

Genesis 3:16 -20 Saved From the Curse

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To the woman he said,

*“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”*

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

*“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,*

*‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.*

*¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”*

*²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.
(Pastor prays)*

We feel it all around and live in it every day. We live in a world that is in decay. Our cars break down and the dishwasher quits and our children get in trouble in school. C.S. Lewis was right – we live in a world where it is "always winter but never Christmas." Young people die suddenly, there's a hit and run on Seventh Street and your blood pressure is high because of Genesis Chapter 3. The power goes out and trees fall on houses because although God's creation is good, it exists in the shadow of sin's curse.

Sin didn't just affect human beings, it has affected even the very air you breathe and the food you eat. Creation – God's creation-- waits on a redeemer. Isn't that what the Apostle Paul meant? When he looked at this in Genesis Chapter 3, he said in Romans 8:19-22: *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.*

Groaning. We feel it in the depression without cause and the marriage without hope. We feel the weight of being children of Adam and Eve. Sin has consequences. Your sin has consequences. In the passage before us, a good and holy God describes to the man and woman what life is like when there is sin and no Savior. The curse on the woman and the man and creation is felt even up to this day and we groan under its weight. We need relief from this curse. Paul tells us there is hope in the crucified Jesus in Galatians 3:13, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* And this passage tells us in no uncertain terms that...

Life Without Christ Is a Life Under God's Curse

Let's look at this passage and see what life under the curse and without Christ is like.

Without Christ, Parenthood is Hopeless

You'll see this in Verse 16 as the Lord God turns His attention away from the serpent and onto Eve, the woman. In Verse 16a, *"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.* Pain. And it's stated with intensity. In the original it was, "I will cause to be great your sorrow (or pain)."

And all that pain is wrapped up in something so celebrated – children. Conception, pregnancies, raising them. There is pain for those who struggle having children or can't conceive naturally and that pain can be a black hole of grief, anxiety or even depression. And without Christ, there is no way out of that hole. I personally know that grief.

This pain must be a vehicle that takes us to our Redeemer – Christ. What about the pain of being pregnant and having a miscarriage? All that tangled-up grief that is peculiar to a womanhood that seems stifled and without real purpose. If you don't see that tragedy as a means of God drawing you into deeper dependence on Him, if you don't fly to the wounds of Christ, you will become bitter and hopeless and hard and hurt. It's why we take these things to the cross where Jesus became the curse for us, so that the sting of sin, the sting of the curse is removed.

Or let's say you get past the pain of having a child, the actual delivery of a baby and you have the joy of new life. That joy soon becomes a struggle because that little girl, she looks innocent but she is a "viper in a diaper." She will grow up and you will see the marks of sin. Many here can testify to the fact that there are few hurts in the world as devastating as having a child who ends up on the path of destruction. And facing that as a parent, doing that without Christ, is utterly hopeless. So we pray, trust, love and live for Christ. But without Christ, parenthood is hopeless. There's something else in the curse.

Without Christ, Marriage is Doomed

Let me show you where I get that. It's in Verse 16.

He talks about childbearing and then addresses the relationship between husband and wife. Now before I read it, remember God created man and then woman in a complementary fashion to correspond to each other and complement each other.

Before sin crept in at the end of Chapter 2, they were in a garden paradise and were naked and not ashamed. Now sin has made them self-aware and self-centered. Listen to how God describes the damage sin has done in Verse 16b, *Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.*"

Some have thought that "desire" meant that she won't be able to keep her hands off of you but experience has taught most of us that that is just not the case. To understand this phrase you must use scripture to interpret scripture. In the very next Chapter you have the exact same phrase used to describe sin's desire to master Cain. In Genesis 4:6-7, *The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the*

door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.” A desire to be in charge, to dominate and manipulate...to break the relationship of equity and turn it in to one of opposition so that you have the man and the woman, each one trying to rule the other. And that is an all-out manifested nightmare.

And without Christ, without a crucifying of selfishness and self-centeredness it's doomed. Once again the Apostle Paul speaks to this in Ephesians 5. It's a passage you should know and love if you are married. Let me read a little to you. Ephesians 5:21-25, *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ...*

I guess what I am getting at here is that because of sin, if left unchecked, there will be a constant struggle and broken hearts and broken marriages, broken homes and broken people. But in Christ, because He became the curse for us, the heavy freight of marriage doesn't ride on whether or not you can keep the spark in your marriage. It rests on the shoulders of the crucified one.

In Verse 16, God speaks to the woman about the curse. He explains its effects on us. We are frustrated at home and empty inside. We must run to Christ who redeems us from the curse of sin and the futility of life without Him. Sin has so corrupted every ounce of who we are – total depravity - and life without Christ is a life that is lived under God's curse. In the words of James Montgomery Boice as he asks some questions:

1. Did sin bring pain to parenthood? Consider Jesus and the pain He endured to bring many sons to glory.
2. Did sin bring conflict to marriage? Consider Jesus who endured even greater humility. Consider Him and don't grow weary.
3. Did thorns come with sin? Consider Jesus who wore a crown of thorns.
4. Did sin bring sweat? Consider Jesus who sweated great drops of blood.

5. Has your life been filled with sorrow? Consider Jesus. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
6. Did sin bring death to our world? Consider that Jesus tasted death for His people and redeemed His people from the curse by His blood. Then God broke the curse of death by raising Him from the dead so that whoever believes in Jesus – His life, death and resurrection – that person is made new and saved from God's curse.

We live in a fallen, broken world, but our Redeemer lives and there is hope in Him.

(Pastor prays)