

The First Marriage

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[0 : 00] We will now have our scripture reading. Please turn your copy of the scriptures to Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2. And after Genesis, we will then turn to Ephesians chapter 5.

! So place your hand in Genesis chapter 2 first of all, and then place your finger also in Ephesians chapter 5. Genesis chapter 2 beginning in verse 18. Let's hear the word of the Lord.

And 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 ground 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 of 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.

[1 : 24] 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." Turn over to Ephesians chapter 5, please. Ephesians chapter 5, reading from verse 22 through the end of the chapter.

1-1 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

[3 : 02] In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no one ever hid his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Well, this morning as we continue our sermon series in the book of Genesis, we'll be thinking about marriage in general, but we will be looking at the first marriage that we find in Genesis chapter 2, which was just read.

And in Genesis chapter 2, the heart of marriage is in these three verses, verses 23 to 25, and I want to read these verses and then pray.

[4 : 26] Starting in verse 23, Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you for your word this morning. We thank you for the privilege that we have to have it in our own language.

We thank you for this privilege of being able to gather together, to hear it read and preached. Lord, would you speak to our hearts this morning.

You know where each one of us is, and you know what we need. Lord, we thank you for your all-sufficiency and your ability to transcend the many differences that may exist in our lives and speak to us in ways that only you can.

I pray for your grace, Lord, to be faithful to proclaim your word as I should. And will you help us all to respond as you would have us to respond for the glory of your name.

[5 : 51] In Christ's name we pray. Amen. I own a copy of Merriam-Repst's Dictionary, the 11th edition, that came out in 1985.

And it defines marriage this way. The first entry gives two definitions of marriage. The state of being married, redlock.

And the second entry is the legal union between, sorry, the legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife.

However, if you were to go online to merriam-webster.com and you were to look at the definition of marriage, you would find the following definitions from the first entry.

The state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law. And the second, the mutual relation of married persons, redlock.

[7 : 02] And the third, the institution whereby individuals are joined in a marriage. Now hopefully you picked up the changes between what Merriam-Webster said marriage was in 1985 compared to what it is currently stated as on their website.

Now I don't know when they would have changed, but we do know that starting in 2004, the United States began to define marriage as being between persons of the same sex.

But what I think we should notice is in 1985, they saw it as a legal, not our, but the legal union.

The, meaning the only one. Not our legal union, meaning that there are multiple ones, but the legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife.

And the definition that they now have does not need to be changed anymore. They now have a definition that will float with every single possible configuration of marriage.

[8 : 17] marriage. This definition that marriage is the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law fits every possible conceivable union, combination of unions between broken and fallen people.

It includes any configuration, any combination that we could imagine, polygamy, timeshare marriages, whatever the fallen, corrupt, sinful minds of human beings can conceive.

And it's quite interesting to read in Romans chapter 1, verse 30, that tells us that we have the ability, fallen men and women have the ability to invent new ways of committing evil.

And the Bible says that's because God has given them over to do what ought not to be done because they refuse to retain our knowledge of God.

They refuse to acknowledge God as God. And God says, okay, if that's what you want to do, I will let you go where your vain imaginations will take you. And what the Bible says in Romans 1.30 is that we have the ability in our fallenness to invent new ways of doing evil.

[9 : 54] And that helps us to see the extent of sin and the extent of the fall. That as evil as things are, we have this ability to be even more evil and to invent and imagine ways that before could not have been imagined in terms of sin.

And I'm sure that Merriam-Berbster is not alone. It's not the only dictionary that is taking this redefinition of marriage. I'm sure that mainstream, other mainstream dictionaries have done the same.

But brothers and sisters, God's definition of marriage has not changed. Whatever fallen men and women define it to be, wherever they lay down their boundaries for marriage, God's definition has not changed.

And we see that in Genesis chapter 2. When we come to Genesis chapter 2, we come to an ancient landmark. We come to a landmark that God himself laid down, and it would be about 6,000 years, which would be roughly the time of the creation of the heavens and the earth and humankind on the earth.

About 6,000 years ago, God laid these boundaries down for marriage. And what we see in Genesis chapter 2 is that marriage is a covenantal union of love between one man and one woman, and it is the foundational institution that God created for human beings to flourish and manage the earth.

