



## “Brokenness”

Genesis 3

**Idea:** God has a design for our lives, but we depart from His design and end up in brokenness.

**Intro:** Last week we saw how God has left us with a mission to make disciples of all nations. We are to tell people the good news that God made a way for them to live the way they were designed to live. Over these three Sundays we are learning a relational and conversational way to bring them the help they need through the gospel of Jesus.

We have been commanded to go to those who are outside the relationship with God for which they were created. The Bible says that they are dead in their trespasses and sins and are under the wrath of holy God (Eph 2:1-3). The task before us is massive. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) estimates that of the 359 million people living in the US and Canada, 269 million of them are without a personal relationship with Christ. That means 75% of the people are lost and headed to a devil’s hell. There are 1.26 million people in the Richmond metro area. If 75% are lost, that means there

are 945,000 lost people in the metro area. Our own county has a population of approximately 30,000, so there is an estimated 22,500 people who are dead in trespasses and sins living right around us.

How do we reach them? If our strategy is to hope we can attract them to our church, then we have already failed. There are 33 churches that I know of in the county. If each church averaged 500 every Sunday, 50% of the population would still be unchurched and unreached. If we want to turn back the lostness in North America and our county, we must personally take Jesus' final command seriously. We need to stop talking about faster addition and start considering strategies for multiplication.

How do we make a dent in such overwhelming numbers? If Powhatan is 75% lost, what will it take to move our county from 75% lost to 74% lost this year? It means that we need to make 225 new disciples this next year. If as a church we are relying upon the pastors to make that many new disciples in one year, it'll never happen. There is no way that your pastor can disciple 225 people in one year. In fact there's no way that the rest of our elders and staff can disciple 225 people this next year. The numbers are too great to overcome. But if every disciple in the church (approximately 150) becomes a disciple-maker and leads two people to Christ and trains them to be a disciple-maker, there would be nearly 300 new disciples in Powhatan next year. Those 300 would join the 150 of us (450) to make 900 new disciples the following year. Those 1,350 disciples would make 2,700 new disciples in year three. The result would be 4,050 disciples in just three years if every believer in our church led just two people to faith and disciplined them each year. The result would be an 18% decrease of lostness in Powhatan in three short years. In year four if those 4,050 disciples made two disciples each, the result would be 8,100 new disciples for a total of 12,150 disciples, decreasing the lostness of Powhatan by 54%. In year five those 12,150 disciples making two new disciples each would result in 24,300 new disciples for a total of 36,450 disciples made through the

ministry of RLBC. In five years we would decrease the lostness in Powhatan by 162%. We can do this, and we must do this. How? First, we must pray.

Prayer focus: Last week we gave you a 3 Circles prayer card. One side of the card reads, “Far from God people in my life.” The other side has 3 Circles drawn on it. In just a moment I will walk us through how to use the 3 Circles to explain the gospel to someone. The side with blank lines is for you to write down the names of five people you know who are far from God. This is a way for you to commit to intentionally pray for those people to come to faith in Jesus. It is also a way for you to intentionally pray for opportunities to turn everyday conversations into gospel conversations. It is God the Spirit who draws people to God the Son, Jesus. So take this card and put it in a place where you’ll be reminded to pray for the far from God people in your life each day.

To tackle this enormous task Jesus has given us, we first pray, but next we have to see ourselves as outposts of God’s kingdom. We are God’s representatives living in enemy territory. The statistics prove that we are living in enemy territory. There are more who don’t believe than those of us who do believe. So our homes have to be gospel outposts in our neighborhoods. Our desks have to be gospel outposts in our schools or offices. We have to be gospel outposts when we’re out and about in the community—at the grocery store, the ballpark, and the gym.

**Inquiry:** Last Sunday we learned that God has a design for each of our lives, and if we will live within His design, we will experience His blessing. The problem is that none of us do. So today we are going to look at a place we all know too well—a place we’re calling *brokenness*. We live in a broken world. You don’t have to look far to realize it.

In the United States today:

- Forty percent of children live in single-parent homes.
- 500,000 children have been removed from their homes

- due to abuse and neglect and placed in foster care.
- An estimated 20 million people are ensnared in some kind of addiction.
- Police report over 3,000 violent crimes a day.
- This year there have been 68 homicides in metro-Richmond from January 1 – August 31.

We're a Humpty Dumpty nation. We've fallen. We're broken. And we can't figure out how to put all the pieces back together again. But it's not for a lack of trying. We all recognize what's wrong in our world today. We all have a sense of the brokenness, and we try our best to fix it. We teach values in the public schools. We attempt to provide health care for every individual. We study prison re-offense rates and implement behavior modification programs to reduce them. There are all kinds of people trying all kinds of things to put our nation back together again. Fortunately for us, God has given us the solution.

We know that God has a design for each of our lives—draw the first circle “God’s design,” but the Bible tells us that we have all rejected His design. I want to share with you four things about this rejection.

### **1. We choose to depart from God’s design.**

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. – Romans 1:18-19*

God has made Himself and His design for our lives known, but men, women, boys, and girls choose to suppress and reject that truth and exchange it for a lie (Rom 1:25). This reality has been true from the very beginning. Paul explains in Romans 5 that this rejection of God and His design began with Adam and

Eve. It was Adam's sin that brought death into the world, and it is Adam's sinful nature that has been passed down to every generation (Rom 5:12, 18-19).

