God's Curses on Sinful Criminals

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[0:00] loving you the way she does just reminded me we didn't change the clock. So I don't have an extra hour to preach, which I would have fully taken advantage of, as she well knows.

It's all good, isn't it? Let me invite you to turn to Genesis chapter 3. Genesis chapter 3. We are close to coming to an end of this pivotal chapter in Scripture.
Where we are given the reasons for all of the suffering and human dilemma that we face in our lifetimes. And I think what I'd like to do is pick it up in verse 8 after the couple, Adam and Eve, have partaken of the prohibition on the fruit, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Verse 8. Then Adam and Eve, they, heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the midst of the trees of the garden.
Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked.
[1:27] So I hid. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?

And the man said, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate. Then Yahweh God said to the woman, what is this you have done?
And the woman said, the serpent. The serpent deceived me and I ate. And so Yahweh God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you more than any of the cattle, more than every beast of the field.
On your belly you will go and dust you will eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.
He shall bruise you on the head. You shall bruise him on the heel. To the woman, he said, I will greatly multiply your pain and conception.
[2:39] In pain you will bear children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. Then to Adam, he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying you shall not eat from it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles, it shall grow for you.
You will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread till you return to the ground. Because from it you were taken. For you are dust.
And to dust you shall return. Well, this is a terrible, terrible time in the life of humanity.
We didn't get out of the gate very well before this was going on. And it's had a profound effect on all of us since it happened. The title of my message for this morning, God Curses, God's Curses on Sinful Criminals.
[3:56] Now, I see visitors out here, first timers out here, so I can't apologize for the truth, but I will allow you to know, or let you know, that prior to this, I've been dealing with this terrible, terrible reality of Adam and Eve falling into sin and what it meant for the human race, what it means for us today.

And I find myself coming to the place where God's cursing the couple. We have to deal with that. And then next week, my intention, God willing, and I have breath for life, is to come back and talk about God's remedy for mankind's ruin.
Because it's in here. It's in chapter three. But I won't get to that today. So hang on. We'll give you the curses. It's all the bad news.
And then we'll circle back around next week and we'll talk about what did God do or what did He promise to do about this terrible reality that humanity faces.

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So let's start off with this in the way of a quote that I wanted to share with you. The widest thing in the universe is not space, as wide as it is.
[5:03] It is the potential capacity of the human heart. Being made in the image of God, it is capable of almost unlimited extension in all directions.

And one of the world's worst tragedies is that we allow our hearts to shrink until there is room in them for little beside ourselves. That is Adam and Eve's problem.
They allowed their hearts to shrink to a place where there was little in their hearts for anything other than themselves. They were tempted into sin and they went into sin and committed sin both in their heart and then with their hands or behaviorally.
So that Adam and Eve's temptation and sin involve every aspect of their humanity. No part of them as a human being escaped the corruption and poison of sin.
No part. That is very important. Just as Eve was deceived and tempted to sin by forces of evil preying on her heart, you and I are deceived and tempted to sin by forces of evil preying on our hearts in very similar ways.
[6:22] We have seen this in the several sermons prior to this as I have taken you into the New Testament and shown you how Jesus, James, Paul have all addressed this issue of the similarity of our sinful temptation as that of Adam and Eve.

We fall into the same categories because we are human beings following in our original parents' footsteps spiritually as it were. So the New Testament summarizes this spiritual assault on our souls under the headings of the flesh, the world, and the devil.
Those are three main headings that the New Testament uses to summarize this problem of how sin assaults our souls. Now I want to give you an extended quote on this that as I was researching this past week, I had read this a few years ago when I was studying for my biblical counseling degree. It's from a guy I deeply respect. I read just about everything I can get my hands on by this man. And I wanted to share this with you because he does a good job of summarizing the flesh, the world, and the devil.
Now as we read this together, please keep in mind that the point of me doing this is to help you understand how this assault on our souls takes place today being rooted in the garden.
[7:52] We have the same foe presenting the same temptations in the same ways. We are falling in the same ways. So here's what we'll do.

The flesh, starting off with the flesh, describes the personal dimension of sinfulness, your dimension of sinfulness in your life. This personalized iniquity not only works and takes action, it does, it also lusts inwardly.
Sin's operations include an inner psychological dimension that is relentlessly what? Self-centering, self-exalting, self-willed, and self-deceived.
We believe lies. We pursue lusts. We flee fears. We are tempted by our own desires which birth sins which result in death.
James 1, 14 and 15. We saw that last time. Do you see Eve here in the flesh? Look, believed a lie, pursued her own lust, and then ended up fleeing in fear and hiding herself in the garden.
[9:11] Adam, same way. It's the same kind of thing coming over into our lives. This is what we do.
Then we have the world. The world describes the situational dimension where we find ourselves living in this world.

Our social and cultural surroundings marry the heart's proclivities to a buzz of deceitful voices, values, vanities, promises and threats, pains and pleasures.
We are lied to in 10,000 ways by messages that elicit and pander to our lusts and fears, our inner cravings.
The world variously bullies and seduces us which births sin which reaps death. Here we are again in the same place as we succumb to the world's deceptions and temptations as we do when we do in the flesh.
And then finally the last category, the devil. The devil adds a false father, a false lord dimension.
[10:18] He's a God substitute. An active enemy craves, schemes, lies, tempts, deceives, enslaves, accuses and murders.

