

Genesis 2:18-25

The Provision of a Wife for Adam

One of the greatest blessings this side of eternity is that of marriage

- I cannot think of any one person who has helped to shape me and mold me into the image of Christ than Sarah

There is no person who knows me better than her

- She knows my faults, my strengths

I am sure that those of you who are married can attest to these principles, can't you?

Marriage is a blessed union wherein God puts two lives together for His purposes

This isn't to say that marriage is easy

- The natural response is to be selfish and greedy
- We expect to be served instead of focusing on serving others

So far in Genesis, everything that God has created up to this point is “good” or “very good”

- No imperfections
- No blemishes

But there remains one more act of creation

- The formation of woman
- This will be our focus this morning

Let's read Genesis 2:18-25

God performs three (3) actions related to the creation of woman so that Adam will no longer be incomplete and alone

1. God points out man's need
2. God provides man's helper
3. God pronounces man's spouse

I. God points out man's need (2:18-20)

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone;

Up until this point, everything that has been created is either “good” or “very good”

- But we have something different here in verse 18¹

¹ John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, 78.

Everything in chapters one and two, apart from God Himself, is in need of something else to complete it

- The skies without the luminaries and birds are incomplete
- The seas without the fish are incomplete
- The earth without land animals and humans is incomplete
- Adam himself, although perfect in creation, was incomplete²

God Himself pronounces that Adam's status is "not good"

- Specifically, He says, "It is not good for the man to be alone"

So it is in the discussion of man's incompleteness that the creation of woman is announced

- This should help us to see part of the purpose and reason for woman's existence
- Man was not designed to be alone

When God says that it was "not good" for man to be alone, He was not saying that it was evil

- Remember, evil comes in only after the Fall

Man's state of being alone was not desirable

- Man could not carry out God's intended design by himself

We can also notice one minor point on this verse³

- Notice who makes the declaration that Adam's condition is not good
 - o *Not Adam*
 - o *But God*

Adam was not complaining or bickering about his lonely status

- Up to this point, the man didn't know any better
- *But that was about to change*

I will make him a helper suitable for him."

We know from the first chapter of Genesis that the animals had been created male and female

- The repeated command to "be fruitful and multiply" (1:22, 24) entails this

"And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (1:27-28)

- Genesis 1 is concerned with an overall portrait of the creation of humans
- Genesis 2 goes back and helps us to fill-in-the-blank on some of the details

By putting these two chapters together, we can surmise that there was a period of time (we don't know how long) on the sixth day between the time man was created and the time woman was created

For a brief time, Adam had no female counterpart

- He was all alone in the human species
- Adam realized that everything else had a partner, but not him⁴

² Victor P. Hamilton, *NICOT, Genesis 1-17*, 175.

³ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 95.

⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis 1-15*, 68.

God takes the initiative in providing a “helper suitable” for Adam

- This word “helper” is used throughout the Old Testament to describe one who provides what is lacking in man⁵

This is not a demeaning word

- As a matter of fact, God Himself is listed as a “helper” in the Old Testament⁶

God created man in such a way that he needs the help of a partner

Adam could not fulfill his responsibilities by himself

- He was not complete in and of himself⁷

Adam and Eve were designed to complement one another

- What Adam lacked, Eve supplied
- What Eve lacked, Adam supplied

¹⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky,

This is just a simple summary that God Himself had created all of the animals

The important thing to recognize is that God formed these animals “out of the ground”

- Out of the same substance that Adam was created, so it was with these animals
- Not *ex nihilo* (creation out nothing) – but creation from preexisting conditions

Even though Adam was formed from the very same elements as the “beast of the field” and the “bird of the sky,” there was no real fellowship between them

- No animal could be the “helper” that Adam needed

Also notice that not all of the animals were brought before Adam

- No fish were brought before Adam
- No creeping things were brought before Adam

The reason for this was that only those animals that were in close proximity to man were brought before Adam⁸

- None of these animals could be found to be a “helper”

and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

God, like a Divine Zookeeper, brings these beasts and birds to man for a specific purpose

- “to see what he (Adam) would call them”

Imagine the task of having many different animals species pass in front of you

- And you were to name them

⁵ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 126.

⁶ Ibid., 126.

⁷ John H. Sailhamer, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Genesis*, 46.

⁸ Morris, 97.

We saw from chapter one that God gave various names

- Called the light, day (1:5)
- Called the darkness, night (1:5)
- Called the expanse, heaven (1:8)
- Called the dry land, earth (1:10)
- Called the gathering of the waters, seas (1:10)

But now it is not God who names the animals

- It is Adam who is naming the animals

Man was put into a position of authority over the creation

- In 1:26, God said, “**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**”
- *He was to have dominion over the animals!*

Adam was created with a remarkable mind

- To be able to classify all of these animals and give them names must have been a challenging task

²⁰ And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

So here we have Adam giving names to all of these animals

- One species after another is brought before him
- Each animal is named and sent on

But with all of the variety of animals that pass by Adam, one thing remains the same

- “**but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him**”

You mean to tell me that there wasn't a single animal in all of God's creation that was “suitable” for Adam?

