



Daily Devotionals: Dear Church | September 4, 2022

Week 2 | Sexual Brokenness

Dear Church,

If you're anything like me, you know there's brokenness in you. In other words, because of sin, we experience life with a sense of "things are not the way they're supposed to be."

And whether we realize it or not, that brokenness seeps into our sexuality.

I recently learned that the root of the word "sex" comes from the Latin word *secare*, meaning "to cut off." So, for example, if a tree branch is cut away from a tree, that branch has then been sexed from the tree. Isn't it interesting that the word "sex" has to do with union, wholeness, or completeness...or the lack thereof?

The theologian Ronald Rolheiser shares that,

"Long before we even come to self-consciousness and long before we reach puberty when our sexuality constellates so strongly around the desire for sex, we feel ourselves painfully sexed (cut-off) in every cell of our body, psyche, and soul. Sex is a dimension of our very awareness. We wake up in the world and in every cell of our being we ache, consciously and unconsciously, sensing that we are incomplete, unwhole, lonely, cut off, a little piece of something that was once part of a whole."

To be candid, we experience sexual brokenness in many ways: we feel intense shame after sexual sin, we can sometimes feel lonely even when someone is laying in the same bed as us, and we can have issues that prevent us from being intimate during sex.

We experience isolation, meaninglessness, and a sense of being "cut-off" from something greater than ourselves. We feel incomplete and like our lives are devoid of worth and weight.

So many of our sexual actions are done because we feel something is amiss in our sexuality. We act *out* because we feel cut *off*. All of us long to love and be loved, but we know deep in our bones that unconditional love is missing. To fill that void, we go to other things to try and fill it.



And the hard truth of the matter is this: anything other than God will only leave us empty in the long run.

In his book *Mere Sexuality*, the author Todd Wilson writes,

“We want relief from the struggle, and we want satisfaction for our desire.”

And later, Wilson says,

*“As Christians, we struggle to be patient not only with God’s **designs** for our sexuality, but also with God’s **provision** for our sexual brokenness”*

And what I’ve realized is that the Apostle Paul *gets* this. In Romans 8, Paul talks about how we have “present sufferings.”

And later in that same chapter he writes,

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly...” (Romans 8:22-23).

Paul knows brokenness. And waiting. And longing. And pangs of desire. And unfulfilled hopes and dreams.

But Paul is also able to wait out his suffering because of his confident expectation that God will make all things right. That our brokenness will be restored. He says in **Romans 8:18**, that “our present sufferings” are *nothing* compared to the coming glory. And he says in **Romans 8:23** that we are waiting *eagerly* for, “our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.”

In this world we are “cut-off”, yes. But we will one day experience the union with God we so desperately desire because of Jesus’ work on the cross reconciling us back to God and putting all of creation, from the cosmos to our sexual lives, back to order.

For Paul, leaning into the coming restoration of all things was the foundation for his hope. And as I’ve considered my own wrestling with “present sufferings” in general, but also “present sufferings” related to my sexuality, that’s what I find myself clinging to also.



I wrestle with the ache of loneliness. I often feel “cut-off” from those around me. I have felt tempted by sexually illicit content to still the ache. I’ve heard stories from those who have been hurt by their spouse. I’ve heard from married couples who have issues with sexual intimacy.

We all feel it.

But as I’ve wrestled with this topic, here are some things I’ve found...

1. Like last week, I always want to start with Scripture. I’d encourage you to read **Genesis 1-3** and notice the good creation that God made and how sin affected our relationship with God and our relationship with one another. I’d also encourage you to read in **Romans 8:18-39** how our longings and brokenness are acknowledged, but ultimately redeemed by Christ. And finally, I’d encourage you to reflect on how Jesus meets the woman in **John 4:1-26** in her brokenness and brings her grace.
2. Prayerfully – emphasis on *prayerfully* (i.e. do this *with* God) – reflect on the following questions, noting all along the way God’s goodness, kindness, love, and care for you in your brokenness.
 - Where and when have you experienced a sexual brokenness in your life?
 - How has that made you feel?
 - How have you processed those moments?
 - What healing has God brought you to in those areas? What healing do you still need God to bring?

Jot down any significant elements that come to mind. Then, write a prayer to God for anything that needs resolved.

3. Lastly, if you’d like some additional resources on this, here are a few I’d recommend:
 - I’d again recommend *Mere Sexuality* by Todd Wilson (available on Sundays for purchase at a discounted rate!). He talks a lot about sexual brokenness and the hope of the gospel in that book.
 - I loved a sermon from Dr. Derwin Gray on sexual brokenness. Find it on YouTube by searching for Transformation Church | Beneath the Surface | Sexual Brokenness | Sermon | Derwin L. Gray.



- I also found a conversation between Preston Sprinkle and Jay Stringer on sexual abuse, sexual brokenness, and the Gospel enlightening as well. It can also be found on YouTube by searching Sexual Abuse, Sexual Brokenness, and the Gospel: Jay Stringer on YouTube.

The Gospel tells us that we are broken. We experience so much shame and embarrassment because of that brokenness. But here's the truth: God love you so much. God cares about you so much. He desires to be in relationship with you despite your sexual brokenness. And he desires to heal you and restore you and mend you back together.

This isn't an easy topic to think about, but getting down into those dark places is worth it, because we find (I've found) that those dark places are spots in our lives where God can bring His grace.

Grace and peace,
Emerson