A father of lies and serial killer deforms his children into his image of pride and craving. The enemy mines you, finds you, whines and dines you, blinds you, binds you and finally grinds you.

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That's just good. He has captured it. We don't like to hear it but it's all too true. Here's how he finally sums it all up.
This animating trio of flesh, world and devil expresses the God word or vertical dimension of our sin. Closing our ears to the true God, we heed the false gods.
These God substitutes conspire to hijack the heart for darkness. So, sin is more than behavior.
[11:27] And that's David Powelson. This is the same pattern scripture has shown us in Eve's fall into sin.

What he's done here with the flesh and the world and the devil, same kind of thing happening in Adam and Eve's life. She, Eve, exchanged God's word, God's truth for Satan's word and his lies. She made an exchange in her heart before she ever sinned with her hands. Her heart believed the lies and led her then by her will into this.
The God substitutes of desiring to be her own God and follow what was wise in her own eyes. That's what birthed in her thoughts.
That's what came in her reasonings so that the reasonings of her heart led her to do what she did. That is a very, very important reality that we bring over into our fight against sin.
[12:30] Long before you ever sin with your mouth or in your deeds, your actions, you are sinning in your heart. And so, we need to lay the axe to the root.

Where does sin begin? Jesus tells us in Mark 7, sin begins in the heart. That is in the core of who you are. At the core of your humanity is where sin is birthed.
And then, it gives way to behavioral iniquity in your speech and your actions and that iniquity produces death. It produces death for you and it produces death for the people around you.
This is why our relationships suffer. We are death producing people in our relationships with each other. Our words can kill. They can maim.
They can tear apart. Can they not? If you've ever, sometimes you've probably thought I would rather you have punched me in the face than said what you said.
[13:36] Words rip us apart. But then, we murder each other. We rape each other. We take advantage of each other. We steal from each other. All of that is birthed in our heart at the core of who we are.

And that's where Paul, Peter, James, all of them are. Jesus, they're going to constantly take us to the issue of our hearts. What Eve was then reasoning in her heart was sinful because she illicitly desired what was contrary to God's word.
She was desiring what was forbidden by the Lord. sin. So please hear this carefully, friends. The principle of sin that was already fulfilled in her heart was birthed into sins, plural.
So the issue takes us constantly back to, we look at sins and we're taken back to the principle of sin working in us.
Romans chapter 7, Paul's saying, why do I do the things I don't want to do? Why don't I do the things that my heart desires to do? Wretched man that I am. He knew this battle of indwelling sin and that's what we're dealing with.
[14:58] That's what we're addressing here. One of the reasons that I'm saying this to you is that I don't want us to get into our minds what liberal theologians want to do with this. They turn all of this into myth and into allegory and so they tell us that none of this matters in the whole because Adam and Eve didn't really exist.

None of this really took place. It's all a myth. What we need to do and what's most important is to take away the spiritual lesson that's being taught here. And they come up with all kinds of wacky stuff about what the lesson is or the lessons are.
There's one primary lesson in all of this. And here it is, friends. Sin kills. sin is a destroyer of souls. Sin is the most powerful force on this planet in terms of human beings. What is the greater force that goes beyond human beings that overcomes sin?
How would you characterize that? It is the power of the grace of God. God's grace is greater than our sin. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So the greatest force on the planet is not sin.
[16:16] We feel that because we have no answer for sin in ourselves. But the greatest force on the planet is the love of God that sent his son to the cross to bear our sins for us.

That's a greater force. But you got to wait for me to get to that next week, okay? Please come back next week and let me encourage your hearts in the wonder of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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I'll mention it today. I always want to leave you with hope, but I can't camp out on it. So Eve sinned in her heart before she ever sinned with her hands.
Now the progression in Eve's life, Adam and Eve's life, went from wanting to willing. Now hear me carefully here. Wanting to willing.
Eve's illicit desires that she had, willed her then in the area of choosing to sin. So your will is about you getting what you want, getting what you desire.
[17:21] You have a desire in your heart and that desire needs to be birthed. You want something and so what do you do? You activate your will so that your will then propels you forward to fulfill that desire.

But you have to make certain choices to see that desire fulfilled. Or if you choose to just sit there, nothing. So you have to be most, that's your will.
Your will is the choice center of your heart. So you will yourself in a certain direction. That's what she's doing. She's willing herself in her choice to sin.
Why is that important? Here's why it's important. Satan did not force Adam and Eve's hearts to desire sin. He did not force them.
Nor did he force Adam and Eve to choose to sin. Eve was deceived. Adam was high-handed, but both chose to sin from the illicit desires of their hearts.
[18:29] Now it's the same for us, for you and I, when we commit sins. You and I may be deceived, or we may just be high-handedly doing what we know God forbids and doing it anyway.

