

Causes of Depression

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 November 2018

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0 : 00] Well, today we're going to start talking about the causes of depression. The causes of depression. And this is probably at least going to be a two-parter.

It's definitely going to be a two-parter. I hope it can fit into two parts. This is perhaps the point of greatest difficulty and the greatest controversy.

And so I'm going to try to navigate some difficult waters in the next few weeks. And I'm just asking that you would really gird up the loins of your mind and prepare yourself, put your thinking caps on, and listen and think with me because we want to today really go to some of the doctrinal truths of the Word of God that will lay a foundation for thinking about the coming weeks.

And so it might be a little difficult, and I've tried to simplify things as much as I can. But this, as Dare said, this calls for wisdom.

It calls for real wisdom. So we're going to start with some truth. And as we talk about these doctrinal truths, I want you to realize that these are accurately, as far as I am being faithful to the Word of God, and these are accurately describing the real world.

[1 : 27] We're not talking about truth and reality. This is the way things are. This is the way people are. This is the way God has made us, and this is what has happened to us.

And so I want you to have a heart of wisdom as we look into these causes. It's important because as we're going to talk about, the things that we're going to talk about, especially today, are not specific to depression, but they confront us on all sorts of areas.

They cover all kinds of problems. So I'm going to give you this doctrinal framework, this biblical background, to think about the difficulties that people have, all kinds of difficulties that people have. And it's not just people with big problems, but these things are essential to understanding ourselves, our spouses, our children.

So today I want to highlight four essential doctrinal truths. Now, all truth hangs together, and so in some way, all truth applies in every situation, and there's connections.

[2 : 42] But what I want to pull out today are sort of four on-the-surface important essential doctrinal truths that we want to keep in mind to inform us how we think about the causes and how people get into this situation of depression.

And the first is creation, our creation. So take your Bibles and turn to Genesis 2, verse 7. Genesis 2, verse 7.

And so you remember in Genesis 1, it does describe man's creation. But then in Genesis 2, we go over the same kind of material, but we look at it from a different, a little bit different perspective.

So Genesis 2, verse 7, it says this, Now, it's interesting.

In all of Genesis chapter 1, the word, the name, Lord God is not mentioned. It's not mentioned. But here, now in chapter 2, he begins to use that name, the Lord, Yahweh.

[4 : 15] It's God's covenant name. It's God in relation to man. God as covenant-keeping, covenant-making with man.

And so chapter 2 is about man's special creation and his relationship with God. And remember that he talks about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

He talks about if you eat of it, you'll die. So there's promises. There's threats. It's about man's place as God's priest and God's king in creation.

So it's not just man as a creature. It's man in relationship as head of the creation in relation to God. In that special situation that that is.

We're not, in some ways, yes, we are like all the other creatures. But in profoundly important ways, we are the special creation of God.

[5 : 13] As God's the head of creation, his priest, his king here. Now, just in this one verse, chapter 2, verse 7, we can see five basic things about how we are made.

How I am made, how you are made, how everyone is made. We see five basic things about man. We see he's a creature of God. He's a creation of God.

God is his creator. He's an earthly creature. And you might not think that that's too important, but we realize that God has other creatures that are of this earth.

He has heavenly creatures, heavenly beings, angels, and so forth. But man is of the earth. This is his proper domain. And even in eternity future, man is going to live on a new earth.

And heaven and earth are going to be one. But this is his proper domain. This is man's proper environment. This is his context. You see, he's made for a relationship with God. It's the Lord God, the covenant-making, covenant-keeping, promising God he's in relationship with.

[6 : 21] And he instructs them what to do and what not to do. He promises life or death. Man is a physical creature. He's of the dust.

So when someone dies, we say dust to dust, ashes to ashes. He's a spiritual creature. God breathed into him the breath of life.

This is something special because it doesn't say that God did this with any of the other creatures. Man has a spiritual nature.

So here's man and God. They live together in relationship. It's sinless, blessed, not yet cursed earth. Man and women, men and women are body creatures.