- That is exactly what God said

Adam must have recognized that no other animal spoke the language of man

- Therefore, he would never be able to have fellowship with the animal world
- He needed someone like himself, a human

God points out man's need

- *But there has to be a solution to this problem, right?*

II. God provides man's helper (2:21-23)

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept;

God not only points out man's need

- He provides the helper that Adam needs

The manner in which God provides a woman is remarkable

- God actually puts Adam to sleep
- The Text says it was a “**deep sleep**”

This is the first time that God puts someone to sleep before He acts

- But it won't be the last time

When God made a covenant with Abram in Genesis 15, “a deep sleep fell upon Abram” (15:12)

After God allowed Jacob to have the dream of the ladder coming down from heaven, Genesis 28 says that he “awoke from his sleep” (28:16)

This is not the normal sleep and rest that humans need

- This was a special case of God putting someone into a “deep sleep” for His own purposes

then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place.

During this Divine surgery, Adam is asleep

- Not because there will be pain involved
- God can certainly avoid this

Adam is put to sleep so that the credit for the creation of woman would be all of God

- Adam had nothing to do with the formation of Eve

Well, he did provide a rib, but he didn't volunteer for that!

The word here for “rib” is normally translated as “side” throughout the rest of the Old Testament

- But I believe that “rib” is the better translation here for a few reasons

First, the Text says that God took “one of his ribs”

- God only took “one” rib
- This wouldn't make any sense if the sense was “side” vs. “rib”
- There are many ribs in the human body – and this fits well into the context

Second, Adam will respond in 2:23 with the statement, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”

- Somehow Adam recognized in her the uniqueness of human life
- She was formed from a part of his very body

Matthew Henry states, “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”⁹

²² And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man.

In God's providence, He designed that the woman would be formed from one of Adam's ribs

- She was, in essence, made of the same “stuff” as Adam¹⁰

She was not made from the dust of the earth, like Adam

- She was fashioned from a rib
- She formed “an inseparable unity and fellowship” with the man¹¹

⁹ Wenham, 69.

¹⁰ Derek Kidner, *Tyndale OT Commentaries, Genesis*, 65.

¹¹ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Genesis*, 55.

Think about it

- Eve is the first thing that is created from another living thing¹²

and brought her to the man.

After forming the woman from the rib, God awakens Adam from his “deep sleep”

God then brings the woman to the man

- Almost like modern-day weddings where the father brings the bride to the groom

God the Father brings a spouse to the man for the first marriage

We know that woman was formed after man

- Paul tells Timothy, “For it was Adam who was first created, *and then Eve*” (1 Tim 2:13)

The apostle Paul states this same truth again in 1 Corinthians, “For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man” (11:8)

Eve was brought forth from the very side of Adam

- She was to work alongside him and assist him
- “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (1:28)

Not only did Eve have the same flesh and life as Adam

- She also had an eternal spirit like him
- They were both created in the “image” and “likeness” of God (cf. 1:27)¹³

²³ And the man said,

This is the first time in the book of Genesis that the actual words of man are stated¹⁴

- His statement is one of poetic outburst and emotion

“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;

This first statement from Adam regarding the woman may seem a bit perplexing

- What does he mean by these statements?

“Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, ‘Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.’” (2 Sam 5:1)

- This is not a statement of relationship, since they were not blood-related
- This statement conveys a pledge of loyalty

These tribes of Israel all unite under David and pledge their devotion and loyalty to one king, David

¹² Hamilton, 179.

¹³ Morris, 101.

¹⁴ Hamilton, 179.

Likewise, Adam comments to the woman, “**this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh**”

- This is a pledge of loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion

she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

Once again, we find Adam in a place where he can name the creation of God

- He names this new creation “**Woman**”

After the Fall, Adam “**called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living.**” (3:20)

There is a bit of wordplay between “**woman**” and “**man**” in the Hebrew

- Adam says, “She shall be called *Ishshah*, because she was taken out of *Ish*”¹⁵

We have a similar word play between “**man**” and “**woman**” in the English

- The woman’s name is derived from man

God points out man’s need

God provides man’s helper

Finally...

III. God pronounces man’s spouse (2:24-25)

²⁴ For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

The man is exhorted to leave his father and mother and to cleave to his wife

- Why is this so?

Before marriage, man’s greatest loyalty is toward his parents

- His is to honor them and provide for them

But when he becomes married, he is to re-establish new priorities and loyalties

- His first priority is now toward his wife, not his father and mother

The idea of “**cleave**” is oftentimes used in a covenant setting

- It means to enter into a covenant with another person

This tells us of the serious nature and permanence of marriage from God’s perspective

- Marriage is a covenant, not a convenience

It is interesting that shortly after the creation of woman, God established marriage as the norm and pattern

- Marriage was the first human institution established by God

The home would be the basic human unit of authority and instruction

- It would be the basic building block of human society¹⁶

¹⁵ Kenneth A. Mathews, *NAC, Genesis 1-11:26*, 219.

