

# The Man and the Woman

*The Family of God*

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> 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."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

<sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:18-25

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## **Madness: Blurring Creation Distinctions**

The 1999 horror movie *Stigmata* ends with these words, "IN 1945 A SCROLL WAS DISCOVERED in Nag Hammadi, which is described as 'the secret sayings of the living Jesus.' This scroll, the Gospel of St. Thomas, has been claimed by scholars around the world

*to be the closest record we have of the words of the historical Jesus. The Vatican refuses to recognize this gospel and has described it as heresy.”*

The idea is that the ancient church deliberately suppressed what it knew to be true Christianity out of fear of the message that books like this contained. Let me tell you about one of those “liberating” messages from this Gnostic “gospel”:

Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, “These nursing babies are like those who enter the (Father's) domain.” They said to him, “Then shall we enter the (Father's) domain as babies?” Jesus said to them, “When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female ... then you will enter the (Father's) domain.” (Gospel of Thomas 22)

The very last paragraph of this wonderful, free-thinking book of liberation adds:

Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For everyone woman who will make

herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Gospel Thomas 114)

Do you hear how highly respected and deeply valued women are by these disciples and this Jesus? It is unimaginable that feminists would actually promote this kind of garbage over the Bible, but that is exactly what they do, because it isn't about feminism, but power and freedom from God. They want the right to do what they want to do and to force you to have to accept and like what they want to do.

There is a spirit of madness that is gripping the nations and driving us towards destruction. This madness hates the distinctions that God made. **It blurs the kinds, distorts the sexes, eviscerates morality.** Today, **androgyny** and sexual ambiguity are acceptable and celebrated. The dreamland of the ancient Gnostic paradise has become the real life sexual Island of Dr. Moreau, complete with synthetic hermaphrodites, transgendered, and neutered people.

What tomorrow will bring, not even my worst nightmares can imagine, as the heart of man is desperately wicked and no one can know it. But this all began as an attack on the **family** several generations ago. Today the very idea of family is under attack from every possible front. In my view, things started to go from theory to practice with the normalization and cultural acceptance of **divorce** some fifty years ago. Today 1 in 2 marriages end in divorce. This, of

course, has repercussions on children. In Britain in the 1960s, 5% of children were born out of wedlock. Today that number is at 50%. What do you think this does to the next generation? It makes madness normal.

Take the idea of **marriage**. Listen to how the word has changed over time. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines it this way, "The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life." 1913 Webster's says, "The act of marrying, or the state of being married; legal union of a man and a woman for life, as husband and wife." Notice anything missing? "For life." Notice anything else? There is ambiguity that has been added. It moved from "the act of uniting a man and woman for life" to "the act of marrying." Today's Webster's has this, "The state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law; the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage." As logic takes us, but the world refuses to admit, it doesn't stop with the normalization of homosexual "marriages." Polygamists, pedophiles, and a long list of ever increasing degenerates are lining up demanding the same rights for themselves. Apparently **Erika La Tour Eiffel** didn't need to demand anything for her perversion, as she married the Eiffel Tower in 2007 and changed her name to prove it. Madness.

Or how about the idea of **children**? 150 years ago it was common to find families of 12 children. They were viewed as a **gift** from God. Today, the birthrate in the U.S. has remained below 2 children for several decades. Children are increasingly viewed as a **burden** by many people, something that gets in the way of us having our adolescent fun. Yet, in the midst of this radical shift of our view of what children are, science has again managed ways of allowing people that aren't even married to become impregnated and give birth. And do you think science stops here? Of course not. I saw a serious report this week that a fellow named **Ai Hawegawa** is developing a synthetic biology project to help women give birth to fish. Most people have no idea what we are capable of. If we can dream it, we can do it. The dreams of men are crooked and perverted. But if there is a will, we will find a way. We are gods. And it is madness. This is all the result of Gnostic and pagan impulses working their way back up to the surface of our culture like weeds with deep roots. How long do you think God will bear the things we are doing?