But either way, God holds you and I culpable for choosing to sin. Does he not? Now here's why this is important. If God holds us culpable for our sins, but we're really not culpable.
Oh, come on, man. He tricked me. Cut me some slack. I fell for it, you know? A little bit of slack here? No, not when sin is concerned. We could say that about Jesus.
Oh, Jesus, don't go to the cross. God cut Jesus some slack. And we just get in all kinds of theological trouble thinking like that. Sin is a poison. It's a destroyer.
It's a cancer. And there's only one way to deal with it. we have to have killed for us what has killed us.
[19:34] Did you hear me? God has to kill what killed us. And what keeps us dead. Dead in your trespasses and sins.

Progressive, ongoing. That's the grammar that's used there. it's an ongoing thing. This is what this couple is facing in their lives.
One of the reasons this matters is because of what it tells us about God. What does God do with sin? What does he do with it?
Well, there's one of two things God deals with sin in. He either kills it or he punishes it. that's what he does.
Those whose lives have had God kill the sin are brought into fellowship with God and eternity with God. Yes? Those who live under the punishment wrath of God in sin get a devil's hell for all eternity and a wasted life here.
[20:48] Depart from me, I never knew you. Those are the options that the New Testament particularly tells us God deals with sin in. What I'm saying to you folks is that you and I being culpable has everything to do with the justice of God.

Think of it this way. If we're not culpable then these curses that we bear are unjust which makes God unjust and now he's not God anymore.
So the question comes are we culpable or not? Are we under the condemnation and wrath of God as sinners and that is a just punishment for our guilt or is it an illusion a myth something we don't really need to worry about something we can busy our lives doing happy things about and not have to think about that and all the while our conscience bearing witness against us while we callous it over.
And what does the New Testament tell us? That's a very dangerous place to be. That's a very dangerous way to live. You don't want to train your conscience to be comfortable with sin do you?
And so we have reminders like this. You say Jeff why is this in the Bible? It's to help you and I understand where it all went wrong and what God did to put it right.
[22:12] It's in the Bible so that it becomes an everlasting reminder to you and I we have to look outside of ourselves for the cure of what's killed us. What's maimed us.

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What puts us in animosity toward each other. Even in the best Christian marriage as you're going to see even in the best Christian marriage this is a fight.
This is a fight. There's a reason for that and God put it in the scripture. All right. Here's my outline to this point for you as you're thinking along with me.
The first sermon covered verses 1 through 5 and it dealt with sin's constitution or its nature. Then in the second sermon as we went on I just did one verse.
Verse 6 sins consummation. Then sins consequences. The ruinous impact on humanity that sin foists on us.
[23:11] It's a terrible reality. And now today sermon 4 from this chapter sends curses looking at verses 13 or so down through verse 20 and this deals with God's judgment on criminality.

Another quote that I want to share with you again just trying to help you stay in the flow of getting your mind around what's going on in this passage. Sin is a disposition of human beings that leads to notice now a failure to conform to what to the moral law of God.
Notice that sin is a disposition human beings have a nature that is oriented away from God. Sin does not describe just describe the bad things human beings do or fail to do.
More fundamentally it describes who we are as wicked people. So now we're back to David Pallison telling us sin is more than behavior.
That's what we need to see here. What is God judging here? Primarily what God is judging is the nature of hearts. The movement of the nature of a creature.
[24:28] In one case it's Satan. In the other cases it's Adam and Eve representing humanity.
That's what we're dealing with. Alright let's ask this too.

What are these curses then that we are seeing here in scripture? What are these curses? Curse as you'll see is the Hebrew word arar.
Arar. You got to roll those R's they are so good at that. Arar. God it means to invoke a decree of divine doom upon and that doesn't sound good at all.
They are divine penalties imposed on criminals. So God sees unbelievers as wicked people as law breakers.
And this helps us understand what these curses are because we're looking at them from God's perspective. Why is God doing this? What's the purpose of him doing this?
[25:31] Cursing people. That sounds awful. Why would God do that? That doesn't sound like a loving God. And this is one of the reasons that so many liberal professors and theologians put out the kind of stuff that they do that say we could never never subscribe to this because this is not a loving God.

And what they do is they miss verse 15 in all of it unfortunately. So writing about God's response to Adam's transgression one professor that you can read and that is handling this well his name is Paul Thorsell he observed this the events of Genesis 3 portray a divinely imposed sanction on the disobedient couple.
The three pronouncements against the snake the woman and the man are presented then as penalties levied against guilty parties. The question comes are they really guilty?
Yes. In God's sight they are. God is the judge then he is presiding in the courtroom of the paradise that he's made for these two people. He created all of this for human beings.
He is now pronouncing sentence on the offenders of his justice system. Let the punishment fit the crime. let the punishment fit the crime.
[26:56] Now you'll remember for those of you who were here for the last couple of messages particularly the doctrine of original sin teaches that we incur Adam's guilt.

In other words we share in Adam's guilt. Later we'll talk about imputation or the idea that God has credited to us Adam's sin.
People will scream that's unfair. Come next week. come next week please. And we'll talk about that.
Under point number three sermon number three I identified the following major headings as sin's consequences.
And these were the major headings of the sermon that I preached I think it was last week.
Corruption and depravity. Separation. Condemnation. Guilt and shame. And then finally death.
But folks those are not all the consequences and I told you that then. That doesn't cover all the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin. God's curses on the couple are also consequences of sinful disobedience.

