God provided a way for him to overcome the sin and consequences set against him, and he does the same today.

Here is the reality: we all feel the effects of sin from the moment we enter into this world. We will not be rid of these until Jesus returns and makes all things new. Until that day, we are given the opportunity to overcome our sin nature through salvation, the Truth of God's Word, the leading of the Spirit, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Men can be restored as leaders, true servants who love and sacrifice, caring and protecting, and women can be restored in their loving support, choosing to place themselves under the leadership of another, exercising strength in refusing to lead in the vacuum. This is our hope for the marriages at our church, for the relationships we have in this church, and what we model to the world. Today is a day you can be restored from the consequences of sin that you were born with by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, asking for forgiveness, and turning from you sin to following Him. In that we can truly live for the first time.