

From “Not Good” to “Very Good”

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[0:00] Please turn to your Bibles to Genesis 2, 18-25, our sermon text today.

If you need a Bible, you're more than welcome to take one on the back table and keep it as our gift to you. Then the Lord God said, It is not good for man that 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. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

[1:06] 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.

Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, thank you for this word.

It is holy. It is good. It is your inspired, breathed out word. It is just as relevant in 2026 as in the day it was penned by Moses in the wilderness.

So God, would you speak to us, Lord? Speak to our hearts through this word. Let it convict where it needs to convict. Let it encourage where it needs to encourage.

As your word provides piercing comfort to our souls. Do that work among us this morning. In your name we pray. Amen. Presuppositions matter a lot.

[2:21] A supposition, if you don't know what a presupposition is, a supposition is something that you suppose. It's a belief that you hold, an idea that you subscribe to. And so a presupposition is a belief that you hold in advance of something.

For example, if you entered last week's Super Bowl, presupposing that the Seahawks were going to win, you saw the Patriots' second half attempt as inevitably futile, right?

Now, if you entered that game presupposing the Patriots were going to win, then you probably were taken on a pretty big emotional rollercoaster ride, right? The presupposition affected how you interpreted and responded to the situation.

If you're a scientist, your presupposition about whether or not there is a God influences how you interpret the facts of nature, right?

The presupposition that there is no God led to the Darwinian theory of evolution as a way to explain the origin of the universe. But Christians, we believe that there is a God, a God who, as we saw, pre-exists all things, who created the universe by his power and has revealed himself to us in his word.

[3:37] So that presupposition affects the way that we interpret the very same facts. Okay, one more. Even if you believe in that God, if you presuppose that he is not a good God, then you will come to a passage like the one before us today having to do with male and female, with skepticism, with cynicism.

You will probably seek to interpret this text through the lens of culture rather than letting this God-breathed word speak for itself. But Christians, we come to this text not only believing that there is an all-powerful creator God, but that he is unfathomably good.

That he is for the joy and the flourishing of mankind. And the ultimate proof of the goodness and the loving kindness of God is, as we've said again and again, the cross of Jesus Christ.

It's the gospel because there we see that God, under no obligation whatsoever, at unspeakable cost to himself, he acted for the eternal good of mankind.

God is real. God is powerful. God is creator. God is good. God is love itself. And with those presuppositions, not based on feeling, but based on revealed truth, we dive into today's passage.

[5:02] So, if you have not gone there, please turn in your Bibles to Genesis 2, 18-25. The title of today's sermon is From Not Good to Very Good.

From Not Good to Very Good. And we're going to see today, and this is a little bit of a mouthful, but as an act of his goodness and power, God created female to be the perfectly fitted complement to male, giving humanity every provision for a life of joy and flourishing.

That's what I think we see in this text today. Now, just by way of context here, recall that from Genesis 1-1 to Genesis 2-3, we were given this macro view of creation.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and we're taken through that song of creation. And then in chapter 2, verse 4, the camera pans in, and we're given this more detailed account of the creation of mankind and of their life in his life, Adam's life, in the Garden of Eden. Out of God's loving kindness, he formed Adam from the dust of the ground, and he breathed into him the breath of life, and God put him in that garden paradise, and he gave him rich and abundant food, and he gave him purpose, right, to work and keep the garden.

[6:19] He gave him choice, whether or not to submit to God's loving authority. We see in the previous passage that Adam is like a priest in the garden temple.

Adam is intended to manifest God's rule and then extend that rule for the flourishing of humanity. So far, all is right in the garden.

And so we continue the narrative now in chapter 2, verse 18, so please look there in your Bibles.

Then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone.

So we find a problem here. The man, Adam, is alone. Adam is alone. Now this should come if you have been reading the narrative, and this is why we should sometimes read large portions of Scripture.

I actually want to reinforce that. Read through large portions, read through all of Genesis even. It'll take you about four hours, and I know there's a lot of ways you can spend four hours, but I guarantee few will be better than reading through all of Genesis in one fell swoop.