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[28:02] So these curses apply to our lives. We suffer under these consequences as well. And the reason for that goes back to what I preached in the last two sermons.

So go listen to those sermons and you'll get the rationale the theological biblical rationale for why we suffer under what Adam and Eve did back in the garden. Now in our text having already established the fact of their guilt in the previous verses God is now turning to pronounce judgment on the guilty.
He begins with the serpent if you'll notice please brothers and sisters in verse 14. then Yahweh God said to the serpent.
So he's actually speaking to what you and I understand to be a snake to the animal itself because you have done this.
Cursed are you more than any of the cattle and more than every beast of the field on your belly you will go and dust you will eat all the days of your life.
[29:14] So the serpent's penalty is what we're dealing with at this point. Again the snake. God curses the actual animal. The snake. Since it was used to try and exalt itself above man and God it left its place in the animal world and tried to exalt itself even over mankind in the animal world.

And you say well yeah but it was possessed. I understand that. But God is pronouncing judgment and I'm not going to question whether or not he should have cursed the animal itself. He did.
Now what God says is it will lick the dust. It will lick the dust. What does that mean? He's telling this animal now look whatever it was we understand serpent.
I when we did this back I gave you the Hebrew terminology to show you that this was a slithering thing whether it had legs at one time whether it didn't none of that matters.
What matters is he is prescribing something here in the way of a penalty that tells the snake itself you are in humiliating defeat.
[30:26] You will slither on your belly on the ground and that will be a perpetual reminder to you that while you tried to lift yourself over now you'll lick the dust. That's a way of saying that we'll put our foot on your neck kind of thing.

You'll stay in the dust itself. That's that's your domain now. Whatever the domain of that animal was before that's what it is now. So literally.
Now you know what I'm trying to do here is I'm trying to justify my fear of snakes. I hate them. I can't stand snakes. There's no good snake on the planet for me. Again for all of you who like snakes please don't be offended by that just don't be around me when I'm around them because it's not pretty.
They lick the dust in humiliating defeat. Humiliating defeat. Now it's interesting to me at this point that God is making a point of actually talking about and penalizing and judging the animal itself in its environment.
It's interesting to me that in pagan religions in occult practices notice this the symbol of snakes represents power and snakes themselves are used for worship.
[31:46] They're used for spells and even for poisons and potions in religious circles in occult practices in pagan worship ceremonies snakes are lifted up and isn't it interesting what did God use to punish the Hebrew people with snakes venomous snakes in that interesting.

This has been the reality since God did this back in the garden. I want you to notice too in this text before we leave it this verse the cursing of the serpent in the text says this in verse 14 Yahweh God said to the serpent because you've done this cursed are you notice in the text more than any of the cattle and more than every beast of the field.
What does that tell us? It tells us that God cursed the animal kingdom. He just cursed the snake more. He levied a higher penalty on the snake or on the serpent than he did the other animals of the animal kingdom but all of the animal kingdom was cursed.
We also know later that all of creation was cursed and it's all Paul says groaning wanting to be released from what creation itself feels as the weight of sin bears down on creation and the curse from God.
Isn't it wonderful to know that one day as a Christian you will be in a position where you no longer have the potential to sin. Sin isn't even an option anymore.
[33:26] Won't that be wonderful? We have no idea what that's like right now but it's coming. That's coming because of what Christ has done for us. Have to put that in there. Alright?

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Now I don't want to spend a lot of time on the serpent. I think that's enough to help us understand the idea here is that God is rebuking and judging the animal itself and now snakes for whatever they were before are going to slither on their belly and lick the dust and every time we see that that is a reminder to us of God's judgment.
Judgment on sin. Now this critter who wanted to be sly and deceptive will be kept down on the ground. And you still have to kind of watch out for them because they blend in and they're very sneaky.
They scare you to death. Right? What about this next one? Satan's penalty. So now God is going to speak directly to Satan who possessed the serpent.
Now we understand. We understand that by way of inference when God was cursing the snake he was speaking also to Satan. So he was letting Satan know there's going to be a humiliating defeat that you'll constantly suffer.
[34:36] All right? But Satan doesn't crawl around on his belly. You see the difference? So we have to be careful in the way that we interpret these things. Now he's going to get specific about who he's going to judge.

And it's in verse 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.
He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Now in terms of Satan's penalty this is the most significant verse in the entire chapter.
But I'm going to save it for next week's message when we talk about the hope we have beyond sin's power and beyond the curses because there it is. This is the first mention of the gospel in the scriptures.
And we want to come back to this and highlight this next. I can't do it justice today. I want to come back and do it justice if I can. God willing next week you'll be in prayer for your pastor as I deal with that.
[35:40] So hang on to that truth. This is the good news embedded in the middle of all of this as God pronounces judgment on Satan and introduces what he's going to do to handle the remedy for mankind.