[11 : 52] That's the unchanging definition and purpose for marriage. And it matters not what countries say marriage is. It matters not what linguists say marriage is in their dictionary.

That is the unchanging definition of marriage. It is a covenantal union of love between one man and one woman, and it is the foundational institution that God created for human beings to flourish.

For us to flourish and do well, live together, and to manage the earth. Now, I know that's a mouthful, and so what I want to do is I want to reduce it to two statements.

Two statements that I want us to see from this account of the first marriage in Genesis chapter 2. And the first statement is this.

Marriage is a covenantal union of love. That's what we see in Genesis chapter 2. You may remember last week, we looked at how God placed Adam in the garden.

[13 : 10] This amazing garden that was vast, and he filled it with everything that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. And that was a gift to Adam.

So that's the first gift. This morning, we come to the second gift that God gives to Adam. The first gift he gave to him, he put him in the garden, and he told him how he was supposed to live.

He said, you could eat of all of the trees of the garden, and that would have included the tree of life in the middle of the garden, but he says, of one tree, you must not eat. So God gave him these two ways to live.

God didn't do that for any of the other creatures. He didn't create a home and a habitation for any of the other creatures, but he did it for Adam.

And the second gift that God gives to Adam is the gift of a wife. Again, this is something God did for Adam alone. He did not do this for all the other animals.

[14 : 09] He created the other animals, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and he said to them simply, be fruitful and multiply. But when he came to creating human beings, he took a completely different approach because human beings would bear his name.

They would bear his image. And so let's consider how God gives this gift of marriage to Adam. Now again, remember that these details that we find in Genesis chapter 2 are filling out some of what we have already read in Genesis chapter 1.

It's important to remember that God gave these gifts to Adam on the sixth day. That's the day that Adam was created. He was created on the sixth day.

When he was created, God put him in the garden. But God also gave him the gift of a wife on the sixth day. And we know this because in Genesis chapter 1 verses 26 through 28, we see that God created man, male and female.

He created them and he blessed them and he told them to be fruitful and multiply and he told them that they were to manage the earth. They were to subdue it. They were to rule over the other creatures.

[15 : 41] And then in verse 31 of Genesis chapter 1, we're told that God saw everything that he had created and he said it was very good. Now, the observation though that we see in verse 18 is that God said something was not good.

He said it was not good for this man, for Adam, to be alone. And so this means that what God is observing, what Moses is recording, God is observing in verse 18, had to be before verse 31 of Genesis chapter 1.

Because at verse 31 of Genesis chapter 1, God says, now everything is good, everything is wonderful. So this point at which Adam was alone and God says, that's not good.

That's before the end of the sixth day and God is going to give him this gift before the end of the sixth day. Hopefully you see that.

If you don't, just read it again and I think the connection will be seen. So what we see is that God recognizes and remember this, right?

[16 : 59] The way the Bible is written is the Bible is written to accommodate us, to condescend to us that we understand these things. So imagine, for example, you're reading a book to a child and how you may change things, you may even change your voice, you may break words up and you may say things a little differently to accommodate that child.

Well, God knows everything. God knows everything from the beginning to the end. So we shouldn't think that the way this is happening is that God creates Adam and say, man, I should have, that's not good, he's alone.

No, it wasn't that. That's what's being relayed to us through Moses that we may follow along. But what is recorded is that God sees the need that Adam has.

He's alone. But what God wants to do is God wants Adam to see his need. God could have just seen the need and given him a wife and filled the need but Adam would not have been able to appreciate the gift that God gave him unless he saw the need that he had.

So what God does is God sets out to help Adam to discover his need. And the way he does that is he gives Adam the task of naming the animals.

[18 : 22] animals. And so we read in verse 19 that God had, notice it says, now out of the ground 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 so as these animals were coming to Adam and he's naming them and he's observing them, he goes through the whole process of naming the birds of the heavens and naming the beasts of the field.

And Adam had the sense to know that he was different. Adam had the sense to know that not only was he different in terms of makeup and ability over all of these animals but Adam would have noticed there was many of them and was one of him.

