

Broken Relationships

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[0 : 00] Well, this morning I want to talk about relationships. Relationships. And that's something that all of us can relate with. Because we all have relationships.

Well, we've all got friends and family. We've all got people, don't we, that we share special bonds with. And those bonds are probably some of the most beautiful and wholesome things we have in this world.

But sometimes the most beautiful things in life are also the most fragile, aren't they? Like crystal glasses. Crystal glasses are beautiful, aren't they?

There's a picture of one behind me. But they're also very, very fragile. They can break easily. And that's like our closest relationships, our best friends. They're wonderful relationships when everything's okay, but they're also fragile.

It's very easy to have a fight, to have a falling out, to have a misunderstanding. And then also never to deal with it, just to let it carry on. It's like having a broken crystal glass, like this one behind me, but to try keep using it like that.

[1 : 05] Broken like that. Try keep drinking out of it. And try ignore the fact that it's broken. You can't do that. You can't ignore it when it's broken. Well, this morning, what I want to actually talk about is how to fix broken relationships.

Because it's a skill we all can benefit from in our lives. We'll all, sometime in our lives, have fights with the people who are closest to us.

Maybe even now, as Easter weekends, typically a time when family gather together, maybe there's some underlying conflict in relationships that you haven't dealt with yet. Maybe you've had a falling out recently with a friend or a family member.

Well, I want to help you this morning to, I want to actually tell you three things that you need to fix that relationship, that you need to fix any broken relationship. But before I tell you those three things, maybe you're asking, well, it's Easter Friday.

We didn't come here to get relationship counseling. Why are you preaching about this? Well, the reason is because you did come here to get relationship counseling, but with your relationship with God.

[2 : 08] And why would you come to church otherwise? Why? I think you and I know that that relationship is not what it should be. There's a lot of tension in that relationship. But it turns out that the same three things that are necessary to fix human relationships are also needed to fix your most important relationship, which is your relationship with your Creator.

And Good Friday is good because it's today that we learn what Jesus did to fix that most important relationship. So let's have a look at the three things needed to fix broken relationships.

So the three things needed to fix a broken relationship. First thing is confession. Confession. Very often in a relationship when you have a fight, it'll be at least partly because of something you did or said that you shouldn't have, or something you didn't say or didn't do that you should have done.

And the main reason that problems carry on in relationships is because the person who did the thing they shouldn't have doesn't actually want to admit it. It's hard, isn't it, to admit when you've done something wrong.

Well, it's exactly the same with us and God. In this world, we've got a broken relationship with God. That's why we can't see Him. So lots of people don't even believe that He exists anymore.

[3 : 23] And lots of people want to have nothing to do with Him. They just want to live their life their own way, not God's way. The Bible says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

We've all got a broken relationship with God. Whether we like that idea or not, it's what the Bible says. And one of the main reasons it stays broken is that we don't want to admit that we've done

anything wrong.

I mean, who likes to admit when you've done something wrong? Put up your hand. No, no one does. No one wants to admit when they've done something wrong. And we don't like to think of ourselves as sinners.

We don't like that word, sin. We don't like to talk about that. We don't want to think of ourselves as sinners. But you know what the Bible says? It's from the passage Mahil just read for us. Have a look if you've got it open in front of you.

From verse 8, it says, If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves. In other words, you're tricking yourself. You're lying to yourself if you say that you're not a sinner.

[4 : 24] And it says the truth is not in us. But it also has good news. Look what it says next. It says, If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Now that's an amazing, amazing promise. And it's possible because of what Jesus did on Good Friday to fix our relationship with God. But before we can understand that, before we can even appreciate what Jesus did for us, we need to first admit what we've done wrong.

We need to first admit what we've done to break that relationship. And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to stop preaching for a few minutes. And we're going to do that. We're going to pray a prayer together, which is a chance to admit what we've done wrong against God.

And what we're going to confess is true of all of us, because these things are things that the Bible says that we've all done. But it's only when you're honest about these things that you can really start to understand what Jesus did for you on Good Friday.