They're spirit creatures. And both body and soul, both body and spirit, are blessed. They're blessed by God. They're not yet cursed.

[7 : 26] And everything about man's creation is working as it ought. There's complete harmony. There's complete unity.

There's complete blessedness within himself. So man's body is blessed, body and soul all perfect harmony, shalom. And so the blessing of God is coming to man through all of these different avenues.

So man's body is a blessing. Man's soul is a blessing to man. Man's environment is a blessing to man. Man's relationships with each other and with God is a source of blessedness to man.

Man's faculties, his abilities, his gifts as man are a blessing to him. Man's position as God's head of creation and priest, king is a blessing to man.

So all of these are working in harmony. All of these are sources, are places, are doors for God's blessing. And so that's the first thing we have to keep in mind.

[8 : 36] Man's creation. How did God create man? What is the ideal? What were we meant to be? What did God intend for our life to look like? How is this supposed to work?

Because you can't know what is wrong unless you know what is right. What it's supposed to be.

So man, he's not just a spirit. These bodies are not superfluous to our creation. These bodies aren't problems.

These bodies aren't temporary solutions or to some sort of thing. No, man is a spirit but he is also a body. But he's not just a body. He is properly and completely a body, spirit, creature in relationship with God.

So that's our creation. And we need to give each part of that and all that relationships and all that truth. We need to give that the importance that it deserves.

[9 : 43] Sometimes we can think we're more spiritual than body or more body than spiritual but we have to hold on to both and give each their due. Now that's the first truth.

The second is we have to talk about the fall and its effects. So everything was shalom, harmony, peace, blessedness.

But when man, God's priest, betrayed God, and when God's earthly appointed king now rebelled against the king of kings, man, as the head of creation, brought down the curse of God upon himself and upon everything that he was the head of and representative of.

So he brought down on his own head the curse of God and it began to be true that when you eat of it, you shall die.

And now death is at work in man. And it's not just at work in our bodies, but it's at work in our souls, in our spirits, in our environment, in our relationships with each other.

[10 : 55] Death now is at work. Death, ruin, frustration, cursed. Now it's not working like it ought to, and we know this is not the way it's supposed to be, and yet there is nothing now that we can do to

make this brokenness, this frustration go away.

And so separation, we're now separated from the blessed and blessing God. So how far does the curse go?

How far does this brokenness go? Well, our relationship with God is broken. Our relationship with God is broken.

You understand this. And so now where there was peace between God and man, now there's sin, now there's rebellion, now there is, where there used to be mutual delight in each other, in a profound way, now there's mutual disgust.

Now the heart of man, it was made to live in joyful, happy relationship with God is now cut off from God.

[12 : 05] So the relationship between God and man is broken, the earth is broken and cursed, and now death and disease appears on the earth, and now what used to be a blessing, now becomes this avenue of a curse, and so now the water is afflicted, in the air, in the land, in man's whole environment, animals and plants, now death begins to be at work, and now instead of being a source of blessing, now it's a source of danger, a source of peril, and a source of disease and death, and so man's environment is broken, man's body is broken, it becomes dangerously imbalanced, so this fine balance of health and wellness and wholeness, the more we study how our bodies are made, we realize how intricate and how carefully and wonderfully we are designed, and yet now with death at working, man becomes like a person walking over a tightrope over Niagara Falls, and we used to have perfect balance, and now we are tipping one way to the other, we sway back and forth, we stumble and fall, we're desperately trying to keep this delicate balance of health of all of our parts and all of the processes working in order, and yet death is at work, and so eventually, sooner or later, we sway too far, our body goes too far out of sync, we fall over, we fall into the grave, and so man's body now is open to all kinds of hurts, all kinds of diseases, all kinds of imbalances, and our DNA which used to reproduce perfectly, and work perfectly, now the ends get shorter and shorter, and we lose more and more information, and we're able to, less and less, able to accommodate the problems, and things become more and more pronounced, so aging happens, death is at work, we begin to lose more of our physical abilities, so in our bodies, in our hearts, in our muscles, in our skin, in our joints, in our cartilage,!

