

Our Bodies and Brokenness

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- [0 : 0 0] Today's scripture is found in Genesis 3. You can follow along on the screen behind me or in your bulletins. Starting in verse 1, we read, Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.
- He said to the woman, Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.
- You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.
- When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
- Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
- [1 : 2 4] But the Lord God called to the man, Where are you? He answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid. And he said, Who told you that you were naked?
- Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? The man said, The woman you put here with me, She gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.
- Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate it. So the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals.
- You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.
- To the woman he said, I will make your pains and childbearing very severe. With painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.
- [2 : 3 7] To Adam he said, Because you listened to your wife, and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat from it. Cursed is the ground because of you.
- Through painful toil you will eat fruit from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you. You will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food until you return to the ground.
- Since from it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you will return. This is God's word. Great.
- Thank you, Soda, for praying. Jaya, for reading. Yeah, we're going to look at this passage together. But if we want God to speak to us, we should pray. So why don't we do that first?

Let's pray together. Our Father, thank you that you speak to us. Thank you that you tell us the truth. If you tell us about ourselves, about the world, please would we listen.

[3 : 40] Thank you that you also give us hope. Pray that, yeah, today we would listen to the bad news and the good news and come away encouraged by Jesus. In his name we pray.

Amen. Great. So we're doing a series, and it is about our physical bodies, as you may know. If you've been here the past few weeks, our bodies, yeah, we often don't think about them.

We, yeah, we just have bodies. We think they're not important. Actually, they are. So we're having this series on it. And certainly two weeks ago, Kevin talked about how our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made.

And he encouraged us, I think, to give thanks for our bodies, which I think we don't often do because we take our bodies for granted. We don't notice them. Actually, when do we notice our body is when they don't work, right?

When it hurts. When you come out of bed and your foot is hurting or when you stomp your toe or when you have a fever or when you have been working hard in the office and you're so tired, that is when you suddenly notice, okay, there's, my body is struggling.

[4 : 48] My body is hurting. It can, that's kind of short-term things. Maybe there's diseases that you, long-term conditions that you have. Some things we don't even think about anymore, right?

So, I wear contact lenses and I think I've worn them now for 33 years and for 33 years, every morning, I put them in and every evening, I take them out.

I don't think about it anymore but actually, my eyes don't work. I can see until here and no further, right? My body is broken. I don't know if you've ever been to the church office.

There's one desk that has this really wacky keyboard. I don't know if you've seen that, if you've ever been to the office. Well, it's my keyboard because ever since my student days, I've got repetitive strain injury and without this keyboard, I've got all this pain in my arms and my hands and I don't think about but actually, yeah, my body is broken and these are mild things, right?

Just contact lenses and a keyboard. Some of us, we have far more, far worse conditions that we struggle with. That is the reality of our bodies and they don't seem as wonderful as the Bible says, right, sometimes?

[6 : 02] Well, that's because we need to listen to the whole Bible. The thing is, the Bible is not an aesthetic book. There's a story and just as our bodies, yeah, we are created and there's still a lot of goodness about our bodies.

Actually, they are broken and that's the big topic today, how our bodies are broken, how we see that and what we should do with that because if we don't know that our bodies are broken, you probably wonder, well, why does the Bible is so positive about our body when it hurts so much?

So that's what we're going to look at and yeah, this chapter, of course, is the chapter that we always go back to. I think this is the 11th sermon at Watermark that has this chapter as the reading because, you know, we talk about work.

Well, you want to understand why your work is hard? Come to Genesis 3 and now you want to understand why your body hurts? Come to Genesis 3. This is so foundational, right? Because this is the world we live in and God made a beautiful, perfect world.

He put Adam and Eve in the garden and they had everything but then they listened to the serpent who told them that, you know, God doesn't love you, God isn't good to you, why don't you take this fruit and you don't need him and they listened and they took it and then their relationship with God was broken and then, yeah, and as a result everything was broken, their relationship with each other.

