

Genesis 2:18–25

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[0 : 0 0] that's Genesis 2 verses 18 through 25 please stand for the reading of God's word then the Lord God said it is not good that the man should be alone I will make him a helper fit for him now out of the garden the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them and whatever the man called every living creature that was its name the man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast in the field but for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him so the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh and the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man then the man said this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed this is the word of the Lord God may be seated well good morning and welcome to Christ Church Chicago on what is turning out to be a gloriously sun-filled day and I pray that just as the Sun on the outside is beginning to show its face upon us so to the light of God's Word would encourage and warm your own soul this morning when we were last together we left Adam who stood alone in the garden as son of God this week however the text shifts our gaze from the first male to the first female from initial man to inaugural woman and trust me before she is gone from our view I intend for you to see the multi variegated radiances of her person and the full intention of God's promises that are already within her let me say this I am aiming in this message to say something beautiful beautiful to every young girl under the sound of my voice and to every woman who will ever enter into the doors of Christ Church Chicago

I purpose to assure every male in our ministry every male in our ministry every and all men who come under the hearing of this church that whether we are single or married male or female, we will know this.

In creating the first woman, God intended for us to see him securing the everlasting enjoyment of his son.

And at the same time, satisfying the sincerest spiritual longings of the human race. That is how elevated the creation of woman on her own is in the fullness of God's word.

God is securing the everlasting enjoyment of his son in her and satisfying your deepest spiritual longings in all the promises that come forth from her.

[4 : 0 6] Let me get it as clearly as I can. The kind of satisfaction that your soul truly longs for is secured in this text.

And note, because we've been at this series for a while, the first two chapters are going to be complete.

Chapter 1-1 through 2-3, God creates all things with the intention of being celebrated by all people. Chapter 2-4 through 17, where we were last week.

God sustains all things in one man who anticipates his only son. And today, in the woman, God is beautifully securing us for the everlasting enjoyment of his son.

The text wastes no time, and I hope you have it open. Verse 18, in revealing to you that something in this text must be secured if God's creation is to be called truly good.

[5 : 1 8] Verse 18, then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him. Adam, the first, the first person singular, stood alone, and only seemingly was in full possession of every material and moral provision necessary to accomplish God's plans.

I say seemingly because now we know with that phrase, not good, that not all is well. And it won't be well until woman is made from man.

Woman will become God's remedy to not good. That's the truth. That's the glorious truth behind verse 18.

But I am aware that that glorious truth is not heard when those words come across your mind. To see the woman as we should, if you're a six-year-old girl before a Zoom platform today listening to me, or a university student who has seen the atrocities of a society that has inhibited your own potential, you don't read verse 18 as God intended it.

He has said, simply, that he will make a helper fit for him that he should not be alone, and we read everything negative into it when he is trying to purport all kinds of godly influences into your heart.

[7 : 05] So let me put it to you this way. If we are to see her splendors, we will need to clear some contemporary rocks out of the soil of our text.

First rock. Many of us read more into the word alone than we should. By referring to Adam's aloneness as something not good, God is not signposting that marriage is what is going to be universally or ongoingly necessary.

And yet that's the way we read it because we watch how the text ends. Adam is married to Eve having this garden wedding. In fact, I love the floral arrangement before me this morning.

We just performed a wedding in here yesterday. Artavius and Octavia Bailey were married, and today they find themselves in sunny Sedona, Arizona, and we can long to be with them, but we can see the glories of their day.

But when you see a bouquet in the sight of a marriage and you read it's not good for man to be alone and you know how the text ends, you are led to read more into the word than God means.

[8 : 17] Marriage is not being signposted here as something that is universally necessary or ongoingly going to happen. rather it's indicating that a plurality of persons was in order for what it would mean to truly be human as a creation of God.

For just as God exists in the plurality of persons, we who are his image bearers will need to represent the same. Two persons distinct from one another and therefore reflecting something of the imagery of God who is in distinct persons yet one in essence.