No doubt he would have observed companionship between the animals and yet he was the only human being. And we get a hint of what was going through Adam's mind.

Notice in verse 20 it says, but this is the observation, but for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. And then we see Adam when the Lord creates or he forms Eve and he brings Eve to Adam.

[19 : 50] Notice what Adam says in verse 23. He says, at last. That's what he says. At last. He said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

The idea is that he was waiting. He was like, this doesn't make sense. I see all these animals, they all have associations and companions, but I'm all by myself. And so God helped Adam to see his need.

And when God brought the gift of a wife to Adam, Adam says, man, at last, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

Finally, someone like me. And so that was God's approach. God's approach was that he knew Adam's need, but he wanted Adam to see his own need before he provided for that need.

And he did this by having him to name the animals. You know, just as an aside, sometimes God works that way with us as well. Sometimes we don't know what we need, we don't see what we need, and God brings us to see our need before he would meet that need so that we can appreciate what God has done.

[21 : 16] And notice how God defined what Adam needed. He defined what Adam needed not as a wife, but as a helper.

As a helper who is fit for him. Two times we're told this in verses 18 and in verse 20. It says, there was no helper suitable for Adam.

And so in verses 21 and 22 we're told how God goes about to create a helper who was fit for Adam. Notice that God doesn't survey Adam, interview Adam, and say, you know, Adam, you've looked at all these animals.

What do you think? What are your thoughts about your situation compared to these other animals?

God didn't survey Adam about what he needed. And God could have created mankind in multiples just as he did all the other animals.

[22 : 29] God could have simply said to us, you know, let there be and there would be many men and many women and we could have related to one another the same way the animals relate to one another.

We could have sexual partners, multiple sexual partners, without commitment, just living as the animals, living as the other creatures. God could have done that. But he didn't do that.

God could have said, let there be woman. He didn't do that. God did what he did to teach us and to instruct us about this union between a man and a woman.

And so what God does is he causes a deep sleep to fall over Adam. A deep sleep. So deep that he's able to, in a sense, perform a surgery on Adam, taking out one of his ribs, closing it up with flesh, and out of the rib, God made a woman and brought her to the man.

And beyond these details, we don't know exactly how God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. But he is God. And it should be no stretch of our minds to believe that God is able to do that because if God is God, nothing is impossible for God to do.

[24 : 03] But based on Adam's response, even though he was fast asleep, somehow God at least told him that he took Eve out of him.

That's what we see in verse 23. When Adam says, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she should be called woman because she was taken out of man.

The only way that Adam would know that is God had to tell him that. And God told him that for a good reason. God could have simply presented Eve to Adam and I think she was beautiful enough and Adam was lonely enough that he had no questions for God about anything else.

How she got there, he really didn't care. She was there and that was all that mattered. God told him how she got there. God told him, I took this woman out of you.

And again, what God presents to Adam is this helper who is fit for him. When we hear this word helper, one of the mistakes we often make is we see it, you know, we kind of think of like a helper on a construction site or a helper at someone's house.

[25 : 19] You hire them to do some tasks, but really not anything of any great importance. But that's not the idea of helper that we find in the Bible. It's not some menial or some subordinate role that God had in mind when he created this woman to be with this man.

Theologian Bruce Waltke, he notes this, he says that 19 times in the Old Testament this word helper is used, 19 times. 16 of those times it refers to God.

God is referred to as a helper and it signifies the woman's significant and essential contribution, not her inadequacy.

And I think when you get that kind of repetition of God referring to himself as a helper and that's the same designation that he gives to this person that he creates for Adam.

And he says, Adam, you're alone, it's not good that you should be alone. And so when the God of the universe decides to fill that need and he says, I'm going to give you a helper.

[26 : 43] A wife is part of being a helper. That's part of her function but she primarily is this helper that God gives to this man.

We say in Adam's words in verse 23 a beautiful covenantal description of marriage. It's a bone of bone.

And flesh of flesh union. It communicates covenantal union. And this is why God took a part of Adam to create the woman, to create his helper, to create his wife who was fit for him, fitted and suited for him.

It communicates their covenantal oneness. And this image, this picture of God taking out of Adam this rib from which he forms a woman is packed with amazing theology about marriage.