- [7 : 25] You hear them blaming each other for what happened. They are hiding from God and of course then, yeah, the curse. If you've been here earlier this year, we had kind of the cause and the effects, the sin and the curse.
- Well, we are cursed. We live in a cursed world. As you hear, cursed is the ground because of you in pain. You will eat of it all the days of your life or earlier with the woman.
- I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain, you shall bring forth children. Pain is a refrain, right, for Adam and Eve. This is life now.
- God gave you everything but you don't want God, well, you miss out on everything else and it's pain and ultimately death, right? To dust you are, sorry, for dust you are and to dust you shall return.
- The world is now broken. Work is hard. There's natural disasters. There's diseases. There are wild animals. The world is broken and that's why, yeah, our bodies are broken.
- [8 : 32] That's why we suffer. So that's what we're going to talk about. We're going to just think about some of the details and how we see that and how we deal with that. And just to say, we are whole people.
- I mean, we talk about our bodies but sometimes it's hard to know where does your body start and where does something else begin? Right? Like your mind. Is that your body? Well, in some ways, how I think is affected by my brain, right?
- And my brain is part of my body. So even though I might think, well, that's my body and my mind, actually, they're connected. You know, your desires. Is that your body or is that your mind or your spirit?
- And we are whole people and so, you know, they'll be a bit mixed up but to be honest, yeah, we are broken in all of those. So, how do we see our broken bodies?
- Well, first of all, I guess, just like in this chapter, it starts with sin, right? we use our bodies for sin. Our bodies are sinful.
- [9 : 36] Adam and Eve, of course, they use their bodies to sin. Last week, Oscar talked about, you know, it's about our hearts but what we do with our hearts get expressed with our bodies, right? If we love God, we will love him with our bodies and the thing is, if we sin, we sin with our bodies and so often, the Bible talks about sin as, yeah, with your body and so Romans 6, you know, if you're a Christian, just as you once presented your members, your body parts as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness.
- Your body parts, you used to use them for sin, for impurity, now use them for God, right? That's the idea but we sin with our bodies. Sometimes it's very obvious, sexual sin, physical violence and abuse, that's what you do with your body but, you know, those unkind words, they come out of your mouth and you covet with your eyes, right?
- And you, it's nasty text with your thumbs and, right? And you plot revenge with your brain and, right? It's our bodies that we use to sin but it's not just that our body is kind of neutral and you can use it for good and for bad.
- Actually, the way the Bible talks about our bodies, it's like there's this kind of corruption and when Adam and Eve sinned, our bodies became corrupt and it's like sin is kind of running through our bodies and we just can't do right even if we try.
- Romans 7 is a very classic and listen to the Apostle Paul as he talks. verse 1. Verse 1. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.
- [11 : 29] Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Hey, you can hear him. He wants to do good, he wants to please God but he, there's just this sin inside him that in his body, in his members and how can I get rid of this body?

It's like the corruption of sin, it runs through us. I don't know physically how that exactly works, right? But the truth is that certainly every human being is sinful, right?

If you have young kids, you don't have to teach them to disobey you, you don't have to teach them to throw a tantrum, they can do that naturally. Why? Well, that's who we are. You need to teach them to be kind. You need to teach them to obey, right?

That's what we're like. We're all corrupt. But, right? When will we get rid of sin? Well, only, well, that's what he says, who will deliver me from this body?

It's only when you die that we no longer sin. Hopefully, as you grow in Christ, you will sin less but we will struggle with sin until we get a new body. That's the truth.

[12 : 30] And so, we need to know that. Some of you may be very aware you struggle with sin and you feel you can't get rid of it. Yeah, there's this corruption in our bodies. They are broken.

And in other people. Yeah, the sweetest little baby is a corrupt sinner. You know? We sometimes don't get that maybe with adults, right? So, someone looks very good on the outside and we think they're also very good on the inside.

No. Just because someone is very beautiful or very handsome doesn't mean they are also perfect. They are sinners. What? We need to know that about ourselves and about everyone else.

So, sin is one big way that, yeah, we're all broken. A second thing here that comes is shame, right? There's shame.

So, you know, end of chapter 2, Adam and Eve, they were, the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed. Everything was great. What happens after they sin? Well, 3 verse 7.

[13 : 31] Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed thick leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And then later God shows up and they hide, right?

They feel ashamed. They feel ashamed of their bodies, right? They try to cover up. They know they're not who they should be. They're kind of ashamed of who they are and so they hide. And that's a reality, right?

None of us, we all feel like we are not the people we should be. We want to hide. That's why we put on clothes and other stuff or we stay away from people. We don't open up.

We are ashamed of who we are and often ashamed of our bodies. And that's a reality. Now, sometimes that is, of course, right. I mean, if you compare yourself to a holy God, yeah, we should be ashamed.