We Christians must not give into the temptation to accept madness as normal. But too many Christians that I know have done exactly this on at least some of these issues. The number of Evangelicals that I know who argue that at least some of the things above are perfectly fine is startling and rising. These people are filling up even the most

conservative of churches. They argue not from God's perspective, not from the word of God, but as if God's word says nothing at all, or if it does, that it says exactly what the world is presently arguing. Like the frog in a kettle of cold water with the heat on low, we slowly cook, never jumping out of the pot, because we don't realize the temperature is rising. Our culture is the fire. It is on fire. And unless we jump into the objective word of God immediately, we boil.

## Creation of Man and Woman

The most basic story setting our feet on firm ground, and perhaps the oldest story known to mankind, deals with the very issues I've raised here: what is man and woman, what is marriage, what is family, what is normal. These questions are answered by going back to a time before sin, before the fall, when things were exactly as God had designed them to be.

The story presents us with **three basic scenes**. The first has God bringing animals to Adam. The second has God creating the woman. The third has the man marrying the woman. There are several ideas that could be focused on: loneliness, kingship, marriage, the difference between the sexes, and so on. But I think there is an overarching idea that these are all subsumed under.

The idea is that what we are looking at is **the climax of creation**. It is the pinnacle, the summit of what is good. It is the very last thing we read about God creating. As such,

what we read about here is the best and most important thing that we read about in the entire creation story as far as you and I are concerned, for these things deal most profoundly with mankind and what God did for us so that creation would be absolutely perfect in his sight. Its focus is on the woman, the greatest and most mysterious of all the creations of God (in my opinion), and on marriage, the most mysterious of all unions known to mankind, and on the most basic unit of civilization—the family. Its makeup and purpose are presented in the ideal form. As an ideal, it is held out as that which is to be longed for and achieved.

*It Is Not Good...*

Our story today is **Genesis 2:18-25**. As we begin to reading, the very first thing we are confronted with is a statement made by God. “**Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good...’**” This statement is meant to throw the reader for a loop. Six times in ch. 1 God said, “**It is good.**” One time he said “**It is very good.**” This is what God said after creating man—“male and female.” If all God made is good, how can it be that suddenly, something is not good?

The story takes us back prior to the creation of the female summarized in chapter 1. At this point in time, God had only made the man, the male of our species. His name is Adam (**vs. 20**), he is The Man (*ha-‘adam*), and he is created from the

ground (*ha-‘adamah*). This is one of the intricate word plays that exist in our story.

### *The Man is Alone*

It tells us what is “not good.” It is not good that the man should be **alone**. The word “alone” (*bad*) can mean separate, as in by himself, like a hermit. Being a hermit is great, because hermits have no peer pressure (tip of the hat to Stephen Wright). But the life of a hermit is not the ideal. Curiously, in the Bible you can actually have two people that are “alone” together (**1 Kgs 11:29**). So the focus may not be on exactly what you think from this word “alone.” The word can also mean a “part” of something as in **Ex 30:34**, “**Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part).**” The word “members,” as in the members of your body, is sometimes in view (**Job 41:12**). I find in this word a double entendre. The man is alone, and though he is fully formed in and of himself, nevertheless he is only partly complete. It is not just that he is alone, but that he is not fully whole.

We need to understand what this means and does not mean. I don’t want anyone getting the idea from this that somehow singleness is evil or that a man (or woman) by themselves is a necessary deficiency or bad thing. No, **the context** of the story is important. We are talking about humanity as a whole which Adam represents. He (that is



humanity) is given a **great commission** in the form of a mandate to fill the earth and be fruitful and multiply, and he can't do that alone. It is not possible. This is why it is not good. God has plans that extend far beyond the first man Adam.