[7:27] This should come as a jarring declaration to us. Why? Because six times in Genesis chapter 1, we saw the words, and God saw that it was good, and God saw that it was good, and God saw that it was good.

And then the very last verse, it said, Behold, God saw that it was very good. But here, during the sixth day, God declares it is not good that the man should be alone.

And God is going to solve the problem, for he says next, I will make him a helper fit for him. And we're going to come back to that. But first, look at the very next verse. Verse 19, 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. Okay, what's going on here?

Adam, in likeness to God, is exercising his God-given dominion, as we saw in Genesis 1, 26-28. Remember, Adam is God's representative.

[8:32] He is his vice-regent on earth. And Adam is here. He's ruling over the living creatures. And as a sign of this rule, just as God had called the light day, he named the darkness night, he named the expanse heaven, the dry land earth, the water seas.

Adam is now naming all of the living creatures. So this is a sign of Adam's authority. But not only that, his creativity. He has to come up with all these names. His intelligence, his intentionality, perhaps even his patience. I mean, that's a lot of names to give. All of these being reflections of the nature and character of God. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him. Now, the task of naming was certainly useful in and of itself. But here it has this double purpose of exposing Adam's need for a companion and a complement.

It is not good that the man should be alone. And Adam likely now feels this lack. Notice it's God made the declaration, but Adam probably now feels this because he just went through the whole task of naming the creatures, none of which make for a helper fit for him.

[9:44] Now, what is meant by this phrase, helper fit for him? So we often think of the term helper as some sort of inferior position. A helper, properly, is someone who supplies strength in an area lacking.

Someone who supplies strength in an area lacking. A helper provides what the helped needs, right? A helper does what the helped cannot do alone. And you know, of course, who the supreme helper is, right?

Who is the supreme helper? It's God. We just sang, the first song was, Come Thou Fount. We sing in that song, Here I Raise My Ebenezer.

Maybe you're all like, what in the world did I just sing? We're just gonna keep going. An Ebenezer is a stone of help. It's a stone of help. We see it in 1 Samuel chapter 7, after God provides deliverance to the Israelites from the Philistines and Samuel erects an Ebenezer. He names it a stone of help. God provided help to Israel. He delivered them. God is the helper. In fact, 16 of 19 instances of the word helper in the Old Testament, they're speaking about God.

[10:55] Another example is Psalm 54.4, So friends, there is great dignity in being a helper.

The term helper is not at all a demeaning term. It in no way connotes inferiority. It demonstrates, as commentator Bruce Waltke writes, the woman's essential contribution, not inadequacy. Now, if that's helper, I just want to pause and say, so I hope your mind is being expanded here to what the Bible actually says, not what culture thinks the Bible says, or you maybe have thought the Bible says, this is what the Bible teaches.

Now, what about the phrase, fit for him? The phrase is one word in Hebrew, and it's talking about kind of two ideas, a sameness and a difference at the same time. It's opposite in the sense of being a counterpart. And so in this way, as we now said three weeks ago, male and female have equality of worth.

[12:02] They're both made in the image of God. We talked about a few weeks ago, right? They both have the imago Dei. They also have similar natures, as we're going to see more a little bit later.

And they also have distinction in design, right? They are equal and opposite in a way that complements one another. They are divinely fitted for one another. Male and female are God's go-togethers, as Sam Albury writes in a children's book with that same title. I'd commend that children's book to you. God's go-togethers.

In the story, Ethan and Lila, they're with their aunt at a beach, and they discover all kinds of things that go together, right? A net and a volleyball go together, a kite and the wind, a mask and a snorkel, a crab and its shell.

And similarly, but in a far more profound way, God has designed male and female as two go-togethers. You know, G.K. Chesterton, observing a few other go-togethers, he wisely writes this.

[13:07] If I set the sun beside the moon, and if I set the land beside the sea, and if I set the flower beside the fruit, and if I set the town beside the country, and if I set the man beside the woman, I suppose some fool would talk about one being better.