We know the way we live, the way we've rejected him. We should be ashamed and yeah, if it wasn't for Jesus, we'd have a huge problem with God. But, of course, other types of shame are not right, right?

[14 : 36] Sometimes you feel ashamed because you don't look like the supermodel in the advertisement. That, of course, is a wrong kind of shame, right? That's just unrealistic beauty.

That's just not, you know, then you don't need to be ashamed of who you are. Don't listen to those things. We will come back to that in a moment as well. But, yeah, sometimes shame is right.

Sometimes we feel ashamed because of how we look or whatever for the wrong reasons. Yeah, we, you know, maybe your body's changing or whatever. But, yeah, shame.

It's a reality. But then, the big one, I guess, how we feel it the most, suffering, right? This is a world of brokenness and our bodies are broken.

This broken world affects us and hurts us and we see that in so many ways. Just to say, when we talk about suffering, you know, the world is broken. It's not that, you know, my suffering is due to my sin.

[15 : 35] Sometimes it is, right? If I live an unhealthy life, then, yeah, I will suffer the consequences. But, at the same time, the whole world is broken and there's a kind of randomness.

You know, sometimes there's a really evil person and they are happy and healthy. And then, here's a little child suffering unimaginably who's never done anything wrong, right? That is the world we live in.

It's all a bit random. So, don't feel, you know, I'm suffering. That's because of something I've done wrong. It doesn't work like that. But, we all suffer from this broken world.

What can we talk about? You know, lots of words with a D, usually. I mean, can think of destitution, deprivation.

Here's some big ones. Disease, right? Diseases are now in the world since Adam and Eve and we, you know, sometimes small ones, sometimes big ones. But, we get, we're confined to bed.

[16 : 31] We need to go to hospital. We need treatment. Our bodies don't work, do what they do. If you're a doctor, you probably know there's so many diseases. Damage, right?

So often, we get damaged, you know, because you get hurt by things, by accidents, you're cutting food and you cut yourself, you stomp your toe.

Bigger damage, right? Accidents that can really disable you for the rest of your life or something like that. Mental damage as well. I don't know, does that fall under our body?

So many of us, we have scars from, you know, people, what people have said to us. Things that have happened to us that have just led to trauma and experiences and then we have this damage kind of in our mind that, yeah, affects the way we live, that we, stops us functioning as we want to.

That kind of brokenness, damage. Here's a big one, defects. That's what we struggle with, right? Because so often, diseases can be treated and damage, you know, yeah, you go to the hospital, you get a cast and, but defects.

[17 : 39] Some people are just born with something wrong with them. Now, legs that are not the same length. Someone who is blind. People who are infertile.

Infertile, right? That can happen. Less fingers than you should. DNA, that means you are very prone to depression or Alzheimer's and you're just born with it and it's there for the rest of your life.

Sometimes it can be treated, often it can't. Life-threatening allergies, right? We are broken, we are defective and because it's for the rest of your life that can be so hard to deal with, right?

The brokenness or if you have it in loved ones, if you have a child that you really need to care for because of, yeah, there's a defect and, yeah, it's not a nice word but that's the truth, right?

Right? And just to say, of course, I'm talking about real defects, right? Really, your body isn't working. Again, sometimes people, they compare themselves with social media and think, oh, my body is defective, right?

[18 : 45] It's, parts of my body are the wrong shape and the wrong size and the wrong color. That's not a defect. You know, God has made billions of human beings and we're all different and that's just part of the wonderful variety, right?

So often, there's nothing wrong with your body. I'm talking about real defects, right? That your body really doesn't work, that it's really not as a human should be but those are not defects.

Think of anorexia. You know, a girl who is very thin but she thinks she's fat and she hurts her body more to just lose weight. It's her brain that's wrong.

It's nothing wrong with her body. Well, nothing wrong with the rest of her body if that makes sense but, yeah, defects, right? And then, of course, what else? Decay.

This is when you're a bit older like me. You start growing old. You lose your hair. Your hair turns gray. You lose your muscle. You start forgetting things. You lose your mind. We all get old.

[19 : 49] Yeah, some of you are really feeling that. You can't do what you used to do. You try to play sports and you get hurt and injured and then it takes ages to heal because you're just getting old. Why?