But this whole account helps us to see marriage as God really designed it to be. It's very clear from the order of creation that God creates men or creates husbands to lead their wives.

[28 : 12] The fact that Adam was created first, Adam was put in the garden, he was given charge to guard it and to keep it, he was given the commands, Eve was not given those commands, Adam would have told her what God said and she was to help him, she was to be there to enable him to fulfill what God had actually called him to do.

But it was Adam's primary responsibility to do these things. And despite the different roles that they had and the different responsibilities of husbands and wives, we're able to see that the way God created the woman, they share in equality and they share in the image of God.

There's no inferiority between them. theologian Matthew Henry makes a very wonderful observation about how and why God chose to take a rib out of Adam's side to form a helper who was suited for him.

Listen to what he says. The woman is not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved.

That's the picture that God communicates to us by putting, by creating and forming this woman out of a rib from Adam's side.

[30 : 08] And when we get ideas about marriage, about being anything other than that kind of equality, that shared equality, that shared dignity, that shared bearing the image of God, we're looking at fallen marriage.

We're not looking at marriage before the fall. We're not looking at biblical marriage as God ordained it. What we are looking at is marriage that has become tainted by sin.

Marriage has become corrupted by sin. God's original design is that marriage would be a covenantal union of love between a man and a woman, where they share equality of their personhood, where they enjoy this complementary relationship, they complement one another, each one of them is essential.

The whole idea is that this man, Adam, as a husband, is not all that he should be without his wife, and vice versa on the other side, that her as his helper, as his wife, that she needs him as well, and it's only together that they become the one union that God has in mind.

Only sin causes us to miss this equality and cause us to place a lower value on the different roles, or a higher value on the different roles that men and women share in marriage.

[31 : 46] We also see in verse 24 that there's this communication of lifelong loyalty and commitment between a man and a woman.

Look at it again, verse 24, therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

When you think about how families were designed and how tightly knitted they were, this leaving was not an easy thing to do. This man leaving his father and his mother and holding fast to his wife and the two of them becoming one flesh and really a new family unit was not an easy thing to do.

It didn't mean that he abandons his parents, but what it does mean is a change of priorities, it means a change of loyalty, it means a change of affection.

And the husband is called to take this initiative, he is called to do this, he is called to leave father and mother, he is called to receive his wife, and he is to hold fast to her.

[33 : 08] And notice it doesn't even say for life, because the whole idea is that's the only duration that covenant has. True covenant is for life. True covenant has no exit, door, no exit strategy at the end.

And the only reason that changes is because we live in a broken and a fallen world and we are broken and fallen people. But this is the biblical revelation.

The biblical revelation is that this marriage is to be an enduring covenantal union between this man and this woman.

In verse 25, we also see that marriage is an exclusive relationship of sexual intimacy between a husband and his wife.

We see in verse 25, and the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed. This is a beautiful picture of covenantal love and trust and protection as God designed it to be.

[34 : 26] It speaks about honesty. It speaks about transparency. It speaks about nothing to hide in the context of marriage. marriage. But it also sets up what we're going to read about next week in chapter 3.

When sin enters the picture and when there is the awareness of nakedness and there is shame and there is an attempt to try to cover it all because of sin.

Brothers and sisters, it is important that we see that marriage marriage is a gift of God that he has given.

It is an amazing gift that God has given. It is a beautiful picture of this covenantal union. And I think one of the things we should see as we consider this this morning is that Adam needed more than a sex partner.

And how do we know that? We know that because God gave him more than a sex partner. God gave him a helper that certainly included being a sex partner, but that was a part of it, a really very small part of that relationship.

[35 : 52] There is something higher and better and stronger and more lasting and enduring than the activity of sexual relations.

And so what we see is this covenantal union between these two persons from the way God took the woman out of the man and essentially formed her.

marriage is not only a covenantal union of love between a man and a woman. From this account we are able to also see that marriage is the foundational institution of God.

It is the foundational institution of God. And we're better able to see this when we remember that it was not until after God had formed Eve that he blessed her and Adam and told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and manage the earth.

That's the cultural mandate. And he gave it to both of them. He gave that mandate to both of them. He didn't give it to Adam and say go tell Eve. No. Together he blessed them.