And I want to take this opportunity, arising directly out of this word, to say to you women this morning, it is not good for us men to be alone.

For there to be, and I'm talking more broadly here than marriage, okay? I'm talking about in life, in our homes, yes, in our church home, in our communities, we need you.

We need you. You supply a strength that we men do not have. You fulfill a role that we men are unable to fulfill on our own. You add a dimensionality to human relationships that is precious and would otherwise be missing.

Each of you is a tremendous gift and of tremendous value to us and to the Lord. Now, we're going to get more specific as to the nature of that strength, that role, that dimensionality a little bit later, but I simply want you to know that you are valued, that you are needed.

[14:25] And because of you, we are together a better reflection of the image of God. One of us is not the image of God. We need one another to reflect God and his glory and his likeness.

Now, I also think there's a principle here that extends beyond the male-female dynamic, beyond the marriage relationship. And I think that, because the rest of Scripture accords with this, namely, that it is not good for any of us to be alone.

When God says it is not good that the man should be alone, he's also making a statement about our nature as humans. When we looked at Genesis 1, 26 through 28, we talked about how God, and we just sang about this, God is a trinity, right?

Father, Spirit, Son, three in one. Within the divine Godhead, there was and there is and there always has been a perfect harmony, a perfect fellowship.

And God made us in his image. God made us to be social, relational beings. He made us for community and companionship, for relationship, first with himself, but then also with others.

[15:40] God's design for unfallen Adam, we're still in Genesis 2, though he enjoyed this unbroken fellowship with God, God's design for Adam, was to reflect and enjoy the relational intimacy that the Trinity has out in the world of humanity.

When you isolate yourself from community, especially from the community of the saints, from the church, you do so at your own peril.

When you isolate yourself from community, especially this community, the community of the church, you do so at your own peril. This reality is seen in Ecclesiastes 4, commonly read at weddings, but extending, again, beyond marriages.

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.

God made us for community. He made us for relationship. Now, this becomes all the more apparent in the age of the church because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In sin, we isolated ourselves from God.

[16:54] We isolated ourselves from his community. And in love, God pursued each one of us, right? He sent Christ to the cross to forgive our sins, and then what's more, he pursued each one of us.

If you're in here and you're in Christ, God in Christ left the 99, and he pursued you, the one lost sheep, to bring you into his fold, to enjoy him and community.

And he, we were at Jordan, was just talking about, as we bring Brooke and Dylan into membership, God is making us into a family and a kingdom and a body. And it's a body in which no part is superior to another, and every part is indispensable.

If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. 1 Corinthians 12, 26. So brothers and sisters, press into the community of the saints.

Press into it. It's for your good, and it's for the good of the church. And as God took the loving initiative to pull you in when you were isolated, do that for others.

[18:03] Pull others in to the community of the saints. Ed Welch writes in his book, *Side by Side*, and this after exhorting believers to move towards people that are outside of their circle of friends.

He says this, if we're doing that, imagine how this can transform our churches. Instead of talking to the same people, those with whom we are comfortable and who are similar to us, we treat others as God has treated us.

Imagine, he says, imagine how aloneness could gradually be banished. Now we've seen in this text how God identifies a not good in his creative order, right?

Adam's aloneness. And now he takes action to do something about it. The solution. God creates woman. Look there in your Bibles at verse 21.

So the Lord God caused deep sleep to fall upon the man. And while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

[19:09] And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man. I want you to notice the first thing here is God's divine initiative.

God was the one who actually had pronounced the not good. And now God is the one who is doing something about it all by himself. We're going to see later how God causes Abraham to fall into a deep sleep, right?

God of his own accord enters into this unconditional covenant with Abraham. And God is basically saying, Abraham, hey, you can go to sleep. I've got this. Okay, you just go to sleep. That's what he's doing here.

Adam's going to sleep. God's got this. He's the one providing the solution. Adam can't do anything about it, but God's got it. The second thing here, God creates woman from man.

