

Broken Relationships | The Genesis of the Gospel

On Sunday Richard summarised Genesis 1-3 in these 15 words

**“We have been created for relationship, four relationships.
But each of these have been broken.”**

In the group, share your response to Sundays' talk.

- What do you remember? What struck you? What spoke to you personally? What was the most important thing that was said?

- **Relationship with God**

“Genesis tells us that we have been created to bear God’s image, and to live in deep connection with him, to mirror him as his image bearers – **intimately connected**. God created us for him, to live with him, to live in a home with him and to represent him, – connected, walking with him in the garden, alive to each other, walking with each other – in a relationship of **divine trust**.

- What part of the Genesis 3 highlights the breakdown of this relationship?
- In what ways is your relationship with God broken?
- Why is this relationship central to all the others?

- **Relationship with creation – with the world, with the earth**

Genesis tells us that we been born from the dust, for the dust, born into a world that was designed with us in mind... On day 6, right at the climax of the story, we are placed in the beautifully ordered creation and honoured with a beautiful purpose and role. We are for creation, and Creation is for us.

God gave us the earth, the world, the garden to enjoy, to feed us. And he gave us the earth and the world to work it, to tend it, to care for it, to rule it, to subdue it... He gave us a relationship - a **divine responsibility**

- What part of the Genesis 3 highlights the breakdown of this relationship?
- In what ways is your relationship with creation, with the earth, with the environment, broken?

- **Relationship with others**

Genesis tells us that we are designed for others – not for self-expression, or self-fulfilment, or individual satisfaction, or for the pursuit of happiness – but for the sake of others... We are designed to be interdependent – strong and yet vulnerable – needing others to be complete.

God created us for relationship with each other – for union, for connection, for support, for empowerment, for encouragement, for celebration and engagement, for family and friendship. We are made for **divine union**

- What part of the Genesis 3 highlights the breakdown of this relationship?
- In what ways are your relationships with others broken?

- **Relationship with one's own self**

Genesis tells us that we were created to be **at one with ourselves**. When Genesis tells us that God created us in his image, it is telling us that we have been given a significance, a dignity, a value, a worth, a power, a capacity - an identity as well as a responsibility. He created us to carry an honour, a respect, a position in his created order, a sense of worth and dignity, a value – and to feel at one with our selves

- What part of the Genesis 3 highlights the breakdown of this relationship?
- In what ways is your relationships with yourself broken?

Here are some further notes from Sunday's talk.

- Our relationship with **God**, originally marked by honour, responsibility, community, connection, and trust, has become marred by disobedience, shame, hiding, mistrust, rebellion. At the heart of our problems is the broken relationship with our creator. We routinely disregard him, dismiss him, disobey him, distance ourselves from him, disrespect him. We disown him with our language and our actions. We disappoint him in our behaviours We discard his ways. This is the diagnosis of Genesis 3
- The relationship between Adam and Eve, a depiction of the relationships between ourselves and **others**, once vulnerable, courageous, and open, have become closed, hidden, mistrusting, defensive, blaming, exposed, hierarchical, unequal, painful. Our natural and pure longings and desires, created to pull us towards union, will now forever be tarnished by exploitation and manipulation.
- Our relationship with the earth, with the world, with **creation**, with our environment, originally marked by interdependence, plenty, and sufficiency, has become one of toil, stress, misuse, exploitation, trouble, conflict and effort. The work of subduing and ruling, once a calling and beautiful purpose, becomes tiresome, exhausting – a toil rather than a delight. Nature becomes threatening, dangerous, inhospitable. Animals, once ordered in their place each according to their kinds, become hostile and threatening.
- Our relationship with **ourselves**, where one we lived at peace with ourselves experiencing the glory of God's image in us – whole and aligned – has become damaged, twisted, distorted, uncertain, lost, ashamed. We notice in this story that the **natural asymmetry of our gendered bodies**, male and female, the God ordained and good binaries of life, becomes a source of dominance and control. Reproduction, originally gifted as a blessing, becomes painful and hard.
 - How do you feel about the diagnosis of Genesis 3?
 - What is God saying to you individually about this? What do you need to hear?
 - What does salvation mean to you, in the light of this?
 - What do you need from God?
 - What are you going to do in response to this?
 - What question would you like others to ask you next time you meet about this?