[37 : 14] Together he said to them be fruitful and multiply. Together he said to them take dominion over the earth and you're to manage the earth as my stewards. They're to do this together.

They're to do this together as partners. As equal partners with different roles that God gave to them.

We'll see this next week but just to foreshadow it a little bit. When the curse comes, the curse comes to the fundamental roles that God had given to men and women.

Just bear that in mind as we look at it next week. But those roles had nothing to do with determining equality and inequality. We only get those ideas because of sin.

dignity and worth has nothing to do with what we do, with the things we do, the tasks we have. I often use the illustration of a corporation, a business.

[38 : 17] The top guy is no better than the person who is at the lowest part of the staff hierarchy. They have different functions. One may have more authority to do different things but in terms of dignity and worth and value and personhood.

All the same, and that should be respected. We should never demean a person because of the role that he or she plays. And we should never make much of ourselves or other people because of some role that we actually play.

We are who we are, and we are who God created us to be. We're not what we do. We are who we are. And so this idea that a family unit would be made of Adam and Eve and that they would have children when God created this vast garden.

He had more than Adam in mind. So he gives them a wife and the idea was that they would have children. They would multiply and there would be many, many family units multiplied from that.

And they would go from Eden. That's what those four rivers were for. They would go to the ends of the earth and they would fulfill the cultural mandate that God had given to them while obeying God, not partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, learning good and evil from God and the way he defines it.

[39 : 44] Not going to try to find that on our own because we see where that led us. But it was living in obedience to God. And this was God's idea to have this humanity that was going to develop and grow over time, order through family life, order through a husband and a wife.

See, because again, death was not in the picture. And just progressively carrying out the cultural mandate and taking control of the earth, taking dominion over the earth.

And so what we see is that marriage then is the foundational institution of society. It's before the church. It's before human government.

And now it's only because of the fall that we don't know what life would have really been like had there not been sin that entered into the picture.

father. But what we know now is that God gave the gift of marriage and by extension the gift of family as the foundational institution through which human beings would flourish and manage the earth living in obedience to him.

[41 : 12] and despite the fact that sin and the fall has caused men and women to rebel against God's plan for marriage and the family, we must remember that marriage is still the foundational institution of society.

That's what God created. That is the smallest building block upon which all of society is built and it is a gift even in its brokenness even in its fallenness.

And the more we as a society are able to conform to God's plan, the more we as a society will flourish. But we have rebelled.

Marriage is no longer the only context for sexual relations. In our wisdom, which is folly, we have legalized sexual relations to take place outside of marriage.

And so we have the sins of fornication and adultery. We've even legalized children having sexual relations. In this country, the age is 16 years old.

[42 : 33] And we see the folly of that because in order for a child, someone under 18, to get married, you need the permission of parents. But you don't need the permission of parents legally to engage in sexual relations once you're 16.

But if you're less than 18, you need the permission of your parents. And that's our wisdom. And that's our wisdom that flies in the face of divine wisdom.

And we have shown the greatest folly by rejecting God's gift of marriage between a man and a woman who he created in complimentary fashion.

He created them for sexual intimacy to be enjoyed by being opposite, to have the ability to reproduce. And we've decided that marriage is fine between people of the same sex.

And there's an increasing trend now towards polyamorous marriages where multiple people can just get together and say, hey, we are all married.

[43 : 51] And brothers and sisters, when we really consider how we're working through the book of Genesis, we're able to see the rebellion of mankind by rebelling against the foundation that God has laid for society.

That's why we're rebelling. We're rebelling at the very foundation. We're saying, no, we're wiser than you, God, and this is the way we will order our relationships.

relationships. In Leviticus 18, it's very instructive to read it and to read the sins that Moses, that God told Moses to tell the children of Israel were prohibited between them.

Now, remember, we talked about this at the beginning of the series that Moses is writing the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy to make a case to the nation of Israel to show them that the God who delivered them out of Egypt is the God who created the world and created them, and they are to live the way God would have them to live in God's world.

That's what he does in these five books. He's making a case to say, this is why you need to live this way. But when you read the book of Leviticus, the Lord tells Moses to tell the children of Israel they're not supposed to live the way the Egyptians lived, and they're not supposed to live the way the Canaanites lived.