And yes, even in our brains, this is what we need to talk about, there is this blood-brain barrier that God made, this, this, great wall of China of these cells, that separate the cellular barrier that separates your brain from the rest of your body, that only allows in very few nutrients, water, certain gases, very few proteins, very much separating the brain from the rest of your body, but this is what you need to realize, is there's no curse brain barrier, your brain is subject to the curse as in everything else, your whole body, and so sin affects the way we think mentally, but it also affects the physical material and functioning of our brains, there's not some sort of

Tupperware seal around your brain that keeps the curse away, and so the most complex organ in your body is not immune to the ruinous results of the curse, it goes right in, and man's soul is now dead, so not that it doesn't move or has no movement, but it's cut off from the one who is life, in our sin, we're cut off from God, and so our soul is now blind and lost and filled with rebellion and idols and mistrust, we believe lies, we like to lie, so the fall and its effects, that's the second essential truth we need to keep in mind, it affects us spiritually, it affects us relationally, it affects us environmentally, it affects us physically, now instead of blessing coming through all of those doors, now ruin comes in, and sin, and suffering, and misery, death is at work, now we have to think of that creation holistically, all of it, and we have to think of how we have fallen holistically, all, every part of our creation is fallen, is cursed, is now subject to ruin, to breaking, to frustration, salvation, now, the third and fourth doctrines, they go together, and I really didn't want to separate them, they kind of go together, and it's this, it's important to see that this fall doesn't just turn us into sinners, it turns us into sufferers, man never sinned before the fall, and man never suffered before the fall, but after the fall, we become sinners, as to our nature, and we are sufferers, and then the second part of this, the fourth truth that goes with it, is this, even as

Christians, even as those who are now beginning to be made new, or we are new creatures in Christ, even as creatures, we don't, as new creatures, new creations, we don't, in this life, escape either one of those realities, of being a sufferer and a sinner, we don't escape either one of those realities, we, even as Christians, and especially as Christians, live in this tension of, I have already begun to experience salvation and redemption, what Julie was talking about, but, not yet, have I

experienced all of it, I'm living in this tension of already, and not yet, so we remain sinners and sufferers through our whole life, we still experience the curse, the fall, until the end, so take your Bibles, you're in Genesis, turn all the way to Romans, chapter 8, Romans, chapter 8, verse 9, verse 9, verse 9, verse 9, verse 9, this tension of already and not yet is one that we find again and again in the word of God, but it's one that we find in the Christian world that it's hard for us to get this right, we either want heaven too much now, or we don't live in what is true now, what is already, so we have a difficult time living in this tension, and yet this is where God has called us to live now, and so Romans, chapter 8, look at verse 18, he's already talked about how we're justified, we saw last week we're freed from sin, we're no longer slaves, but, and we're, we have the [19 : 59] Holy Spirit, this is the first part of chapter 8, but look at verse 18, and let me read verses 18 through 25, I consider that our present sufferings, you hear that word, we're suffering, we're sufferers, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us, not that is revealed in us, that will be revealed in us, the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed, for the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay, and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

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 as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Talking about the resurrection, for in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Now, what this passage is teaching us is we're not only victimizers, we don't only victimize other people, we are victims, we are sufferers, we hurt people, and people hurt us.

The curse at work in the world hurts us. Disease happens to us. The devil and all of his demons are at work in the world to betray, to kill, to murder, to confuse, to lie, and we are still at war with them.

[22 : 24] We're still open and exposed to their violence. So we're both sinners and sufferers, and we need to give each part of those truths due.

The three-year-old girl whose father rapes her is brutally hurt, brutally betrayed, frightfully and profoundly damaged.

But it's not her sin. It's his. And so is she a sinner? Yeah.

She's also a sufferer. Something has happened to her that will have terrible and lasting effects on her physically, relationally, spiritually.

That that trauma will affect her for the rest of her life. Because she's a sinner? No, because she's living in a fallen world with fallen people, in a fallen body, still waiting for the perfect salvation that is yet to come, if she is a Christian.