Now, I do want to debunk a myth first, a myth that I believed growing up. Men don't actually have one less rib than women. Did you know that? They both have, Matt confirmed this from, well, actually, he told me to consult Google, the nurse expert.

[20:18] He said, just Google it. Men and women both have 12 ribs on each side, I learned this week. Okay, God was doing surgery. He wasn't altering Adam's genetics.

Okay, all right. And that's the myth debunked. Now, it is significant that God creates Eve from Adam, right, using one of his own ribs. She is not created like Adam from the dust of the ground. Instead, she's created from Adam. And this is showing the vital connection between them. She is one with him. She is his perfect complement, his perfect companion. Now, Matthew, you might have heard this.

Matthew Henry famously wrote in the 1700s, That's a beautiful picture of what that relationship ought to look like.

And not only is Eve created from Adam, but also for Adam. Now, some of you, your senses are going up a little bit, and I want you to press in here because this is God's word.

[21:32] We see this in the fact that Adam was created first and Eve second. So there's an order here. Adam was, Eve was created to be Adam's perfectly suited helper, right?

She is solving his problem of aloneness that God had declared, the not good. And then after Eve is created, God brings her to the man. Now, this isn't just my conclusion here.

Paul makes the same conclusion when he says in 1 Corinthians 11, 8, and 9, which we looked at last year as a church, For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

Now, again, this is the sort of thing that makes our culture a bit uneasy. More like antagonistic.

Now, you might be thinking, Mike, that sounds offensive, right? How could you say that woman was made for man?

And again, I want to point out something here that Mike Lusa is seeking to say nothing more or less than what God, the creator, says. Okay? My dad was a mailman, and whenever we'd ask him how work was, I might have said this before, he'd say, oh, it was fine.

[22:31] I sort the mail, I deliver the mail. I sort the mail, I deliver the mail. That's all that I'm doing. I sort the mail in the week study, and I deliver the mail. Okay? This mail, though, is not just a stop-and-shop circular that you burn in your wood stove, that's what I do, or throw in the trash, right?

This mail is God's authoritative word. God has spoken. He is the sovereign creator, God, who speaks, and it is so, and who has ordered creation for our flourishing.

He is good. So we do well to listen to what the Lord says, and so in light of that, let's just press in here and consider what this actually means. Like, what does it mean that woman was made both from man and for man?

Now, the first thing that I think it means is that God has established hierarchy. Again, I want to pull from 1 Corinthians 11, and I would refer you back to that sermon we preached last year, in which Paul is addressing the issue of head coverings in the Corinthian church, but Paul says in verse 3,

okay, this is the theological basis for what Paul goes on to say, but I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Now, we said in that sermon that just as God the Father and Christ the Son are equal in worth, yet there is a hierarchy of authority, father to son, so too are husbands and wives equal in worth, but God has established a hierarchy of authority.

[24:03] But we also talked about what the nature of that authority is, what kind of authority is it, and fundamentally, it is an authority to lead and to love, or perhaps better, to lead in love.

This is not some tyrannical authority in which the man requires the woman to answer to his every beck and call, to fulfill his creature confidence. No, no, no. It is a sacrificial authority of self-giving, servant-hearted love, right, in which Paul says the husband loves the wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, an authority in which the husband nourishes and cherishes his wife as his own body.

And then she happily, willingly submits to his good and loving authority. That is the marriage ideal. Now, this dynamic also has implications that extend beyond marriage into the church, right? God has called elders to be qualified men, and this is grounded in the creation order. And again, we need to remember the creation order, it was an overflow of God's goodness and God's love, right? God created mankind as the crown of his creation in his image for joy and for flourishing, for relationship with him and with one another. And so the hierarchy that God established at creation is intended to be for our good.

[25:34] Second, God established interdependence. Interdependence. The very fact that it wasn't good for man to be alone and that woman was made from and for man underscores how interdependent!

interdependent we are. And Paul also captures this in that same passage in 1 Corinthians 11 when he says, nevertheless, in the Lord, the nevertheless is like, hey, you Corinthian men, in case you're trying to try to take what I'm saying and then abuse your power, it's like, no, no, no, no.