[45 : 34] They come from Egypt, they were going into Canaan, he says, don't live like them. And then he begins to list all the sins, the sexual sins that are prohibited that they should not engage in.

And on the list is bestiality. Now recognize that bestiality was not there just because God was trying to exhaust every possibility and he came up with something that never existed before.

No, bestiality was there because it was practiced. And the Lord says to Moses, tell them that the woman or the man who lives with an animal is to be cut off from the community, they are to be executed.

And as I was thinking about this, I thought, how far have we fallen? When the Lord brought those animals to Moses, sorry, not to Moses, to Adam and told him to name them and he saw the animals coming to him, it never entered into the mind of Adam that he could possibly have an intimate relationship with one of those animals.

Never crossed his mind. They were not bone of his bone. They were not flesh of his flesh. But fallen man, sinful, rebellious men and women have come to do what Adam never thought to do.

[47 : 11] Never crossed his mind in a split second to do that. And we see it in Leviticus 18 and even today we have laws in our books in this country against bestiality in other countries and there are some countries that are allowing bestiality to take place.

And it helps us to see the depth of our fallenness. This is something that would have never been countenanced by Adam and here we are and God has given us the amazing gift of marriage where we can enjoy sexual and relational intimacy in covenant with someone who is suited for us someone who is equal with us and our fallenness has brought us so low that we would seek that with an animal.

but this is what happens when we rebel against God and this is what happens when God turns us over to go the way we want to go to do things we ought not to do.

It's when the worst things could ever happen to us is when God turns us over. Next week again we'll look at chapter 3 and we will see how all this happened how all this changed how these wonderful gifts that God has given the gift of being in this amazing garden the gift of having this covenantal union with this woman between this woman and this man and how Adam and Eve spurned it because in their own wisdom they thought that God was holding out from them God was holding something back from them and they tried to go after it and lost what they had and gained nothing in return and what we'll see next week is immediately when that happened husbands began to be domineering over their wives and wives began to be rebellious towards their husbands we'll see how this man

Lamech in Genesis chapter 4 he takes two wives totally contrary to the biblical revelation if God wanted if God's idea to fill the void that Adam had was two wives he'd have given him two wives or ten wives or whatever the case may be but he gave him one wife and we see after the fall the Lamech goes and he takes two and it begins this pattern of men taking multiple wives and we also see coming out of that where wives and women began to be treated as property and mistreated and abused in the most horrific ways and then we see why we need to hear the instructions of Ephesians chapter 5 22 through 23 33 saying that husbands love your wives the way you love your own body because in a sense your wife is a part of your body and wives respect your husbands submit yourselves to them as the church submits to Christ you know hardly a day goes by certainly in our country where we don't have people asking the question what's wrong with society and what's wrong with society is sin and sin has affected and disrupted and corrupted the foundational institution of the family and while people talk about the need to restore the family the fundamental need is not to restore the family but it is to restore and to save the hearts of men women boys and girls who comprise families and that's really the way that families will be truly restored and that doesn't mean that we don't do things that we are doing like passing laws to curtail behavior and enforcing those laws to bring about conformity and to restrain evil we need to do those things but we need to see those things for what they are those things will never transform the hearts of men women boys and girls they were never intended to you know

[52 : 15] God gave us the ten commandments but the ten commandments were never given to transform our hearts the ten commandments were given to constrain us the idea is not I mean you could care you could think what you want to think about stealing the idea is don't steal you may feel you have a right to somebody else's wife but the idea is don't commit adultery only God can transform the human heart and so yes we we need to enforce laws we need these laws but ultimately our hope is the transformation that only God can bring to the hearts of men and women in marriages and the extent to which we're able to see that take place is the extent to which we will see families being transformed and responding in light of the gospel because the gospel is to be lived out the gospel matters and it's not just a private thing but when we are truly transformed by