Because, well, it leads to the last D of death and one day we will all die. Our body will fully, finally stop working and God is the God of life and when we reject him, we have death and the death rate has never changed.

It's still 100%. No matter what we have tried to do, no matter how much technology we have, we will all die. Our loved ones die, right?

That's something we really feel and some of us are very aware that the death is hanging over us. That is the ultimate brokenness when our bodies will ultimately fail.

So yeah, that is our, the brokenness of this world, the brokenness of our bodies and I don't know how you feel. My guess is you will feel depressed, right?

[20 : 48] Because this is depressing. This is the world we live in and it's, yeah, and if you, if this is all there is, if you just, you're going to decay and die, isn't that a horrible prospect?

Now, how do we deal with this? Well, in some way, we shouldn't complain. We're sinners. This is a broken world and it's better than we deserve.

But here's a few things. First of all, we can have faith. We can trust God in the suffering and brokenness of this world and of our bodies. We can have faith. We can trust.

What would that, well, what do I mean? Well, even this, in our brokenness, you know, if you're a Christian, God is your father, right? He is in control of everything.

He shapes you. He forms you. He knows what's going on and he, he has a purpose in what's happening. So, the brokenness that you experience, God promises he's using that.

[21 : 52] And so, like we see in James, you know, trials lead to steadfastness. We can trust him in that. A big example, of course, is the Apostle Paul, right? He had a problem.

2 Corinthians 12. And so, to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Three times, I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said, he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

I don't know what it was, but some kind of, something physical, right? A thorn in the flesh. Something that he struggled with. The great Apostle Paul is not, he didn't have perfect health, no, he had something and it really annoyed him.

But, you know, God gave that to him for a reason. I mean, it was a messenger of Satan, right? In some ways, God didn't cause it. It's caused by other causes, but God was in control.

[22 : 59] And God gave it for a good reason, hey, to stop you becoming proud, to keep you humble. And Paul learned to accept that, that hey, yeah, I suffer with this, but I can trust God with it.

And so, I don't know what you are facing. We can trust God with it, that hey, God is using this. And even though it's hard, I know God is with me in this and he's got a purpose.

It's not always easy, it can take time. Sometimes it's not even easy to know what to do. I mean, clearly Paul prayed that he would take it, that God would take it away.

That's a good thing to do. It's not just that he just accepted it. I mean, and if you're sick, it's good to go to the doctor, right? And if your leg is broken, please go to hospital. That's not a bad thing. But sometimes it's really hard to know what to do.

Infertility. What do you do? Do you just accept that you don't, that you know, that you can't have children? Do you adopt? Do you seek fertility treatment? They're all legitimate options open for Christians?

[24 : 04] You know, trusting God. What does it look like in those cases? It's actually very difficult. I mean, you know, as you get older, you need to work on your health, but how much, right?

You don't want to become a gym rat, you know, but at the same time, it's good to be healthy and work on your heart and your, right? Those kind of things. Actually, there's a lot of wisdom that you actually need how to deal with this.

But the basic idea, hey, I know I'm broken, but God is in control of my brokenness and I can trust him in this. That's the big message. We can have faith.

And of course, we should have love, right? We should care care for each other. If we know that we're all broken in so many ways, so many ways that we, sometimes we can't see in people, but we know we are scarred and damaged and there's things going on.

Well, it should give us compassion, first of all, right? We should be gentle and patient and gracious with people because we're all broken. And sometimes as a pastor, there's, you know, people, and you know, this is what God says, go and do it.

[25 : 12] That's my instinct. Just go and do it. But actually, you know, people have experienced things. People have struggles. People have mental health. People have things going on in their life that means they're broken.

They're struggling. I should be gentle and patient with people. We can be gentle and patient with each other. Maybe in your CG, you know, people aren't doing what you want them to do or something.

Hey, let's understand each other. Let's have compassion and be gracious and gentle. Practical help as well, right? It's not just our attitude. If people are broken, we should help each other.

And it's great to hear of someone in hospital when their CG kind of jumps into action and takes care of them. That's wonderful to see. Sometimes, as a church, we're really good at that. I mean, it's a lot easier when it's short term, though.

How about long term? Maybe if you're, you know, I saw that prayed. If you're caring for elderly relatives and it's just every day, every week, caring, every, all this practical help that can be so tough and hard.