In the Lord, woman is not independent of man nor man of woman. For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman and all things are from God.

This goes back to our first point. We need each other. We need each other. Each of us needs to be in community, but more specifically, what this text is really talking about even more is that man needs woman and woman needs man.

And I want us to probe into this for a few minutes. And I want to do this by asking something that we started just barely to answer a few weeks ago. What makes a man a man?

[26:46] And what makes a woman a woman in such a way that we need and complement one another? I mean, this is so important for our time.

It's so important. This is one of the reasons that we wanted to come to Genesis. Now, there are some clues here in the text answering this question. There's clues here.

This also requires a holistic understanding of the constellation map of what Scripture has to say. But there are clues here. So I'm going to draw your attention to some of the clues that are here. But also know that I am in my mind, I'm also pulling in what other things the Lord has to say all throughout His Word.

I'll ask a question. Who is made outside the garden from the dust of the ground and then placed in the garden and then given the commission to work and keep it?

Who is given that? Adam. All right. Now, in this, we see Adam is especially fitted to work the ground and to guard and keep the garden and to extend its fruitfulness to the world.

[27:53] He will need to take the initiative and he will need to use his God-given strength to accomplish this. And he needs the help of Eve to accomplish this task.

But there's a difference here. Unlike Adam, Eve is not made from the dust of the ground. She's made from him. And she's not made outside the garden. She's made within the garden.

Eve is fitted differently. Eve is fitted primarily not to work the ground but to help Adam in his assignment, especially by nurturing and caring for her family and her home.

And so I think we establish, there's a principle here being established that again, we see throughout Scripture that of man as strong and protective leader, woman as nurturing and compassionate caretaker.

men in this room and I'm also talking to you young men because you're growing up into manhood and you need to know what it means to be a man. We are called, men and young men, to be initiative takers.

[28:55] We are called, men, to use our God-given strength and abilities to spread the goodness and the life of God to the world for human flourishing and for protection of humanity, especially the weak and the vulnerable.

This is one way that we live out our God-given masculinity. It's not about how much you can bench press. It's not about whether you like football or not. These are just cultural stereotypes and the church goes too far when it reaches into those and says, that's what it means to be a man. No, no, no. Being a man is being an initiative taker. It's being a leader. It's using God-given strength, not necessarily physical strength, but there is a physical reality that we see and we can't ignore it, right?

Work hard, men. Work hard. See needs and meet them. Take initiative. Protect the weak and the vulnerable. Elders, fathers, husbands in this room, we have a particular calling to do that for those under our care, but every man in this room is called to the same things, just in a different context. And these are things, these are characteristics that image God. Women and young women, young and aspiring women, you are fitted with gifts that we men generally lack, okay?

[30:12] You generally possess a greater nurturing spirit, generally possess greater compassion, generally possess greater relational sensitivity, and these two are characteristics that image our maker.

God transcends male and female distinctions, okay? These are also characteristics that image our maker and our Savior and Christ and their characteristics that we men are generally lacking.

So I can say it like this. If you see a nurturing heart or compassion or relational sensitivity in me, that is the godly influence of my wife on me over these 11 years of marriage.

Not that I didn't possess those things before, but that I probably possess them a lot more now than I did before because of her. Women, use those gifts for the flourishing of your families and your church family and your workplaces and the wider community.

Use them to provide spaces where souls are loved and cared for and nurtured. Now again, notice how I'm speaking to both the married and the unmarried, okay?

[31:19] What we see in Scripture regarding what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman, yes, it does find unique expression in marriage, in parenthood, but it extends to all of life.

As a single woman, you are able to live out your God-given femininity, right? As a single man, you are able to live out your God-given masculinity.

You're simply called to do it in a different context. Okay, now, as an important clarification here, in light of what I'm saying in this first point, am I saying that women can't be strong and that men can't be compassionate?

