

Sexual Brokenness (John 7:53-8:11)

Big Idea: The culture's vision for sexual flourishing is bankrupt, and we are all sexually broken, and yet we serve a God who's eager to forgive and repair our broken sexuality.

Welcome to our second ever series on sex. Over the next few weeks we're going to look at marriage, singleness, same-sex sexuality, transgender, non-binary, and intersex identities, sexual assault, gender roles, and a Christian vision for sexuality. No matter who you are, no matter what your perspective on these issues, we are so glad you're here. We can't wait to explore these issues together.

Today's topic is important. We're going to talk about sexual brokenness. I need to warn you: today's sermon may seem a little negative at first, but I want to invite you to hang in there, because I think it's actually good news for all of us. **My goal is to elevate awareness of how sexually broken we are, so that we can find forgiveness and healing through Jesus Christ.** We want to level the playing field so that nobody feels superior and nobody feels left out. So regardless of who you are and where you're coming from on this issue, we actually have a lot more in common than you think.

We're All Sexually Broken

What do I mean when I talk about sexual brokenness? I mean two things.

First: We are *all* sexually broken in one way or another. Take the story we just read. There's a problem with this passage. There are a few — only a few — disputed passages in the Bible, and this is one of them. In most translations it will say, "The earliest manuscripts do not include John

7:53-8:11.” It’s possible that this passage was mistakenly added in. But we know this: It reads like the real Jesus. It embodies the gospel. Leon Morris, in his excellent commentary on John, writes, “Throughout the history of the church it has been held that, whoever wrote [this passage], this little story is authentic.”

And here’s what it says. A woman was caught in adultery. The religious leaders hauled her before Jesus as a trap. In verse 7, Jesus says to the religious leaders — the best of the best — “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” One by one they walk away because they know Jesus is right. She was a sexual sinner, and so were they, and so are all of us.

In the 1700s, one of the most brilliant theologians who’s ever lived said this: “The humble Christian has so much to do at home and sees so much evil in his own heart and is so concerned about it that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts. He is apt to esteem others better than himself” (Jonathan Edwards). There is so much evil in our own hearts that we really shouldn’t have much time to be busy with condemning others. More recently, one of the preachers I respect most [said this](#):

*I am a sexual sinner. I'm faithful to my wife, not looking at porn, and I am a sexual sinner.
If sin were blue, then everything about me, at all levels, all the time, would have at least
a tinge of blue, including my sexuality. Same for you. So can we all humble ourselves?*

That is the attitude we all need. We’re all sexually broken. If you’re alive, that includes you.

But I also mean something else. **The culture’s message of sexual freedom has been damaging and has not fostered sexual flourishing.** Mary Eberstadt in her book *Adam and Eve After the Pill* says that the sexual revolution was the destigmatization and demystification of non-marital sex and the reduction of sexual relations in general to a kind of recreation in which anything goes as long as those involved are consenting adults. Despite promising so much, the sexual revolution has been devastating, leading to prolonged adolescence, widespread

pornography on a scale we've never seen before, an increase in predatory behavior on the part of men, and more. It's damaging for everyone: for men, for women, for young people, for families, for society. Pornography has become widespread for both men and women. [Time Magazine](#) reports:

A growing number of young men are convinced that their sexual responses have been sabotaged because their brains were virtually marinated in porn when they were adolescents ... Of course there are much broader concerns about porn's effect on society that go beyond the potential for sexual dysfunction, including the fact that it often celebrates the degradation of women and normalizes sexual aggression.

One author [writes](#):

We have sexualized childhood. We titillate each other online. We're catching more pernicious bugs in bed than ever. Online porn is now standard operating procedure for a near-majority of men ... We can't seem to get enough of sex—so we focus on technique—but what we get is leaving us hungering for still more or longing for some emotion or transcendent satisfaction that cheap sex seems to promise but seldom delivers.

I don't mean to imply that everything was great before the sexual revolution. There was a lot of misogyny, sexual abuse that was covered up, and many other problems during the "good old days" of the '40s and '50s. But the culture's message of sexual freedom has been damaging and has not fostered sexual flourishing. "Do whatever feels good" leads to us feeling "very bad." It's an empty message that cannot deliver what it promises.

We're all sexually broken, and our culture is no help.

What Do We Do About It?

So what do we do about our sexual brokenness? Let me try to offer a bit of a vision for biblical sexual flourishing with the remaining time that we have with five biblical truths we desperately need as sexually broken people.

One: Sex is good.

This is an important point that needs to be reiterated since much of what we've said so far is negative. We were created to have lots of sex before the fall (Genesis 1:27-28) and God deemed it "very good" (Genesis 1:31). In fact, God's very first command was, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Our last series on sex was called "God Loves Sex." After all, God invented sex! One whole book of the Bible is a celebration of sexual intimacy. Proverbs commands men to be sexually intoxicated with their wives (Proverbs 5:19). One commentator [observes](#), "The Bible is saying, 'When you get married, drop your inhibitions, and *go for it* in both quality and quantity.' That is a command of God."