That is what is confirmed. And that's the way the whole Bible goes forward. I mean, it's amazing to me how this misreading of the text stumbles into all kinds of errors in the present day.

You already know about our Lord who was himself single. You've read about the Apostle Paul who actually prefers singleness and we should avoid the mistake knowing that when we arrive in heaven there will be no more need for marriage because the portrait of marriage which brings forth the priority of Christ in the church will be fully met.

So in his aloneness he is not signposting marriage. I was thinking about it.

[9 : 49] It means something more about what it is to be human. My, well, I don't know if I should tell you this but occasionally I've watched I think two or three of these episodic adventures called Alone on TV.

I'm not saying you should go get it. This is not a voice of recommendation from your pastor. I don't want to hear from you about why you should or should not have watched this miniseries. But the thesis is they dump ten people individually all on their own.

They are alone. They're given seven objects with which to fend for themselves and make a life and the last one in before tapping out receives \$500,000.

And this is what you find. that men and women when placed alone make it for 30 to 60 days before they need to tap out not because they're married and someone's at home but because of what it means to be human and the incapability they have of moving forward in a social way on their own. So when God says it is not good that man should be alone he is indicating the full intention of personhood that will find its expression in a humanity that involves the necessity of a plurality of persons that are distinct from one another.

[11 : 25] Second rock. Not only do we read more into alone than we should and therefore women who read this text wonder what it means and men wonder am I incomplete on my own but we read less into the word helper than we should.

You see the word helper there? For too long people have misread this word. To be the man's helper has been used by some readers to advance a false notion of a woman in the sense of being quote inferior.

helper is read or interpreted as something of inequality and worse yet a subservience of sorts that leads and has led and continues to the abuse the exploitation of woman.

She is simply here to help me get on with how I want to live my life. And in the Bible though and this is why you need to let the Bible words have Bible definitions. In the Bible the word helper here is one of God's own self-preferred titles.

Exodus 18 Deuteronomy 33 Psalm 20 and 121 To capture the significance of the title helper you need to understand what God is saying here.

[12 : 45] Let me paraphrase it. I will make says God for Eden's only son what I myself will be to Israel later on.

This man here will have one like me. One who will fight for him. One who will live beside him. Yes, let me put it this way.

One who will deliver him. For just as Israel will need me says God so he will need her.

Just as Israel would be lost without me so too he would be alone without her. Just as Israel will have enemies that require my military aid to deliver her so too the man will have adversaries that can only be overcome by her and through the one that will come forth from her.

Helper in all of that glory is what God intends. We read more into alone than we should. We read less into helper than we ought.

[13 : 56] We read beyond the meaning entirely of this phrase fit for him. Now this is a word for fit for him.

This preposition has caused havoc in the reading of the text as though woman was for him. In other words it's meant to be termed she is to be used by him.

It's almost the language of commodity. Actually though the word fit for him is one compound phrase in the Hebrew. Let me see if I can just lay it out for you.

There's a prefix the word like. So there's a word and attached on the front end like and the word that like is attached to is the word opposite. Like opposite with a second person singular pronoun! suffical ending which then says if you want to know what she is she's going to be a helper like opposite to him. Like opposite to him. It's just a beautiful phrase for the distinction between men and women.

[15 : 01] What is the woman? She is like opposite to him. It means counterpart. Ezekiel 40 verse 28 uses it in reference to gates that are in the temple and it pictures this gate at the temple with all of its majesty and its measurements and then it says that there is one inside opposite to him and you architecturally can almost see the symmetry and the balance of the temple in which there is one object and then one opposite to him built in relationship to him.

This is more than companionship. This is a counterpart that is absolutely perfect. This is why male and female is so essential.