But now let's move on to Eve's penalty because I got to say some things about this. Eve's penalty in verse 16. To the woman God said I will greatly multiply your pain and conception.
In pain you will bear children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. Now somehow that just doesn't sound good.
If you think your desire will be for your husband is a good thing think again that's not a good thing. And I'll explain this to you. What is going on with Eve's penalty?
Well God sentences Eve and it affects all the women who will come after her as her descendants. So all of you ladies I see one sitting here now with a brand new baby.
[36:43] And ladies can I get an amen? Are you thankful for epidurals? Yes. Alright. I know I would be. I've said it many times if men had to have babies the world would be nothing like it is today because there wouldn't be anybody here.

We would just say yeah I'm not doing that again kind of thing. This is what God's doing with Eve. Creation was very good before sin.
Now here's what that means. There was no pain. No tears. No illness. No death. So originally in God's very good world there was no pain in childbirth.
Hallelujah. Multiplying is the idea that we need to focus on here. Multiplying that pain seems to have a twofold meaning.
I will greatly multiply your pain in all of this. The first thing that we can notice about it. Pain would be a reminder of the rebellion that Adam and Eve had as they went against the prohibition and disobeyed God.
[37:53] And now this would be multiplied in terms of the labor. The labor. Particularly that a woman will feel in fulfilling God's mandate to multiply humanity.

I will multiply your pain in your multiplying. That's the Hebrew wordplay here. I will greatly multiply your pain in the command that I gave you to multiply.
And now you'll feel it. Whereas there was no pain before. Thank you Eve. There you go. That's where it goes. That's where it goes back to. So this strikes at the heart of Eve's role and mandate for her to be faithful to God.

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This God is prescribing right into the heart of where Eve disobeyed the Lord. You went outside of my authority. You tried to make yourself your own God.
You tried to be wise in your own eyes. And look what happened. Now I will give you a reminder of that rebellion as you fulfill the mandate that I've given you as a woman after my heart.
[39:08] You'll feel it now. And then, two, God will multiply this pain in the sense of a change in all women descended from Eve.

So the multiplication will be in a way of it spreading to all of womankind. You see the double whammy there. I'll multiply the pain in you keeping the mandate.
And I'm also going to multiply it in that it's not just going to be your pain. I'm going to spread it to all of womankind. And so ladies, when you have a baby, if you don't get the medical help to numb the pain, you'll feel it.
I watched my wife have three babies. And the last one came so fast and they couldn't give her the thing, the epidural. And I was, so I filmed all three of them.
You see me doing this. This is what we had to do then. It wasn't any of this phone stuff. I had this thing. No, it's not this bad. Somebody, deacons, where are my deacons?
[40:17] So I'm doing this on all three of them. The first two, it's like cake. It's like, did the baby come out? Are we good? Or whatever. There's no, because she's, she's doped up.

She's got the thing and it's just all happening. Fine. The third one, not so much. The third one, we got to a certain point. And I tell you, this is the truth.
Suzanne was, was doing her thing. And she looked at me. I'm standing off to the side just kind of filming, watching this whole thing. And this is nothing like the other two, right? I'm very discerning. This is the guy who was watching the monitor and I would tell her, oh, that was a big one. She would be like, no kidding. So I'm filming this thing and all of a sudden, as I look at, look up and look at her, her face looked like a wild animal.
Her eyes look like a wild animal in a trap, which I've seen before. And she said, turn the camera off.
[41:20] Yes, ma'am. And I turned the camera off and we went on with the business and Jared was born in minutes, right? After that. The pain was so intense that it literally changed the countenance of my wife.

Now, she didn't say anything wrong or do anything wrong. I just saw in her face how intense it was for her. So I'm one of those guys that know from a distance.
I just don't know it personally. God. That's when you drop to your knees and say, thank you for making me a man. This is what is going on in this multiplication process.
Your desire, notice this, the second part of the curse on Eve bears the most grievous aspects of family life and marriage. So here's the second part.
Look again with me. To the woman, he said, I'll greatly multiply your pain and conception and pain you will bear children. But now notice this. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.
[42:24] And if you're married, you feel this and have felt this and will go on feeling this because this will be the battle of your life as a married couple. I'm not going to make marriage sound bad.

It's the most wonderful thing in the world. But you need to understand what's going on here. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.
Now this drives into the very heart of their companionship because they threw that off. It's like they tossed their companionship into the mud when they decided in their hearts that they would rebel against God's prohibition and take of the knowledge of the tree of good and evil.
They threw that. They just they acted like it wasn't even a big deal and just threw it away. And God says, now I'm going to drive right into the heart of that. You threw it in the mud.
Now here's what's going to happen with it. All marriages will now suffer this competitive, combative reality.
[43:29] Say, Jeff, is it that bad? Yes, it is. According to what God did. Look with me. Desire and rule function together in communicating the negative, sinful attitudes and actions between husbands and wives.

Now here's what I want to help you do to see the impact of this curse. I want to remind you of God's design for marital authority and companionship established for us in chapter two.
I took this apart for us in a previous message. passage. And I made a big deal then of telling you we need to know this and be grounded in this because when we get to chapter three, this is going to be

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huge.
And now here it is. Let me just remind you. Here is how the authority slash companionship motif was presented to us in chapter two.
I'm going to borrow here a little bit. Author, theologian, pastor, Alexander Strzok. Many of you have heard of him. He's written extensively on this topic. So he summarizes six vital truths in God's design for marriage and gender roles within marriage.
[44:38] Six vital truths. Here's the first one. All of this is helping us summarize chapter two and the focus or the emphasis that God is making on headship, authority, and companionship slash together.