Don't ever think the Bible is anti-sex. God invented sex. It's a gift that he gave us. Sex is good.

Two: You don't need to have sex to flourish as a human.

Few people will actually believe this, but it's true. Sam Allberry [writes](#):

He is the most complete and fully human person who ever lived. So his not being married is not incidental. It shows us that none of these things—marriage, romantic fulfillment, sexual experience—is intrinsic to being a full human being. The moment we say otherwise, the moment we claim a life of celibacy to be dehumanizing, we are implying that Jesus himself is only subhuman.

The most complete and fully human person who ever lived never had sex. Not only that, but there will be no sex in the new heaven and earth. Marriage and sex will have served their purpose.

Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. So when we enter into the fullness of our relationship with him, when the church is finally presented to him as his perfected bride, the institution of marriage will have served its purpose. We will have the reality; we will no longer need the picture.

I love how Rebecca McLaughlin puts it: “At the resurrection, no one who has chosen Jesus over sexual fulfillment will have missed out. Compared with that relationship, human marriage will seem like a toy car next to a Tesla, or a kiss on an envelope versus a lover’s embrace.”

Sex and marriage are good, but they’re not ultimate. In fact, even the best marriage is temporary and does not fully satisfy. All of our sexual longings point to something greater: to the day when *all* of our longings will be met and fulfilled. Contrary to what this world says, you don’t have to have sex too flourish as a human being. Jesus is proof of that.

Three: God’s sexual guidance is for our good.

We’ve already seen that no rules leads to destruction. We’ve been “sexually liberated,” but that liberation has damaged us. We’ve also seen that God loves sex and says it’s good.

So here’s the important part: Any “dos and don’ts” are for our good. God doesn’t give them to withhold something from us, but so that we can flourish. Deuteronomy 5:29 says, “Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, *that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!*” God gives us his commands for our good.

One example. [A Dartmouth economist found](#) that the happiness-maximizing number of sexual partners in the previous year is calculated to be one, and that married people have more sex than those who are single, divorced, widowed or separated. One observer says:

Stable marriage correlates with a range of mental and physical health benefits, but for women in particular, increasing our number of sexual partners is actually correlated with negative psychological effects including increased depression, increased suicidal ideation, and increased substance abuse. This is no disparagement of sex itself or female sexuality, quite the opposite.

God's design is for our good.

Four: If you've been a victim of sexual abuse or coercion, it's not your fault.

We're going to talk about this in a few weeks, but I just want to pin this here now. God hates what happened to you.

If you hear nothing else, I want you to hear this today. The Bible is not silent on this issue.

Katie McCoy [writes](#):

From the very beginning, He intended for women to be protected and valued. Whether she is a college sophomore at an Ivy League University, a 14-year-old Nigerian abducted by Boko Haram, or a 65-year-old woman finding the courage to break her silence, an assault against Eve is an assault against Eden. And, one day, every wrong committed against her daughters will be righted by a justice-keeping God.

Five: God delights in forgiving sexual sin.

There are a couple of reasons we looked at John 8 today. One is to establish the fact that we are all sexual sinners. All of us. But the second reason is this: to establish how Jesus deals with sexual

sinner. Jesus meets a lot of obvious sexual sinners in the gospels. He is unfailingly gracious to all of them.

In verse 11 of this passage he says, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Ray Ortlund says:

By these wonderful words, Jesus creates for this woman, and for everyone who will join her, a new unaccused place for guilty sinners caught in the act ... “They shamed you, but I am covering you. They accused you, but I am forgiving you. They stigmatized you, but I am dignifying you. They excluded you, but I am welcoming you.”

Jesus is where sinners can live again. What this woman doesn’t know is that Jesus is even at this moment on his way to the cross, to bear her sin for her. What she did the night before would be washed away by the blood of his cross. He will pay her penalty under the wrath of God. And if Jesus bears our condemnation, we bear it no more. We’re free to live again – this time, for his glory.

What wonderful news!

The culture’s vision for sexual flourishing is bankrupt, and we are all sexually broken, and yet we serve a God who’s eager to forgive and repair our broken sexuality.

He invites us to come to the cross. The ground is level there. Jesus provides more grace than we could ever need. He is only and always tender to anyone who comes to him for life. Come today to Jesus. He will not turn you away.

Father, we are sexually broken. All of us. And Jesus is a tender and compassionate Savior. My prayer is that today and in the coming weeks you would make his grace big in our lives, for our good and for your glory. Amen.

Based on an outline in Preston Sprinkle's [A Pastor's Resource](#)