They are suited one to the other. So do you see now what's behind God's words? If you're listening to this sermon today or in months or years to come and you are a woman or a young girl or a mother raising daughters do you see that what God is declaring is that he intends in the creation of the woman a glorious multivarigated radiance of person that becomes the eternal enjoyment of his son perfectly suited when God's word is rightly understood then God's designs to make a woman reveal his intention to make for his son one glorious counterpart she is then resplendent even before she's made here she is resplendent with manifold radiances of beauty she is a companion that like

God would deliver him from his solitude and eventually his sin she is the one who completes in the fullness of human friendship what is unfinished without her she is the crowning achievement by which God secures the everlasting good for his son and in doing so your deepest longings are likewise satisfied for the Bible will unfold the fullness of what is yet here a mystery that we shall become the everlasting delight of our Lord the church the bride that we are ones who find our life in him and out of him and we go on to partake not only of his nature now but of his rule in everlasting ways we share in the eternal familial friendship with the older brother as it were it is astounding these are not mind numbing realities it is nearly beyond our ability to take in it's beyond my ability to explore ironically though just as we lack the self awareness of all that

God intends to accomplish for his son in this woman so too in the garden the first man lacked the powers of perception to see himself rightly he didn't even comprehend all that he was lacking without her which is where verses 19 and 20 come love that this happens to the man because it reminds me of my own life in school they say that men develop behind women mentally socially academically probably morally I don't know we could go on but there's something simple about the object lesson here with the animals that the densest of men can get he didn't know what he didn't

even know what he didn't know at this moment and so in kindness God condescends with an object lesson meant to make him aware notice how the text moves from not good to not found there's almost this intensification of what woman will meet for the man the animals there prated before him named by him with a narrative movement so that he would notice become self aware perceive verse 20 that there was not found a helper fit for him that is the moving takeaway without woman creation not yet good without woman you can search the world over not yet found and so then the culminating movement of the text is really located in verses 21 and 22 where you're going to see notice the active verbs

[20 : 36] God will have him sleep and take a rib and close it and God from that rib he had taken made will make into a woman and brought her those are the active verbs I wanted you to see God made her God brought her God made this woman from the man answering the not goodness of creation without her God brought this woman to the man answering the not yet found until her and there we have it I just I just want to pay attention to it notice the woman is made from the man this is interesting it's not just that we all come from one couple we actually all come from one man even the woman from the man which has a lot of implications that I don't have time to go into today but the implications are there for the historicity of

Adam and the theological implications that he is our federal head in whom we all have our existence but it also has implications for what it means to be human again the woman comes from the man that her origin is within her and this speaks volumes in regard to the theological import later that God will give for us in Christ and through her the birth of the church we have our very life in the one man we have our new birth through the spirit and the adoption into his family everything we have is in that beautiful union God made the woman and that has deep implications for what it means to be made human and one family and that ought to bring mutual respect within this church family one for the other I'm not going to turn there but you already know 1 Corinthians 11 verse 9 will pick up on the idea of the woman is made from the man but we'll go on to say but that is nevertheless needs to be understood in terms that man himself comes from the woman and so the writer is picking up on this from this to create within the church body both an understanding of respect and way of relating to one another that elevates both in the midst

God made God brought I like to envision Eve here she will be named by Adam indicative of his carrying on his responsibilities in the world he's going to name the animals he's exercising what God wants him to do he names the woman who has come forth from him and now notice almost like a wedding Eve coming to Adam on the very arm of God she's presented and if you are a young girl or a young woman or a matriarch in our midst you walk with all the dignity as heirs within the lineage of the fullness of what

God does here in God making and in God bringing we see God securing an everlasting goodness for his son no wonder verse 23 is the resolution not the climax the climax is 20 21 God did it God made her God brought her but the resolution is the man saying this this at last bone of my bones flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman she was taken out of man this poetic verse of wow God has resolved all that is needed for his creation to move forward my hope then is that every young girl under the sound of my voice again every woman who enters through the doors of Christ church that you will experience in all purity the poetic intent behind these words from every man that you meet that dignity for her will be on display in this house that honor to her will be bestowed upon all in this house that a celebration properly will be given to what God has done in and through her that all the endowed radiances of divine pleasure that are given to this woman will be protected by all who are in our midst and what is more just as we learn how this relationship plays out in the Bible it will become clear that not only is God securing in her an everlasting goodness for his only son namely that in