[26 : 20] And you love this person, you want to help them, but it's draining and, yeah. But love is a beautiful thing in that case. But it could be all kinds of things, right? Not just that kind of practical help.

Maybe someone with same-sex attraction and it means they will never marry someone they're attracted to. They're going to be lonely. And so, inviting them and hanging out with them for the rest of their life, that can be a long thing.

But it's a good thing to do. It's how we can love each other, practically. But finally, beyond faith and love, I mean, if this is all, if it's just, yeah, we love each other, but we still die, it's nothing.

No, there is hope. Yeah? As Christians, we have hope. Of course, if, you know, if this world is all there is and we're just going to decay and die, that's hopeless.

But as Christians, no, there is hope. Right? We know there is more. I mean, back in this chapter, all the way at the beginning of the Bible, there is, there is hope.

[27 : 24] Things went wrong with the serpent. But one day, yeah, God says in verse 15, to the serpent, I'll put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head.

Right? It's like, humanity was mastered by the serpent, but now, someone is going to step on the serpent. Right? He masters the serpent. He deals with the problem.

The problem of sin will be dealt with. Later in the chapter, God provides clothing. He deals with their shame. It's like, the things that are wrong, the brokenness, God will deal with it.

And as we read on in the whole Bible, yeah, God will deal with all our sin and suffering. He'll make this new world that we've been singing about. The new creation. It's going to be wonderful.

And so, we should have hope. As, yeah, Romans 8.23 is such a great verse. This is the Christian attitude.

[28 : 24] Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

In a chapter about the brokenness of the world, we groan. Right? We want to get out of it and we wait eagerly for the time that our bodies are set free.

That is, Christians, what we do. So, we need to look forward. My wife still remembers that when I was, when my kids were young, I would always, whenever they grazed their knee or they had pain, I always would say, yeah, yeah, this is a world of pain, but Jesus is making a world without pain later.

Just giving them a biblical framework. But it's true, right? If you know that, it changes everything. If this is all we have, it's so depressing. But if there is hope, you know, if one day there will be no more suffering, no hurt, nor pain, as we just sang, then it's okay.

We can go through it. We just need to know that there's an end, right? I don't know if you remember COVID. The worst thing about COVID was just, it was never ending. You never knew when it would be over.

[29 : 32] But if you know something will be over, you can endure it. Yeah? Yes, we will all die, but there is a resurrection waiting. As someone said, death is not a full stop in your life.

It's a comma for something that comes later. In two weeks, I'm going to preach on it. The resurrection, I'm already looking forward to it. Right? We need hope. And so, yeah, don't look back.

You know, don't look, oh, when I was young, I could do all these things. Don't look around. Look forward. Look forward to the resurrection that's coming. There is hope. There is an end.

And so, we can trust God in the meantime with our brokenness. And how can we know that? Will God really have us back?

Yes, he will. How do we know that? Well, in a moment, we're going to have the Lord's Supper. Look at the broken body of Jesus. You want to deal with your broken body?

[30 : 33] Look at the broken body of Jesus. Because how would we get out of it when we deserve punishment? Well, God himself would take that punishment on himself.

He would take the brokenness of our bodies. He would have a broken body in our place so we can be redeemed. Of course, God didn't have a body, right?

He's a spirit, which is why Jesus, he took on a body. And we see that Hebrews 2 puts it so wonderfully that since therefore the children us share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil.

And Jesus took on flesh and blood so that through his death he could destroy the devil. As it says in Genesis 3, the one who would bruise the serpent, his heel would be bruised.

He would suffer in the process. But a suffering is for us. And that is what Jesus did. He got a body, he lived our life and then well, he hung on the cross.

[31 : 44] First of all, so much shame, right? Hanging up naked for everyone to see. So much shame. Well, to deal with our shame. And then all the pain and all the damage and the death that we deserve he took on himself so that we can be set free.

Of course, it means you can go to Jesus now. He knows about suffering. He knows about pain. He understands that because he went through it. You can always come to him. But his suffering was so much more, right?

It was in our place. It saved us. So look at Jesus' broken body. See his love for you and know that there will be an end to our suffering, our brokenness.

So later, when you take the Lord's Supper, yeah, take it in like that, right? Jesus, thank you for, yeah, I have a broken body. I need your broken body. I need you to die for me.

Thank you that you did that. Thank you that I can be free. Please raise me from the dead. Let's take it in that way. Okay.