As we looked at the creation story last Sunday, we saw that God designed a beautiful and wonderful world. He placed Adam and Eve in that magnificent world to steward and to enjoy it. God gave Adam everything he could ever want. He lacked nothing that was needed. Adam was given four commands. 1) Obey God's Word. 2) Love God's woman. 3) Excel God's work. 4) Steward God's world. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God.

Read Genesis 3:1-7.

Adam rejected God's design. The Bible has a word for his action; it is *sin*. Therefore, because of Adam's sin, we all sin today. Our nature is sinful; thus, we sin. (Isaiah 53:6; Rom 3:23)

## **2. When we depart from God's design, it always leads to brokenness.**

We are not surprised by this brokenness. We know what it feels like. It feels like guilt, shame, loneliness, addiction, strained relationships, and broken homes. This is exactly what we find taking place in Adam and Eve's lives immediately after their rejection of God and His design.

Read Genesis 3:8-10.

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, and that is exactly what we try to do in our brokenness. This leads to a third thing we need to understand about our rejection of God.

## **3. Brokenness disrupts God's design.**

It disrupts our spiritual life. God had told them that if they ate of the tree then they would die, and that is exactly what happened. They immediately died spiritually. Adam and Eve hid from God (Genesis 3:8). Intimacy with God was lost. On top of that, they discovered they had an enemy in Satan that they couldn't defeat (Genesis 3:14-15).

It disrupts our family life. Their sin brought pain in childbirth and pain in the family (Genesis 3:16).

It disrupts our marriage life. Another aspect of the curse is contention in marriage (Genesis 3:16). The intimacy and selfless that Adam and Eve enjoyed prior to their fall was lost. Their marriage and every marriage to follow was and is full of contention as the man and woman contend with one another.

It disrupts our work life. God cursed the land (Genesis 3:17-19). Our work is toilsome, hard, and exhausting. Many times it seems that our work labors against us because of our rejection of God's design.

It disrupts our physical life (Genesis 3:19b). God told them that if they ate of the tree, they would die. God was true to His word. Death entered our world because of our rejection of God's design.

We are a broken people.

#### **4. Brokenness helps us see our need for change.**

Like what Adam and Eve did in Genesis 3:7, we try to cover our sin. But it doesn't work. We try to fix our brokenness with new relationships, drugs, alcohol, and trying to be a better "me." But it doesn't work. We are broken.

Brokenness seems like a bad thing, but in many ways it

is good because it's how God gets our attention. You see we have to come to the end of ourselves and own our brokenness before we'll realize that God is our only hope.

God has a design for us. Our sin has broken that design and broken us, but there is good news. We'll unpack the good news next Sunday.

3 Circles Script: Introduce the Life on Mission app.  
Reintroduce the 3 Circles card.

God has a design for every area of our lives—our families, marriages, money, sex life, work life, and just plain life. God designed us to be in relationship with Him, but we have all departed from that design. The Bible calls this sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God's command in the garden, they brought God's curse upon them and passed it on to us. We are now born with a sinful nature, so sin comes naturally to us. There is no one who gets it right all of the time. We all sin and fall short of God's perfect design (Rom. 3:23). This sin leaves us in brokenness.

Brokenness is easy for most of us to understand. It feels like broken relationships, addiction, depression, discouragement, guilt and shame. We all want out of brokenness, so we try to fix it (squiggly lines out of brokenness). We medicate it with drugs or numb it with alcohol. We strive to be better people, hoping that somehow, someday, our good will outweigh our bad. We look for ways to alleviate our pain. When we do that, we just get more and more broken. This feels like a bad thing, but in many ways brokenness is a good thing because it's the way God gets our attention. When we feel broken on the inside and everything's all messed up, we know something needs to change.

The Bible has a word for the change we all need...the gospel. The gospel simply means "good news." The good news the Bible declares is that God has done for you and me what we

could not do for ourselves. He made a way where there was no way. God the Father sent God the Son to this world. His name was Jesus. He was fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a perfect life, keeping and fulfilling the Law. Therefore, He was able to offer His life as a sacrifice on the cross to atone for our sin. The Bible says Jesus' blood was shed for our forgiveness as He died on the cross. He was buried in a tomb for three days before rising from the dead and ascending back to the Father in heaven. Jesus did this so that far from God people could experience God's design for their lives.

In order to experience God's solution for our brokenness, the Bible declares that we must repent and believe the gospel. The change we really need comes only from Jesus. When we repent, we choose to turn away from our sin and ourselves and turn to Jesus. Instead of trusting in our ability to earn our way to heaven and a better life, we believe in Jesus' provision through the cross. We believe that His sacrifice and resurrection is sufficient. When we confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior and put our trust in His death and resurrection, the Bible says we will be saved from our sins (Romans 10:9-10).

We are now able to pursue and recover God's design for our lives. Jesus' work on the cross, made it possible to have a relationship with the God who created us for Himself. Our dead spirits are resurrected to new life in Christ, so we can now pursue the relationship we were created for. As a result we can recover God's great design for our lives. In doing so, Jesus sends us right back out into a broken world to tell others how to find their way out of brokenness.

**Conclusion:** Where do you see yourself in this diagram? If you're in brokenness is there anything that would keep you from repenting and believing the gospel right now? Lead in a salvation prayer.

For those who believe, what would prevent you from being trained to share the good news with others who are still in brokenness? Together we can reduce the lostness in our



community by telling others about Jesus. Next Sunday we'll finish the 3 Circles, but you can get more in-depth training and practice beginning this evening at 5:30pm.