[26 : 31] Christ and through the church we have the very delight of what our Lord wants but we will see that he satisfies the deepest longing of your soul that the church is the everlasting delight of his son think of it that Jesus the second Adam to whom this first Adam already was pointing toward will say the saints are the ones in whom is my delight that the one to whom all rule and authority has been given now intercedes in the heavens at the right hand of the Father waiting for the pleasure of welcoming you into his presence forever more does it get any more glorious than this can God in one act both satisfy the eternal enjoyment of his son and the deepest longings of your soul and he does it from here oh it's beautiful in verses 24 and 25 the narrator's voice returns it's almost as though he's beginning to make application of the text it's an interesting verse verse 24 evidently

moving beyond the story itself to a time in

Israel's history where we see the implications of that first act we're now reading of the sense that there are already fathers and mothers around in creation he says therefore a man shall leave his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one text the narrator's voice is beginning to apply the text for later generations and notice it gets applied here in regard to marriage but by the time you get to the New Testament it will be applied in manifold ways as well let me just give you three this beautiful creation of woman applies in the New Testament along the lines of marital inseparability but also the permanence of biological sex and gender intentionality and as well as universal sexual purity I know that's a mouthful let me slow it down this text this movement to not ashamed from not good to not found to gotten and made to not ashamed this trajectory has implications for everyone listening to me today and the

New Testament picks up on them on at least three occasions and fleshes out application Ephesians 5 you already know this so many of you who are young who want to be treasuring this and want to be married under this are fearful of this text but Ephesians 5 has all the glories of this inseparability this unity and it actually applies the truths of our text to the condition of those in the church who happen to be married you can see it right there in Ephesians 5 therefore a man shall leave his father or mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh that's verse 31 but it's in the context of a husband loving his wife as he loves himself because there is a unity she has in one sense the first woman came from the man no wonder he would love the woman through the activity of the man and this unity and this inseparability are what's picked up on in marriage and it ought to be reflected in every marriage in

Christ Church Chicago the beauty of this relationship the unity of relationship the inseparability of the one for the other in this relationship I know we don't all experience that we're in a fallen world but this is what the Bible says this is what the Bible means this is how it ought to be applied in your life for those who are husbands in our midst they are to love their wives as Christ loved the church they are to love their wives as they love their own body for who doesn't love themselves and yet the woman came forth from you how is it that you would not love her she is one with you inseparable to you and ought to be served by you I mean this is just a beautiful thing but Ephesians 5 isn't the only place where you begin to see this perfect counterpart and application from Genesis 2 but Matthew 19 grabs hold of our text when a question is asked of Jesus regarding the permanence of this male female relationship of this man woman relationship of this marriage relationship there's something about the intricacy of the permanence and the intentionality of man male and female husband and wife so Jesus actually quotes in Matthew 19 you already know this I don't need to show it to you that Jesus quotes Genesis 1 he made them male and female notice Jesus doesn't shy away from calling them male and female and then he says Genesis 2 that what God created in Genesis 1 is what he intended in Genesis 2 and then he comes forth with his own culminating interpretation therefore let no man put asunder!

[32 : 23] think of it think of it along the lines of biological sex Jesus from his own voice male and female think of it in regard to gender man and woman what God created says Jesus God intended think of it in regard to identity think of it in regard to all of its permanence therefore whatever God did he intended whatever he intended he meant that it shouldn't be taken down and this is something that we need to walk with one another in as a church family I mentioned it in chapter one I'll mention I'm sorry I mentioned it last week I'll mention it again compassion ought to be the ruling vantage point from which we work with one another as we live in a world so far east of Eden but there is something in the scriptures about continuance to these things commendation of