All right? Not one above the other. Together. Because that's what God designed it to be. Here's the first one. God made Adam the central character in chapter two.
We covered that. God created Adam first. These are all ways that God is focusing priority on that authority slash companionship element.
Number three. God formed the woman out of man. Woman came from man, not the other way around. Paul will make a big deal out of this too. Number four.
God created the woman for the man. God gave the man the right to name the woman, which is an aspect of authority, showing authority. And then this one, number six.
[45:41] God created the man and the woman equal in nature. They are spiritual equals so that Adam's headship authority did not mean that he was more important than Eve in God's sight or that he had the right to make Eve his doormat or anything like that.

This headship authority and submission thing, that was something God designed that perfectly complemented the couple and reflected the character of God in them. It was a beautiful.
You and I have a hard time getting our minds around that because we have to really work at being in the spirit of God and being obedient to scripture to even remotely taste that in marriages today.
So what is going on here? How do we understand what's happening here? Well, all of that establishes, if you can see it here at the bottom of the screen, establishes God's baseline for what? Gender differences, for gender roles, and for equality among the sexes. Adam's authority over Eve was designed by God, here it is, and put into marriage before the fall.
[46:55] The feminist movement many decades ago decided to reinterpret this passage of scripture and say, this whole headship authority thing, that was a result of sin.

And so now, any time men try to exercise authority over women, they're exercising it in the reality of the depths of depravity and sin. It's a fallout thing from sin.
No, it's not. Chapter 2 taught it before Adam and Eve fell into sin. Big difference. This was originally God's design. And friends, here again, it was beautiful.
We need to preach and teach this because it's the design that God, through Jesus Christ, wants us to uphold. Wants us to live. That's why we need to preach this and teach this to our people, to God's people.
So hear me on this. The role relationships of headship authority for the husband and helping slash submission for the wife, these roles, these role relationships are God's perfect design and are not based on man's fall into sin.
[48:06] God did not base all of that design on man's fall. That was all in place before we fell into sin. So being in headship did not and does not today mean a husband's dominating, selfish authority over his wife.

No. At the same time, at the same time, being in submission to her husband's headship, to his authority as a helper, made as a helper from man, doesn't mean that a wife is lower or lesser in her relationship to God or to her husband.
No. That was never God's design. When the couple rebelled against the Lord, sin poisoned that design.
It marred that design just like it marred our image made in the image of God. It didn't destroy it, but it poisoned it and marred it. And so Adam and Eve reversed the roles God made for them in marriage.
Listen, Eve deceived by Satan, disbelieved God, and what did she do? She usurped Adam's authority over her and did what she wanted to do.
[49:25] Period. I'm going to do what I want to do. Adam, for his part, rebelled as well. And here's what he did. He high-handedly abandoned Eve.

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He high-handedly abdicated his role as a loving leader and protector of his wife. Now, look. What was a beautifully designed relationship of loving protection and mutual complementary companionship within the bounds of these roles God designed now became a battleground between competitors.
So what was complementary now turns into competition. That's a curse from God. This is the hard part.
God did this. Not just sin. God's behind it. A good and gracious and loving God is cursing this couple and saying from now on when a man and a woman marry even in the Lord there's going to be this constant battle against the sin nature as a reminder.
To remind you and I of what? I'll tell you next week to remind us of how much we need this. Amen? How much we need the cross of Christ.
[50:53] All of that nature issue is to remind us that we need a new nature in Jesus and in Jesus Christ you can have a marriage that honors the Lord. Amen?

You can. In fact friends you must because of Ephesians 5 that our marriages are supposed to reflect the character of God.
His love for His bride. His sacrificial willingness to protect and to serve His bride. For her betterment. For her spiritual love and life.
That I'm willing to sacrifice self in the moment. Lay down and take the bullet whatever so that my wife can grow spiritually and thrive spiritually in her relationship with God.
nothing should matter more to me as a married man than the spiritual vitality of my wife. I'll say it again and back it up with the Bible. As a married man nothing should matter more to me on this planet than the spiritual vitality of my wife.
[52:04] Nothing. Other than my own love for Christ. But that's how I love her is out of love for the Lord. So I say to my wife I have headship responsibility in your life.