Absolutely not. And this quote from Andrew T. Walker speaks to this. Andrew T. Walker says this, a woman can be protective and a man can nurture, but we should consider whether there are natural aptitudes that men possess that make them better protectors and natural aptitudes that women possess that make them better nurturers.

This does not mean to suggest that maleness or femaleness can be reduced down to aptitudes and inclinations, but that these realities are tied to the larger embodied differences of men and women.

[32:34] If we insist that there are no differences in aptitudes or inclinations, we are insisting upon, this is what our culture insists upon, the interchangeability of the sexes which history and experience tells us is false.

He goes on here. Stay with me in this long quote. To misunderstand, blur, or reject the creator's categories for humanity doesn't just put us in rebellion against the creator and creation, it puts us at odds with how each of us was made.

Since God made a very good world with no flaws, and since that world included humans created as men and humans created as women, to strive to become different than or even the opposite of how God made us can never result in happiness, flourishing, and joy whatever it promises.

Okay. There are also, I'm pulling here a little bit from Genesis 2, right? Look in your Bibles at Genesis 2, verse 15.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it, and then he gives the command to Adam. There are spiritual undertones to Adam's commission in 2, verse 15. [33:51] I said before at the start here that Adam is like a priest, right? He is serving the Lord and keeping his garden temple like the Levitical priests will later do.

The language is actually similar. It's the same. Now this becomes more obvious in the next verse, 2, 16, when Adam is given that command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Right? Adam, as priest in the temple of God, in the garden, he will need to instruct his wife and his children to come. Right? He's going to need to teach them the ways of the Lord.

He's going to need to guard the moral purity of his family. And so Eve is brought along as an important helpmate to Adam in this, but he's supposed to lead and she's supposed to follow and then encourage him in that calling, in that priestly role.

And so again, here's another principle. Man as spiritual leader, woman as spiritual follower and encourager. Men, we are called to be the spiritual leaders.

[34:52] Right? To be the pastors of both church and home. Husbands, you are fathers. You're the pastor of your home. You're the shepherd of your home. We're called to shepherd and disciple those under our care into greater knowledge and love of Christ and of the Lord.

Now of course, in order to do this, we ourselves need to be pursuing Christ. We ourselves need to be seeking the Lord on our own in the word and in prayer.

Now if you're sitting here and you're a male and you're not a husband and you're not a father or an elder, first of all, you might be one day. Secondly, every man should aspire to the qualifications of an elder.

They're the qualifications of what it looks like to live out our calling in Christ. Every man should aspire to those. But thirdly, every man has opportunities for spiritual leadership to varying degrees. Every man should be seeking to lead others to know and love God, to worship and to serve Christ, and if nothing more than by his own godly example. Women, you are vital helpers toward this great end of all of us knowing and loving and worshiping and serving the Lord, and then passing that faith onto the next generation.

[36:14] So this means that you also need to be pursuing the Lord, studying his word, and praying to God. It also means that you should be spurring on the men in your life towards the same.

It means that you should be praying for your husbands and the fathers and elders that God might equip them by his spirit to lead well. And then it means that you should seek to follow their leadership.

Okay, the last one. We already talked about this a few weeks ago, so I'm going to be pretty brief. Recall the creation mandate, right?

Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And what is the primary way that we fulfill that mandate? Childbearing. Nobody wants to say it out loud.

It's okay. By populating the earth with more humans, can man do that on his own? No. No. He needs woman.

[37:11] Adam needs Eve, whose name literally means life giver, in order to fulfill the creation mandate. We see this principle here that man equals biological male and that woman equals biological female.

Okay, now men, you are more than your physical anatomy, but you are certainly not less. Women, you are more than your biology, but you're certainly not less.

No matter what the world teaches, Christopher Yuan writes, sexual differentiation is not a social construct. Being male and female is an intrinsic aspect of who we are.

God did not make a mistake when he assigned each of you at conception the biological sex that he assigned you. We are sexed beings, right? Sexual differentiation is God's beautiful design.