God or in the voice of Jesus in Matthew 19 the very commendation of our Lord one man one woman he created he intended he doesn't want it broken this is what the Bible says this is what Christ church believes this has big implications for the way we talk with one another and deal with one another on all kinds of areas and we will live in compassion toward one another and work these things out and we will hold in continuance to what God has done and we will ground it not in some dictatorial rule of law but by the commending voice of the creator of the universe and his son Ephesians 5 picks up our text Matthew 19 picks up our text let me let me get ready to shut this down 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 grab hold of our text and it's not in regard to the inseparability of it not in regard to the intentionality and permanence of it 1

Corinthians 6 and 7 grab hold of this text whether you're married or single divorced or widowed betrothed or not the whole realm of 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 is in regard to the intention of this text as

it relates to sexuality and to purity it might be worth just seeing in 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 there is a moment in verse 16 of chapter 6 where it is written the two will become one flesh and without having to walk you slowly through 6 and 7 all of the questions that are related here are in the context of sexual mores for a believing community now that we have come to Christ what does it mean now that I'm a Christian in regard to how I handle my body what does it mean if I'm married or not married divorced or looking to remarry single or otherwise and

Paul will commend in these chapters remain in the condition you find yourself in don't worry about that but he calls all of us all of us to sexual purity all of it in those chapters and so for all of us I just want to state in our present state and our struggles with sexuality there is an exclusivity of this beginning chapter in Genesis that ought to hold us in purity everyone needs to realize that our struggles over sexuality over singleness over marriage over divorce over remarriage over all our efforts think of it all your efforts to secure intimate relations no matter how thoughtfully you try to secure those or for many of us how recklessly you try to pursue those they are all skewed they are all skewed we all live under the umbrella of a skewed sexuality this side of the fall we are all in this together this is nothing new and we ask ourselves what am

I to do what is open to me and know this sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage is wrong premarital sex is wrong adultery is wrong and adherence to pornography is wrong the practice of homosexuality is wrong bestiality is condemned as wrong in the coming day the use of sex robots is and will be wrong at its most basic and fundamental level the lust of the human heart are all violations of a one flesh principle all of us are fallen everyone is charged all are guilty all are trying to come to some resolution on how to handle ourselves as God fully intended we all need redemption we already know this we need purity we need help we need to be striving toward holiness are you married and in need of help on this seek help are your desires misguided seek help are you gay seek help remember 1st Corinthians 6 and 7 here speak about the fact that such were some of you past tense were some of you you don't find in the scriptures and just allow me this word of pastoral love and encouragement

[38 : 14] I want us to get back to identifying ourselves as Christians or non Christians and I'm aware that even a term like I am a gay Christian is increasingly common I can only tell you that it leads to confusion because there are so many variant understandings of what that might mean and it's a confusion I find it unhelpful may we better consider ourselves as one as the bride of Christ as the church of Christ as Christian or not as the objects of Christ's love all of us under the banner of trying to sort ourselves out as it relates to human sexuality let me close with this at the outset of my message I wanted you to know that in my heart is every girl in this church and every woman who will come through our doors and every man in his maleness love or marriage coming to understand that in creating woman the everlasting enjoyment of Christ is secured and your sincerest spiritual longings can be satisfied and that the kind of satisfaction that your soul that my soul longs for is secured in coming to Christ finding our life in

Christ and living under the word of Christ you certainly remember the prohibition of chapter 2 verse 17 humanity has never been absolutely free we were cut from clay we are not the potter regardless of what men may say so rejoice I rejoice today in the making of woman for in her God has secured the everlasting enjoyment of his son wonder of wonders that we are the delight of his soul saints in whom is his delight objects now more than objects of his deepest affection submit let us submit ourselves therefore to God's intention for our lives let me put it this way give yourself over to the pleasure of being loved like this our heavenly father this portion of

Genesis which has placed the creation of man and woman in succession from one another has been rich there are things we've learned here that we would not have known if Genesis 1 was all we had so now bring your spirit to help us believe that which we've read and to embrace that which our Lord says and to walk with the confidence that you are doing something new and beautiful in us we praise you in Jesus name amen