So here honey follow me as I do what? Follow Christ. Follow me as I follow Jesus. If I ever ask my wife or try to foist on my wife something that violates her conscience or requires her to sin my wife would be doing this as she followed me.
Oh whoa. And then she does this and she starts praying for that old boy. And then she can find ways to lovingly say to that old boy I love you I can't follow you there.
Here's why. Here's why honey. Offer the biblical alternative. I can do this. So she's not saying oh you you oh right and she's saying I can't do that but I but I know you and I love you and I hear your spirit Jeff I know you and I love you and this is why what I can do this in the spirit of what you're asking I can do this my wife's done that with me she's an intelligent woman she's a spiritually astute woman she loves the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit lives in my wife now I can tell you when we were first married that was tough for me but I was immature and now I'm less immature there's hope there's hope all I'm trying to say to us in this is that God's curse is putting competition in marriage this was never the design this is the result of God's judgment let me show you what I'm talking about now stay with me here and
I'll finish this out look can you see this desire and rule in verse 16 are the same words that are used in chapter 4 verse 7 will you go over to chapter 4 verse 7 now here God is confronting Cain because Cain is pouting about what's going on with the offering that he made and so God is saying to Cain in verse 7 if you do well will not your countenance be lifted up and if you do not do well sin is lying at the door and its desire is for you but you must rule over it desire and rule you see that in that verse God tells Cain sin's desire is to seek to control him manipulate him prompt him to evil but he must rule dominate get mastery over it so this is a harsh bitter messy idea of battle against a foe same words being used in 7 that are being used over in verse 16 in chapter 3 what is it saying that's just what
[55:23] God's curse says about a husband and a wife in marriage the curse itself strikes at the core of their relationship because Adam and Eve reversed roles and threw off God's original design so what does all this mean Jeff it means this wives your desire will be to control manipulate subvert and throw off your husband's God given authority over you husbands for your part you will seek to rule over dominate and seek to master even harshly apply your authority over your wife in other words the Bible says you'll try to lord it over your wife you'll try to use your authority over her in selfish ways so we have warnings in scripture in the New Testament particularly that help us understand that dynamic and stay away from it and not use the authority that God's given us in marriage to dominate our wives or suppress our wives because we'll do that by nature this is what

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we're born into it takes the power of God shedding his blood on the cross to free us from this and give us an opportunity an option to go in a different direction this is powerful powerful stuff folks do you hear me saying this is the

God of the universe levying this judgment on marriage he invented marriage marriage this is powerful this is why we have the divorce rate that we have in our country here's the way Dr. MacArthur summed it up Dr. John MacArthur summed it up the curse on Eve was that woman's was that woman's desire would hence forth be to usurp man's headship yet the man the husband would resist that desire and subdue it through brutish means women have a sinful inclination to usurp man's authority men have a sinful inclination to put women under their feet that's what we're dealing with when we do marriage counseling within the first session or two I'm going to have that couple in this passage of scripture and I'm going to be trying to explain to them the nature of what's going on so that they have a biblical view of the conflict God designed the two of you as Christians to be completers and complementary to each other to come together in a complementary way and help complete each other what Satan wants to do is pull that apart and make you competitors when God cursed marriage he put inclination in our hearts toward that so that all that we can do all that we can do to remedy that issue is to run to the cross and allow
Christ to remedy it for us by drawing our hearts to himself and as he draws our hearts to himself so that we grow in our love for him then we turn to each other as spouse and we say now I want to minister that love sacrificially to you will you please follow me as I imperfectly stumble along and try to do that come on honey come with me please learn to trust me learn to ask for forgiveness with me help me help me help me do this that's the heart that's what we need that's what the world needs the world needs to see more of us living like that in our marriage they need it they need to see that when we stumble and fall when we mess up when we hurt each other they need to see how willing we are to go back and make it right in Christ because we love Jesus because we want to please Jesus in all respects so that so that me making my point here's me making my point
I want to put my foot on my wife's neck God help me that's my inclination apart from Jesus that's what I will do so God help me God help you God help our marriages for the wife's part she doesn't want to follow like that her inclination is at the first sign of a trip up oh I knew it oh I knew it I told you yeah well you're on your own on this one man let me know when you get it together alright that's a wife's heart that's your inclination you know I'm doing you I've been married for 40 years I know a little bit about this this is the way that God dealt his judgment onto married life now if you're listening to this especially if you're listening to it online as a tape after the fact you're probably wondering man how did those people go to that church that dude is so depressing
[60:28] I know but the hope is this and I keep saying it the hope is that God has made remedy for what has ruined us in Jesus Christ alone as husbands and wives flee to Jesus they find the only hope they have for living a life to please God in all respects and to deal with their own nature that is your only hope ladies gentlemen that's your only hope is the Lord Jesus now we're going to keep preaching that and next week I'm going to really try to bring that home to all of us let me finish up because I can't leave him out right ladies I don't want to throw you under the bus let's do Adam what about Adam's penalty look at verses 17 through 19 this will be quicker to Adam God said because you've listened to the voice of your wife and it eaten from the tree about which I commanded you saying you shall not eat from it in other words

God is saying you absolutely high-handedly Adam disobeyed me you weren't deceived you just decided you weren't going to obey cursed is the ground because of you in pain you will eat of it all the days of your life thorns thistles shall grow for you you'll eat the plants of the field in other words you'll have to grow and cultivate everything the earth's no longer going to help you by the sweat of your face you will eat bread till you return to the ground because from it you were taken for you are dust and to dust you shall return in other words you'll die one of the results of this is death you are going to die Satan lied to you when he told you you surely will not die you surely will and you are going to die and you're going to feel it folks this is the longest and strongest of the curses God spends more time cursing Adam and just in terms of the sheer number of verses than he does in any of the others in verse 17 God says because you abandon your role of authority and protection by obeying your wife Adam you should have listened to me not her in this instance she was disobeying you should have been the one to remember my word and hold the ground and protect her and help her not follow in sin because you abandoned that role because you listened to