So let's pray this prayer of confession together. Dear Creator God, we confess that we have sinned against you. We have often ignored you in the world that you have made.

[5 : 35] We have broken your laws and done things that we know we shouldn't have done. And we have also not done things that we know we should have done.

We know that you have made a way for these sins to be forgiven. So please forgive us and help us to listen to you and follow you.

In Jesus' name. Amen. All right. So that's the first thing that's needed to fix a broken relationship. A human relationship, but especially our relationship with God, is to admit when we've done wrong.

And admit what we've done wrong. But that's not enough. That's not enough. Because that by itself doesn't fix things in a relationship, does it? The other person still needs to forgive you.

And that's the second thing that's needed. Forgiveness. Do you know what that word means? Forgiveness. It actually comes from the word which means to give up a debt.

[6 : 34] To clear a debt that hasn't been paid. To give up something that somebody else owes you so that they don't owe it to you anymore. That's basically what it means to forgive.

And that's hard to do, isn't it? It's hard to do. When someone owes you something, it's only right for them to pay it back. When someone's hurt you or taken something from you, it's only right for them to make it up to you.

In other words, people need to pay back for what they've done in order to make things right. That's the way the world works. And that's just how it works in a court of law, for example. You see, the job of a judge in a courtroom is to make sure that someone who's broken the law makes up for what they've done.

The judge can't just let them go. It wouldn't be a very good judge who let every criminal go without any punishment, would it? Because they would just go and carry on breaking the law.

No, a judge can't just forgive someone. His job is to make sure that a penalty is paid. That they make up for what they've done.

[7 : 41] That a debt is paid. Now, you know, the scary thing is that the Bible says that God is our judge. He decides how we must live in this world. And when we break his law, there's a consequence.

There's a debt that must be paid. But the Bible also says, we've just read it. It also says that God forgives us when we truly confess to him. So how can that be?

Have you ever asked yourself that? How can he be a good judge, but also forgive us for the stuff we've done wrong? How can he do both? Well, listen to that verse again, verse 9.

It says, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. There's something in that verse I want you to notice.

It says when God forgives us, he's being faithful and just at the same time. Not just being faithful, but faithful and just.

[8 : 38] In other words, he's pardoning our debts against him as a father, but he's also making sure our debts are paid as a judge. But how can he do both? How can he do both?

Well, let me tell you how with a story. Now, excuse me if you've heard this story before, but it's an important story, especially today. There was a judge who served in a court in a city.

And the judge, unfortunately, had a broken relationship with his son, who left home a few years before, and they hadn't spoken since. The judge still loved his son, and he thought of his son often, and he hoped eventually the relationship could be restored.

But he hadn't seen him for years and years. Well, one day, one normal day when the judge was going about his job, he took up the seat in the court, and the bailiff announced the next case to be tried.

And in walks the defendant in his prison clothes, policeman on either side, and the judge looks up from his papers, and he sees there standing in front of him his own son in prison orange.

[9 : 42] His own son. And apparently, it turns out that his son stole a large amount of money, more than he could ever pay. And the law said that if he couldn't pay it, he would have to go to jail.

That was the only fair punishment. And it was the judge's job to make sure that justice was done. Even though he was his father, and he didn't want him to go to jail, he had to make sure that justice was done.

And so he was torn. You can imagine how he felt, seeing his son standing there, knowing that he's got to judge him. He was torn. He didn't know what to do. Anyway, it came to the end of the trial.

And the evidence was presented, and his son was found guilty. There was no way of getting around that fact. And it came to the time when the judge had to issue the judgment.

Every eye was looking at him. He really didn't want to do this. But he had to. And so with a tear in his eye, he declared that the sentence is that his son must pay the full amount that was stolen or face a hefty prison sentence.

[10 : 47] And with that, he hid his gavel on the wooden block. But then he did something unexpected. He stood up. He took off his judge's cloak.

And he stepped down, and he took out his checkbook. And he wrote a check for the full amount that was owed, and he gave it to the bailiff. And so his son was free to go because his debt had been paid.

You see what this judge was doing? He was faithful to his son as a father, and he forgave him. But he was also just in that he made sure justice was done.