He made us male and female in his image so that in addition to everything we said before, we could partner with him in the creation of more humans. These are humans who are made in the image of God.

[38:16] They have worth and value far above all else in creation, and they are immortal souls. This is not some small thing to create humans. It's a big deal.

And God made us differently to be able to do that. Okay, we've touched on some important ways that a man is a man and a woman is a woman. There's so much more that could be said. I would recommend to you a book the men are going through right now in the Friday morning study, *Men and Women in the Church* by Kevin DeYoung.

That's a great book. I also have some kids books that I'll have up front for you to see that kind of address these topics for much younger audiences. I just want to finally say before we move to the next point, men, strive to live out your God-given masculinity.

For God's glory and for the flourishing of others. And you do not need to apologize for being a man. God made you a man. You don't need to apologize for it.

Okay? Instead, you should thank God for making you a man and then strive to embody Christ in your masculinity. Women, likewise, strive to live out your God-given femininity for God's glory and for the flourishing of others.

[39:25] Be thankful that God made you a female. Now, culture doesn't tell you to apologize for it, but be thankful that God made you female in his image and likeness and seek to embody Christ in your femininity.

Okay, so God identified a problem. He took the initiative to solve that problem and then he brings Eve to Adam and now look at verse 23. We're going to move a little faster here. Adam responds, 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. The response, Adam is overjoyed. Right? Adam bursts here into poetic song. He's awestruck. He's overjoyed at what God just provided for him.

As in English, we can see it in the English, but the Hebrew word for woman and man, they're closely related. Again, demonstrating this intimate connection between the two. She is of the same stuff as Adam.

Right? And unlike all the other living creatures, she is his perfect complement. Right? She's his counterpart, his companion and helpmate, his divinely fitted helpmate.

[40:30] Husbands, may we cultivate through prayer this kind of sense of overwhelmed gratitude for our wives that Adam demonstrates here. And then demonstrate it tangibly to them.

Now we naturally feel this on the day of our weddings. Don't we? In that engagement period, on the wedding, even after that. And then as the rough and tumble of life ensues, we so easily take for granted God's very good provision.

Now this works both ways, of course. Right? Husbands to wives, wives to husbands. God, help us to see one another with admiration and to thank the Lord. Now we should also see our brothers and sisters in Christ in this way.

Because God not only divinely fits spouses together, but whole churches by his grace, it's by his design. We are a church of male and female that God has sovereignly arranged and composed for our joy and our flourishing in Christ.

Again, we saw that in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. He's also done that, not only for our joy and flourishing, but for us to display Christ. This is our purpose here. For us to display Christ and the gospel to the world.

[41:37] Right? For the salvation of sinners, for the glory of God. And we do that better. We fulfill the great commission better as a church of male and female. Now this passage, and the whole creation account of Genesis 1 and 2, next week we're going to have a hard transition into Genesis 3, but the whole creation account ends like this in verse 24.

This is sort of an epilogue here.

God institutes marriage. Now if you've been at a Christian wedding, you've probably heard this verse quoted and you've probably also heard the words that Jesus adds to it in Matthew 19, 6. Jesus says, What therefore God has joined together? Let not man separate. Here in this garden and sanctuary of Eden, God the Father walks the first bride down the aisle as it were and he joins her to the first groom.

God is instituting marriage. This is not, again, this is not a social construct. This is God, the Lord, instituting this good institution of marriage and he ordains it to be right here in Genesis 2.

[42:57] He ordains it to be the union of one biological man and one biological female for life. Right? For life. Now the word covenant is not here explicitly, but it's definitely implied.

The marriage relationship is founded upon a covenant, a commitment. Right? Not a feeling, a pledge, a promise of love and of loyalty.

Radically changes the way we look at marriage. If marriage is based on my feelings and my sense of fulfillment, well then it can come and go. If it's a covenant that is lifelong, well that's something of another, it's made of different stuff.