[23 : 36] But she has scars in this life that will not completely heal. if she is a Christian, if she becomes one, she enjoys significant healing.

But she will live her whole life as a Christian in that tension of already but not yet. And that already and not yet truth will play itself out in her whole life.

She's waiting for her resurrection. So the abandoned boy is a sinner. but he is also a sufferer. And he too is profoundly and frightfully, mentally, physically, spiritually hurt.

And this is what we need to see that the Bible does not just address us as sinners, but also as sufferers. So that once abandoned boy, even as a Christian, to some degree, will live his whole life in the already but not yet.

Healed somewhat. Maybe healed amazingly amount. A lot. But still, that already and not yet will play itself out, will have its due, will be expressed in his life as he waits for his adoption as sons, the resurrection of his body, redemption of his body.

[25 : 02] God and so it's not only through our own personal sin that pain and brokenness get into our lives, but it is also the sin of others. It's through the curse that is at work in the world.

It is even through God's sovereignty. And all of that trouble and consequences and hurts and scars will not be completely done away with until what Paul says, the adoption, our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies is our resurrection, the buying back, the bringing back from the dead of our bodies.

And so we're not just waiting for spiritual salvation. We are waiting for physical salvation. And that's the hope.

There is hope. There is healing. There is resurrection. And it's already started. It's already begun. And we could talk about that.

That's what the video talked about. But we also have to realize that that hope is not yet completely realized. We ourselves groan inwardly as we wait.

[26 : 19] But who waits for what he already has? We're still waiting for something. If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for a patiently. And so there's this tension here.

There's these truths that we're trying to hold in balance and to give each their due and to understand that they're not just figments of people's imagination, but they are real expressions of what life is like on this side of the fall.

And so that, yes, you can be as a Christian, you can be a Christian and still be suffering and enduring in this life and never totally get over in this life the effects of the fall.

Now, this is what Christians sometimes, like I said earlier, have a hard time accepting. Some people want to get heaven on this side. Or they think it's going to be better than what it really is going to be. 100% holiness on this side. That's been a problem in the church, where people thought someone could be perfect. And that truth, that idea, caused more damage than it was worth.

[27 : 33] It was a problem. Or they expect 100% freedom on this side. And, well, in maybe some cases, there can be real freedom, real growth on this side.

it's not what it's meant to be, generally. But the battle continues. The problems and the pains can continue. And some counselors can get so frustrated with the struggling person in front of them, because the counselor himself doesn't want to live in this tension.

Doesn't want to have to wait, be patient. And so, they'll say, here's the truth, you live in it, get over it, snap out of it, you shouldn't be depressed, you shouldn't be so anxious, what's your problem, you're a Christian, you shouldn't, shouldn't you be living above that, isn't that weakness, what's the problem, here's the truth, what's wrong with you?

Well, there's a lot of problems with that attitude in the counselor, but one of the problems is that that counselor is not living in the already and the not yet. He's not living with the reality that that person is going to continue to struggle in some ways, and we need to give it its due.

So what's my problem? My problem is I'm still waiting for the hope that I'm looking forward to. I'm still living in a fallen world with a cursed body, and I'm not choosing, I'm not necessarily choosing this.

[29 : 08] Did you see what it says? The creation was subjected to frustration and not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it. And it's so important that we live in that already and not yet, to realize that we live in a hope not yet seen, not yet realized completely.

It will be one day. It has already begun, and that's where you get so much ground when it has already begun. And I know I'm not emphasizing that side of it enough today because I'm trying to emphasize the other side, but it has begun.

There is amazing growth. There is amazing hope. There is amazing hope for this life, but my resurrection is coming. It's not yet here.

So that full experience of living as a child in the house is not yet here. We're sons of God. That's what we are, but we're on our way home. We're not yet brought into the house completely. That's us.

That's our loved ones in Christ. Now, we have to keep those four essential doctrines in mind. Man's creation, man's fall, man as sufferer and sinner, man as living in the already and the not yet.