Christ was asked one day by a group of religious teachers, “Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” (Mt 19:3)

- This was a loaded question, designed as a trap for Jesus

But instead of succumbing to their bait, Christ goes back to Genesis 2 in forming His answer

- “And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read, that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh “? ⁶ Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” (Mt 19:4-6)

When the Pharisees responded with the fact that Moses allowed divorce, Christ said, “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.” (Mt 19:8)

- That last phrase is what sealed the deal

All sorts of marital deviations have occurred throughout human history

- Polygamy
- Homosexuality
- Divorce
- And the list continues

But as Christ reminds us, “*but from the beginning it has not been this way*”

- God intended for marriage to be between one man and one woman for one lifetime

We notice several applications that arise out of this passage on marriage

- Marriage is to be monogamous – one man and woman
- Marriage is to be permanent – one lifetime
- Marriage is to be pure – “*one flesh*”
- Marriage was instituted by God – He and He alone brought this union into existence
- Marriage is to be heterosexual – everything outside of this is a deviation from God’s original standard¹⁷

²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

There was no reason for Adam and Eve to be embarrassed

- There was no reason for them to be ashamed
- They felt perfectly natural with one another

Only after their sin did they understand some of the stigma of being naked

- “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.” (3:7)

Immediately after sin entered the world, perfection became perversion

¹⁶ Morris, 99.

¹⁷ Davis, 78.

Marriage is being attacked these days like never before

- It seems that the phrase “traditional marriage” is out-of-date

The “in” thing is to express one’s creativity

- Forget what God, the Creator, has written in His Word
- Forget the Divine perspective that alone can bring fulfillment

If we turn to Ephesians 5, the passage that Jacob read from earlier, we will see why the issue of marriage is so crucial to a right proclamation of the Gospel

- It is interesting that the apostle Paul places the roles and responsibilities of the husband and wife in a passage that stresses the Spirit-filled life

Wives are told to “*be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord*” (5:22)

- They are to have the attitude of willing submission, since God has ordained that the man have leadership in the home (5:23)
- The recognition that God has designed this as their responsibility

Husbands are to “*love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her*” (5:25)

- Each husband is to express his love and loyalty by sacrificial, selfless love toward his wife

Why is this important?

- Why does marriage have to be between one man and one woman?

Go back again and look at 5:24, “*But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*”

- The wife’s submission to her husband is an outward proclamation of how the Church relates to Christ

If you look at this passage in more detail, you will find this interplay between the husband/wife and Christ/the Church

- It is sometimes hard to follow whether Paul is talking about marriage or the Gospel

I believe that is the exact purpose and intent of Ephesians 5

- Marriage is one of the best demonstrations of the Gospel
- Marriage depicts the roles of the husband and wife, which point to greater realities

Then look down at 5:31, “*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*”

- Isn’t this a reference back to Genesis 2:24?

The dynamics of marriage go far beyond the physical and emotional

- They reach to the depths of the spirit

For those of you who are married, I hope that you see this in your own relationships

- The culture and society around us encourage us to “express” ourselves
- The Scriptures call us to obedience

Husbands, do you realize that the way in which you treat your wife tells a lot about how you view Christ?

- That’s right!

If you boss your wife around, demand service from her, and never offer to help, you are living and proclaiming a very unbiblical view of Christ’s love for the Church

- Your love should be tender, compassionate, consistent, sacrificial, and selfless

You can't blame your lack of love on your wife's refusal to submit

- Did Christ wait for the Church to become lovely before He died for her?
- “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8)

And wives, do you think that if your husband would just love you the way that you wanted him to, you would submit?

- Let me remind you of Ephesians 5: 22, “Wives, *be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*”
- When you can't submit to your husband because of his actions, you can submit to him because of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ

God designed marriage so that the husband and wife could complement one another

- The husband is to be the head, not the Hitler, of the home
- The wife is to be submissive, not pushy and aggressive

Through the Gospel, part of the stigma of the curse can be reversed

- Husbands can, indeed, love as Christ loved the Church
- Wives can, indeed, submit as the Church does to Christ

You may say, “But Kevin, you don't know what I live with and put up with. You would not believe what my spouse does to me!”

- You are right, I don't know the specifics of what your spouse does to you
- Some of you live in very difficult relationships

But my encouragement is that none of you this morning has been treated like the Lord Jesus Christ

He loved the Church to the point of death

- Instead of appreciation, He was crucified
- Instead of applause, He was beaten

So the next time you are tempted to complain about who your spouse is, think of Christ

- Think of the nails in the hands
- Think of the hole in his side
- Think of the thorns in the brow
- Think of the weight of God's wrath for sin being put on Christ

This morning, we celebrate what Christ has done on the cross

- He lived a perfect life for over 30 years
- He died a substitutionary death on the cross at Calvary where He took your sins upon Himself as the only acceptable Sacrifice for sin
- He rose from the dead on the 3rd day, signifying His power and victory over the grave, death, and hell

As we will see next week in the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve sin by disobeying the one commandment given to them by God

- That one act of disobedience still affects every child ever born

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23)

If you are here and are not a follower of Christ, please do not partake of this Communion

- There is nothing for you to remember

This is a special time for believers to honor, remember, and worship Jesus Christ for what He has done on the cross