His being alone is not really addressing him being “lonely,” as if as soon as God made Adam he was suddenly full of sorrow and tears because he didn't have anyone to talk to. No, the man talked with God himself. God is the one who fills our most lonely needs, not other people. In fact, people get into all kinds of trouble when they think that first and foremost having a wife or a husband is going to solve their loneliness. Marriages (and friendships, which also fill the need of loneliness) work best, not when they exist to fill some emptiness inside of a person, but when both people are already full and overflowing with the love of Christ in their lives. That way, they have something to give to the other, rather than simply taking and draining and emptying out of the other. We are to fill the void in our hearts with Christ, for he alone is big enough and good enough to fill it. So this is not a clarion call to people to find their fulfillment and satisfaction in some other person.

### *A Helper*

The aloneness is fixed by what God is going to “make” for the man. “**I will make him a helper fit for him.**” You can

see by this that the **aloneness** is related to not having a fit **helper**. It isn't primarily about friendship, but a co-laborer, a partner, a counterpart, a cohort. Again, don't hear this wrong. This isn't saying that marriages shouldn't be about being friends, even best friends. It is to say that our common task in the Lord, doing what he has created us to do together, is what actually drives and deepens the friendship and the other bonds that exist here. Our civilization has it exactly backwards, where we think that marriages are only about friendships and meeting my needs, rather than coming together for a common purpose as a pair to accomplish the goal that God set for humanity, which is much bigger than any one of us.

This helper is also one that is “**fit**” for him. The NAS translates it as “**suitable**.” Whatever this word means, it has to take into the context that the solution to man's aloneness could not be solved by animals, nor by another man, but only by a woman. The animal/man relationship has its own benefits and even fills certain needs that we have, as do same-sex friendships. But something much more than what these relationships can give is in mind here. Thus, the fit helper must necessarily take into account the entire **dominion mandate** with the commands to be **fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue, and rule**. This is the help that the woman will give. She does her help in ways that are functionally

complementary to the man, but so that she is also fully, ontologically identical in her humanity.

Before moving on, I want to make it perfectly clear that this is the ideal and the model. God's design was to create it this way and not another. In our day as in no other in human history, men have gone a tampering with the relationship set up from the foundations of the earth itself, making it possible on the surface to carry out the dominion with a man and a man or a woman and a woman and so on. We think that we are highly evolved now that we have gotten rid of those sexist distinctions of functional differences between the sexes. The Gnostic ideal of androgyny and blurring what God created is actually better than his design. Meanwhile, civilization crumbles because all we do is the result of our sin and the fall and our rebellion against the moral fabric of the universe. Make no mistake. We are not better today than we were 50 years ago. Families are not better. Individuals are not happier. Children are not better off. Institutions are more depraved. Government is more wicked. Every part of culture is reaping the fruitlessness of the barren seeds we have sown in destroying the family. Everything that you see around you is a lie, and only in returning to the ideal through Christ and his righteousness and forgiveness will we be made whole again.

*The Beasts? The Birds?*

Let us continue with the story. The first of three acts takes place in **Gen 2:19-20**. It relates to us that God formed all of the **beasts** of the field and all of the **birds** of the heavens from the ground. This is the same ground (*adamah*) from which Adam was created. Another word play. There is a sense, then, in Adam and the beasts are related. They both come from the same original substance.

The beasts of the field are called the *chayyah*. These are the “living” creatures. This word has yet another word play. It will have importance once the woman is created, for her name will be *Chavvah*—Eve, the mother of all living (*chay*). There is something about the *chayyah* made from the *adamah* that is not good enough for Adam who needs his Chavvah. That is what God is going to fix.

But Adam needs to figure this out himself, first. It tells us that **God brings** all of the beasts and the birds to Adam to see what he would call them. **Naming**. This has an important side-story that is related to Adam’s duties assigned to him by God. As the *Bible Backgrounds Commentary* explains it, “**Names are not given randomly in the ancient world. A name may identify the essential nature of the creature, so that giving a name may be an act of assigning the function that creature will have.**” In Egypt, for example, the name was based on an essential relationship that existed between the name and the named. It ran in both directions so that anything that could be

gathered from a name says something about the essence, and everything said about the essence of a person can be ascribed to that person as a name.