[30 : 28] We need to keep all those truths in mind if we're going to understand this condition of depression with biblical clarity and with biblical honesty.

depression. Now, next time we're going to talk about five different causes of depression. We're going to talk about lifestyle, psychology, that's just how we think, lifestyle, psychology, sin, sickness, and sovereignty.

And if we're understanding just the things that I've talked about, you're going to realize that those aren't five separate disconnected causes, but rather five contributing factors.

And this is, again, where many Christians and counselors have simplified something that shouldn't be simplified. The world definitely simplifies it and says just, they've had the tendency in the last 20, 30 years to just simplify it as a sickness, as a bodily problem.

But Christians, on the other hand, have overreacted to that and said, no, it's all just completely spiritual. And what we want to say is, no, these aren't five separate categories, they're five contributing factors that are interwoven.

[31 : 53] That are interwoven. So, instead of thinking of them as separate, or all or nothing, it's all physical, it's all sin, it's all lifestyle, it's all psychology, we need to see that in almost every case, there is going to be a mixture and a combination of those five, of those five factors.

And the combination and mixture is going to come with different recipes, so to speak, with different relative weights, with different primary, secondary, or tertiary factors.

So, some cookies have more flour and some cookies have less, some cookies have more chocolate chips and some don't have any, but at the end of the day, you still have a cookie. There's different recipes.

Now, depression can come in different flavors with different relative weights to these five causes, but in almost every case, there is going to be a proportion of each of them.

Now, where we get into trouble and where we're sort of led astray and led into a dead end is when we think sin is always the first, the biggest factor, or sickness is always the first, the biggest factor, or psychology is always the first, the biggest factor, and honestly, that just doesn't line up with reality because it doesn't express itself always in those terms.

[33 : 23] And I don't mean to belabor this point, but we need to remember our creation. We're body, spirit, creatures. We're made in relation with God.

That's who we are. And we're sinful, and we live in a cursed, malfunctioning world, malfunctioning bodies with broken minds and broken hearts.

We're sinners who commit sin, but we are also sufferers. now some depression will be caused primarily by the sin side of the equation.

Another depression is going to be caused more by the suffering, or lifestyle, or sickness side of the equation. And all of it is under the sovereignty of God. But sometimes that sovereignty of God is the most pronounced characteristic.

And what we're going to talk about is just sometimes it seems like despite everything else, God says, you know what, you're going to go through this season. He'll put us through it.

[34 : 30] But whatever the case, we have to realize that the suffering and the sinning, it goes together. It's like two sides of the same coin.

And so we always suffer as sinners, and we sin as sufferers. so just because depression is caused primarily by suffering in a certain case, it doesn't mean that sin isn't going to have a part, that sin isn't going to show up, that sin isn't going to be revealed, that there's not going to be spiritual consequences.

And just because depression is caused maybe by lifestyle or sickness or physical damage or biological changes or whatever, it doesn't mean that the heart isn't going to need to be addressed. And the other side is true. Just because it's primarily sin doesn't mean that the health and the relationships and the psychology of whatever is not going to need to be addressed with it.

We don't live as disconnected people. We don't live with five columns inside of us that never touch. You're a whole, connected, suffering sinner.

[35 : 53] And so, if we think it's all sin, then we are missing what God is telling us about what the world is like now. What it's like to live in a fallen body.

It's broken, it's a malfunctioning place. And if we think it's all sickness, it's all physical, it's all serotonin and chemicals in your brain, and that's all that it is, then we are going to miss what the Bible says about sin and about God's sovereignty.

So, we need to stay out of the ditches. We need to stay out of the ditches. And if you think, and this is where I want to challenge you, if you think there's only one ditch that you really need to be aware of, then you're probably already on the other side.

If there's only one ditch, you're probably stuck in the other. In other words, this is really the heart of what I'm saying, is we need to think holistically.

The Bible looks at us as a whole, and our thinking needs to reflect that. We need to be holistic theologians with the whole Bible's truth in mind.

[37 : 12] And we need to see people and their problems holistically as God sees them and addresses them. Well, we're out of time.

We're dismissed. Thank you.