Christ it affects how we live and family is the primary place in which we live in Ephesians 5 31 32 and I'm closing Paul concludes his teaching about marriage by quoting Genesis 2 15 therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh and then in verse 32 he goes on to say this mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church real quick some of you know this but for those of you who don't let me say it when the Bible talks about mystery it is not talking about something that is hidden and we don't know what it is it's talking about something that was formerly hidden but now it is revealed and what Paul is saying is that the mystery that was formerly hidden is that this verse therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they should become one flesh the mystery is that that was about

Christ and the church and it's now revealed through the apostle Paul to tell us that that is what it actually is and so Paul tells us that when God was ordaining this institution of marriage he was doing more than building the foundational building block of society he was certainly doing that but he was doing more than that he tells us that this first marriage that God was pointing to the ultimate marriage he was pointing to the marriage between Christ and the church and when we think about what marriage has become today when we think about what marriage is today and all of its brokenness and all of its fallenness it's a different picture Christ laid down his life to save a people for himself to whom he joins himself in covenantal love and union we are united with

Christ forever he has promised never to leave and never to forsake and always to be with his people to the end of the age but marriage today that is to be pointing to that ultimate marriage shows us a different picture it shows us a picture of people who are not covenantal people who are not loyal and faithful people who do not sacrifice and serve one another in marriage the first marriage that scripture talks about is in the book of Genesis the last marriage that scripture talks about is in the book of Revelation and this is what it says in Revelation 17 verses 7 to 9 let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints and the angel said to me write this blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb and he said to me these are the true words of

God brothers and sisters it is amazing to me and I pray it's amazing to you as well that God would choose to let men and women people like you and me to mirror and point towards this amazing and ultimate marriage knowing all that he knew knowing how we would be broken people and fallen people and knowing how marriage would be such a distorted picture of this ultimate marriage but in his amazing grace and love he has ordained it to be that way and it is only when we find ourselves in a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ those of us who are married that we have this opportunity more and more to reflect this to one another and in a fallen and a broken world where we get to live out even in a fuzzy kind of way this covenantal union this love between a husband and a wife that Paul tells us

[58 : 50] God had in mind all along when he created the first marriage in the book of Genesis and I think those of us who are married know that it is only by the grace of God that we are able to communicate some semblance of this amazing love that is displayed between Christ and the church where he laid his life down where he sacrificed to make the church into his bride and so whenever we think about marriage brothers and sisters let us let this first marriage be our starting point as we seek to measure how the world is looking at marriage how the world is defining marriage as we seek to evaluate marriage but let's not stop there let us look to this ultimate marriage this perfect marriage marriage that is unlike our own marriages that lack this kind of enduring and lasting commitment and thank

God that's the marriage that he has decided that he would have with us that once we belong to him we will always belong to him he will never leave us he will never forsake us he will always be with us to the very end and may this be increasingly true about our marriages as well let's pray together oh father we are so grateful for the gift of marriage that you've given to us and lord we are even more grateful for the ultimate marriage that we get to be a part of because Jesus Christ set his love upon us and saved us and brought us to himself never to leave us never to forsake us but always to be with us to the end of the age lord as we enjoy the gift of marriage on this earth may we ultimately look forward to that day of that amazing marriage between

Christ and his church we ask these things in Christ's name amen amen let's stand together for our closing song please join as we sing turn your eyes turn your eyes upon Jesus our eyes to the hillside where justice and mercy embrace the will be there the son of

God gave his life for us and our measureless debt was erased Jesus to you and Jesus to you we lift our eyes Jesus our glory and our prize we adore you behold you our savior ever true Jesus we turn our eyes to you verse 3 and turn your eyes to the morning and see Christ the lion away and what a glorious dawn there of death is gone for we carry his life in our veins Jesus to you and Jesus to you we lift our eyes Jesus our glory and our prize we adore you we hold you I say forever true oh Jesus we turn our eyes to you

Turn your eyes to the heavens Our King will return for His own Every knee will bow Every town will shout All glory to Jesus alone Jesus to you And Jesus to you we lift our eyes Jesus our glory and our prize And we adore you Behold you A Savior ever true Oh Jesus We turn our eyes to you

[65 : 36] And oh Jesus We turn our eyes to you And oh Jesus We turn our eyes to you Let's pray together Lord we turn our eyes to you Lord we thank you for the gift of marriage The gift of husbands and wives Living together in covenantal love Yes Thank you.