A Theology of Disability - Breakout

I. MC - Introduction

II. Theological Overview

Here are some theological considerations about disability. They are grouped chronologically and follow a redemptive historical timeline.

Creation - MC
-In the beginning there was no disability.
*Genesis 1:26-31

Fall - MC
-Sin, death, and disease (i.e. disability) enter history at the fall; the sin of Adam and Eve is the source of disability.
*Genesis 3
*Romans 8:18-23
*Romans 5:12-14
*John 9:1-4

-Even after the fall, all humans are still made in the image of God—including people with disabilities.
*Genesis 5:1

-God remains sovereign over disability…meaning that those who suffer from disability do so according to God’s sovereign will as He works out His redemption in a fallen world.
*Exodus 4:11
*Romans 8:18-23

-Sin not only brings about the existence of disabilities, it brings about the tendency for humanity to ignore, oppress, and exclude certain populations (i.e. people with disabilities).
*James 2:1-6
Israel/Law - HB
-God legislates the protection of people with disabilities. It appears that God does this because sin has given humanity a propensity to oppress people with disabilities
*Leviticus 19:14

-The relationship between David and Mephibosheth is a positive example of how God’s people ought to care for and honor a person with a disability.
*2 Samuel 9:1-13

-Israel continually prophesied about and looked for a Messiah that would come and bring an end to disability; a key part of Israel’s vocation was to be a people proclaiming a disability free future.
*Isaiah 35:5-6

Jesus - MC
-Jesus sought out people with disabilities, interacted with them, touched them, and valued them—and He taught his disciples to do the same.
*Matthew 11:1-6 (fulfillment of Isaiah)
*Matthew 15:29-39
*John 5:6

-Jesus healed people with disabilities...which suggests that disability is not His eternal desire for His people (disability is temporary). He also knows and has compassion on the chronic nature of many disabilities.
*Matthew 4:24
*Mark 9:21

-Though Jesus healed many, he didn’t heal all of the disabled people he came across. Healing seems to be exceptional, rather than normative in this present evil age.
*John 5:1-9
*2 Corinthians 12:8

-Jesus prioritized peoples spiritual ailments over their physical ailments...but didn’t neglect either. Jesus considered people with disabilities to be sinful just like everyone else.
*John 5:14
*Mark 2:1-12
Redemption - MC
-Jesus becomes a disabled man to bring about the salvation of the world. He is crippled by the weight of the cross, paralyzed by the nails of crucifiers, and dies under the weight of our sin.
*Isaiah 53

-The cross defeats disability. But we await the fulness of this victory in the coming kingdom. Now we experience foretastes - then, resurrected new bodies.
*Romans 8:39
*2 Corinthians 5:17

The Church - HB
-If the Church doesn’t include people with disabilities, it becomes disabled itself.
*1 Corinthians 12:12-26

-Their is a reward for serving people with disabilities.
*Luke 14:12-14

-Disability in God’s people is used as a profound means of glorifying God.
*John 9:3

-The Church is called to make disciples of all populations - the disabled are one of these.
*Matthew 28:18-20

-People with disabilities are a main population that the the Church should proclaim the gospel to (as exemplified by Jesus). Jesus came for those in need of a physician.
*Mark 2:17

-The Church must find ways to reach people with disabilities.
*1 Corinthians 9:19-23

-Like Jesus, the Church must treat people with disabilities spiritual needs not just physical or mental needs.

-People with disabilities should be ministering to the rest of the Church and some should be in leadership positions in the Church.
*1 Corinthians 12:12-26
*2 Corinthians 12:10
*Restoration - *HB
-There will be no disability in the age to come!
*RRevelation 21:1-5
*R1 Corinthians 15:50-58

-The tree of life reemerges and it is for the healing of the nations!
*RRevelation 22:1-2

III. MC - Questions and takeaway thoughts