Right? And the husband here is said to leave and it doesn't say cleave, but we often use the term leave and cleave. Right? To leave and to hold fast. This again, I think, shows one thing we already saw.

The leadership and initiative the man has to have. He's the one that's leaving. He's the one that's joining himself to his wife. Now it also shows, I think, another thing we said before, in the man joining with his wife, right, he leaves, he comes to her, it shows how she is to be sort of the nurturing heart of the home.

[44:04] If man's the head, woman is the heart. But most of all, I think it shows how the man's priority is no longer father and mother. Right?

It's his wife. He leaves the home, he clings to his wife, and they become this one flesh union. Now obviously, this connotes sexual union, but also so much more.

Okay? In marriage, they become a spiritual entity, a unity. They are one. This doesn't mean they lose individual personality. Right?

This is a reflection of the Trinity. They retain individuality, but they have commonality. There is this unbroken intimacy and union that is there.

And that reality is underscored, I think, in the closing comment. Man, the man and his wife were both naked and unashamed. This comment, it not only speaks to a physical nakedness, but of their being fully known, fully loved in return.

[45:08] Right? There is full knowledge of one another, full exposure, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. They are totally exposed to one another, yet without fear or shame.

Derek Kidner writes this, that this is the fruit of perfect love, which has no alloy of greed, distrust, or dishonor. And we're meant at this point to look back at the conclusion to day six in Genesis one and understand why it said, behold, it was very good.

God, in stunning creativity and power, with no help from anybody else, out of the overflowing goodness and love of his divine nature, he turned the not good of Adam's aloneness into this very good of the first married couple.

And so at this point, the end of Genesis two, mankind has been given everything he needs for a life of joy and flourishing, for a life of glorifying God, of worshiping and serving him.

But friends, we know, we know that the very good of the garden has been lost through sin. We're going to dive into that more next week.

[46:22] And whether you're married or not, you know that in light of sin, marriages never attain to the very good of Genesis one and two. Right?

But you see, marriage was never intended to be an end in itself. Adam and Eve walked with God. He was their end.

He was their highest joy and their highest satisfaction. And until that relationship is restored, our hearts, we said before, are restless. They're unsatisfied no matter where else we look.

See, we live in a post-Genesis three world. But we also live after Christ has come the first time. We also live after his life and death and resurrection and ascension.

And we now know that there is a greater marriage that is coming, don't we? One that every single person is invited into. Jesus Christ has given up himself, his own life for us.

[47:25] He has pledged himself to us in sacrificial, self-giving love. And now all of those who turn to him by faith and in repentance can enter into that greater marriage that is to come, their sins forgiven, brought into the bride of Christ, the church of Christ.

And when he returns, friends, the wedding feast of the ages is going to ensue. Christ and his bride will be joined together forever.

Then we're going to experience fully, finally, the garden ideal of being fully known and fully loved in the absence of fear and shame. Can you even imagine?

That's our hope. That's our hope. For everyone in this room that claims Christ, that is your hope. Husbands and wives, that greater marriage between Christ and the church, that is the pattern that we are seeking to replicate in our own earthly marriages and how we need the Spirit's help for that. Whether you're married or unmarried, if you are in Christ, then that greater marriage is the reality that you are a part of. And it's not just a lifelong but eternal covenant, an unbreaking covenant sealed in the very blood of Christ.

[48:48] And until that day when Christ returns, God has given all of his saints everything we need for a life of joy and flourishing in Christ.

Peter writes in 2 Peter 1, 3 and 4, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises so that through them you become partakers of the divine nature.

If you are a partaker of the divine nature, then you have the best thing. You have the best thing. You have Christ. You have fellowship with the living God.

That's the purpose for which you were made. You're joined in unity to the body of Christ, His bride, the church, and you are now able in the power of the Spirit to live out your God-given masculinity, your God-given femininity, and do that in the likeness of Christ.

Friends, that is human joy and flourishing in this broken world even and ultimately in eternity to come. Let's pray. Let's pray.