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Eve and her sinful rebellion and because you high-handedly rebelled against me verse 18 thorns and thistles now will grow for you and you'll eat the plants of the field here's what's going to happen the human enterprises then of living and making a living will be filled with constant toil all the days of your life thorns and thistles weeds they were not present before the fall now the earth itself will fight against you the earth will fight you so guys when you go out to make a living in the workaday world the fact that you have to deal with sin from other people you have to deal with corruption in the way that your bosses handle things your company handles things all of that is the result of this curse now you're going to go out into the world and it's no longer going to work with you it's going to work against you and as it does be reminded you need to flee to the cross not despair not complain not be grumpy not sin back at the people sinning against you flee to the cross flee to jesus to redeem you and redeem the time that you're spending earning a living for your family the fact that god gives you the ability to work is a blessing it isn't a blessing to work in the hard workaday world i understand that but it is a blessing for god to be able to provide you work so that you can provide for your family that's what he's telling them did i put verse 18 up there there you go that's what i just said so friends when we talk about floods droughts blights pollution pestilence pests tornadoes hurricanes tsunamis fires earthquakes those are just some of the ways the earth displays god's curse on creation you and i also feel it in ways akin to verse 19 by the sweat of your face you will eat bread till you return to the ground because you were taken from it your dust and you'll go back to it go back in the ground doing life is hard it's hard then you die that's what it says isn't it you're going to sweat it's going to be hard and then you're going to die what are you going to do about that where's their hope where's the joy where's the peace where's the purpose that sounds so ruinous folks it's a curse it's not supposed to be happy clappy it's a curse

Adam and Eve's fall into sinful rebellion fundamentally and dramatically altered life on this planet and we need to see the ruinous effects of sin and God's judgment on it these penalties prescribed by God changed life as God had made it so the combined effects of sin and judgment are the reasons we all suffer in the ways we do the flesh the world the devil and God's curses on our life it's a progressive the word I want to show you this word the progressive entropy it just me entropy means the progressive nature and inevitable nature of social decline and degeneration entropy is one of the laws of nature that tells us that everything is moving in a way where it's dissipating energy it's using up energy and it's not replenishing at the same rate and so what do we see in our world it's degenerating it's getting worse not better we show those same signs as we age we're not getting better I don't feel more vitality than I felt when I was 20 40 years later down the road I'm showing the signs of the wear of sin and the decay of this world on my body that's what we're in for God is constantly reminding us you're not in heaven yet so language think about language communication relationships nations governments weather the environment plants animals our bodies our systems our stuff our houses homes cars jobs everything's wearing out everything is showing the signs of these curses that we go out and try to make a living we go out and try to relate and we mess it up we say something that offends we didn't mean to people say something to us they didn't mean to we struggle to communicate and just get our get ourselves across to people we struggle in our jobs and in companies to communicate in ways that we can make transactions all of that that's the curse now you're going to go out and have to sweat and everything's going to be different it's not going to work with you or for you anymore wow and it's all because of the fall and God's penalties leveled on criminality what a mess well folks the mess was so bad that God had to send his own son to be tortured to death on a cross to rescue us from it that's how bad a mess it is and if we don't preach that mess we take away from the cross and the sacrifice God made on our behalf we have to preach the mess to show what God waited into to love us out of sin and to himself what a God what a God embedded in this terrifying reality is a terrific reality and it is this it is the truth that God's grace is greater than our sin that's next time will you join me in prayer father we thank you almighty God for the truth of the word as difficult and as hard as it is for us to hear the message of these curses that drive at the very heart of our relationships both with you and with each other we look to you and we thank you God that embedded in all of that is

[70:10] Genesis 3 15 where you tell us that you're going to make remedy for the ruin that we all feel and experience in life so I pray for my brothers and sisters to be encouraged that they are being called to flee to Jesus and the cross of the Lord Jesus that we would know your forgiveness for our sins we would no longer be cursed knowing that Jesus took the curse for us he became the curse for us so that we would live under the curse no more no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus I pray that that message of gospel truth would ring in their hearts if there's anyone in

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here today Lord who is uncertain about their heart before you they don't know for sure they've been forgiven for their sins they don't know for certain that they have the hope of heaven because they're trusting in Jesus Christ dying for them on the cross I pray that you would give them courage to come and speak with me today let me sit down with them and encourage them to look to

Jesus for the hope of the forgiveness of sins that God has made in his only son thank you father for your truth and thank you for even the truths that we have to hear that are hard for us now I pray for the marriages in our midst I pray that you will help husbands love their lives with the love of Jesus Christ sacrificially giving to them that they might have spiritual vitality as though their wives follow Christ I pray that the wives would submit to their husbands in a wonderful humility before you and that they would say this is the way that God has called me to love my husband is to humbly support him even as he stumbles along and imperfectly leads God help me to have a word of encouragement knowing that the world constantly beats him down and that he beats himself up because he knows his failures like David he knows his sins help us to have marriages that please Jesus and reflect the character of God in your forgiveness in your patience and in your kindness toward your people thank you for the word of truth help us to take it into our hearts now in Jesus name amen thank you for your kind attention folks you

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