Well, the Bible says that's exactly what God did on Good Friday. You see, God can't just sweep our sins under the carpet and pretend like they never happened.

They need to be paid for to make things right. But God loves people so much that he came to earth as Jesus to pay for those sins himself when he sacrificed himself on the cross for us.

[11 : 49] That's how much God wants to fix your relationship with him. The question is, do you want to fix it? Do you want that relationship to be fixed in this life and in the life to come?

Because if it's not fixed, one day you'll stand before the judge and you'll have to pay for your own sins. And that's a terrible thing. But you see, God has given you a way out of that.

That's what we celebrate on Good Friday. But you must respond. You must accept what he's done for you. You must believe it and put your trust in it rather than trying to pay back God in your own way.

I hope you're not at church this morning to pay back God. Because that's not what he wants. We should be at church to hear what God did for us.

To pay for our sins. Not try to come to church to pay him. And one of the ways we remember that is not only through hearing it from the Bible and reading it together.

[12 : 54] But also through communion. When we share the Lord's Supper together. We're going to do that on Sunday. And I hope you come back. Because that's a way that Jesus gave us to remember what he did for us at Easter.

And when you come on Sunday, not only will we share communion. But we'll learn more about what new life we can have in Jesus when we remember his resurrection from the dead. But in the meantime, there's one last thing we need to do.

The Bible says we also need to repent. Which means to change direction away from sin and towards living for God. And that's the final thing that any relationship needs to be fixed.

And that is change. So, boys and girls, if you hurt your friend and you went to him and said sorry, can you just carry on doing the same thing that you did to hurt him?

Or do you have to change? You've got to change, don't you? You do. You can't just say sorry and then carry on doing what you used to do. If you're truly sorry, you'll change. You'll stop doing the thing that hurt them.

[13 : 57] And you'll tell them that. You'll tell them, listen, I'm sorry. I'm not going to do this again. I want to stop. We need to do the same thing with God. We need to not just confess what we've done wrong. But we need to stop doing it.

And that will show that we really want relationship with God. That will show that we love him more than we love the things that sin can give us. And that's why John goes on after telling us what Jesus has done to pay for our sins.

He says, I write this to you so that you will not sin. When we truly believe what Jesus did, you see, we don't want to sin anymore. We want to change. And Jesus died not just to make sure that we can be forgiven and that our penalty can be paid.

He died to give us the ability to change, to stop sinning. And that's why Good Friday is good. But I hope you've seen today that those are the three things you need to fix any broken relationship that you have.

Confession. You need to admit to the other person what you've done wrong. Forgiveness. You need to forgive them for what they've done wrong to you. Sometimes even when they don't deserve that.

[15 : 13] Because if you're a Christian, you know how much God forgave you when you didn't deserve it. And when you remember that, that's what makes it possible to forgive other people. And then the third thing is change.

You need to stop doing what you know is wrong. And you need to make sure the other person knows that you want to stop doing that. And all of that is true in your relationship with God as well. I hope you've seen today how Jesus did everything to make it possible for you to come back into a fixed relationship with Him today. And in summary, you know, He did that.

He did that by being broken on a cross. By being forsaken by His Father to take our place so that we can be whole again. That's in summary what Jesus did on Good Friday.

He took our brokenness to make us whole again. To give us life. And if you haven't yet come to find that forgiveness and that wholeness through Jesus yet, then make this Easter weekend a life-changing one.

[16 : 18] By taking that step to be in right relationship with your Creator and to enter the eternal life that God has always intended for you. Entering into life.

But we're going to hear more about that on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is all about new life and what it means to have new life because of what Jesus did. But in the meantime, I'm going to pray for us.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank You that Good Friday is good. We thank You that You've helped us to realize in Your Bible just what Jesus did on that Friday.

That He wasn't just another guy dying, but He was the Son of God. Dying not for His own sins, but dying for ours. Lord, help us to respond to that.

Help us, Lord, to live in light of that. Help us to believe that. Help us to confess. Lord, help us to trust Jesus for forgiveness.

[17 : 16] And help us to change from this day onwards. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.