“In Mesopotamia the assigning of function is referred to as the decreeing of destiny. Decreeing destiny by giving a name is an act of authority. In the ancient world, when a king conquered another country, the king he put on the throne was given a new name [think about Daniel becoming Belteshazzar and his three friends becoming Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego]. In other cases, the giving of a name is an act of discernment in which the name is determined by the circumstances.”<sup>1</sup>

In giving the animals names, Adam is beginning the process of **ruling over them**. He is also figuring out things about them, learning, looking, thinking, assigning, designating, and so on. This was work—real work, good work, hard work, long work, royal work. When we understand what is going on here, we come to learn very quickly that this was not done haphazardly, off-the-cuff, in a couple of hours early in the morning on the sixth day of the week. Adam is doing the work of ruling. Adam is doing what God wanted him to, after the pattern God himself had given when he called the man from the *adamah* Adam.

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<sup>1</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 31–32.

But the main thread of the story is that **no helper was fit for him**. Dr. Boice tells the story of **man's best friend** in his sermon on this passage. He talks about how it is possible for a man and a dog to have great fellowship. They can spend many enjoyable hours. They can play games. They can show and share affection. But the fellowship must be on the dog's level because the dog can only communicate on that level.<sup>2</sup> This is probably part of what is going on in Adam's discovery that he had no fit helper. It doesn't matter what animal you take, none were image bearers, none had the capacity of the man mentally, emotionally, volitionally, socially. And no, as we will learn next week, **this includes snakes**. Snakes didn't talk.

One of the Reformers, a man named **Peter Martyr Vermigli** said of this that God wanted Adam to learn for himself that no such helper was to be found (Commentary on Gen 2:20). I agree with this. God did not merely parade the animals before Adam to see what they would be named, but so that Adam himself would see that he needed a helper, someone fit for him.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Going Deeper*. There is a remote parallel to this story of Adam and the animals in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Gilgamesh is 2/3 god and 1/3 human. His (later) friend Enkidu is basically half animal and half human. Walton writes, "In the Gilgamesh Epic, the tyrant king [Gilgamesh] has no equal to occupy his attention and distract him from oppressing the people, so the gods ordain the creation of his counterpart, Enkidu. Gilgamesh had been singular and alone, and he looks among the animals (where Enkidu dwelt) to find a counterpart for himself. Though

## *The Woman of the Rib*

Part 2 of the story is **Gen 2:21-22**. Sometime after this long procession and naming work, the LORD God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon the man. The reason is obvious. Have you ever heard horror stories of someone who went under the knife, and was awake the whole time, able to feel everything they were doing, but unable to communicate that because of temporary medical paralysis? God is about to do surgery on the man, and he wouldn't want him to be awake for that.

It says that while he slept God took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. What does this mean? The word “**rib**” (*tsela*) is almost always used as an architectural term, and it ought not surprise you by now to learn that it most often refers to a place on a holy object or in the temple (**Ex 25:14; 36:31–2; 1 Kings 6:5; Ezek 41:5–9**). Here, it

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vague similarities can be seen here (because Gilgamesh and Adam are both archetypal humans in need of a social equal to share their functions), the context is entirely different. The value in this parallel is its demonstration that the ancient world recognized that a social context had to be established by deity for humanity to function properly. Adam recognizes that need and God supplies it.” “Enkidu, the half-man, half-beast, is content with animal companionship until he is seduced by a prostitute sent to capture him. The author of Genesis offers the view of man turning away from animals and being attracted to a wife. Again, it is not the author's purpose to engage or debate the ancient Near Eastern perspectives, but the Israelites could not help but see the contrast between Genesis and Mesopotamian accounts.”<sup>3</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 31 and John H. Walton, *Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 175. For a vivid retelling of the Gilgamesh Epic, see Brian Godawa's *Gilgamesh Immortal* in his Chronicles of the Nephilim series.

refers to Adam's body—**his side**. There is cognate in Akkadian that is used the very same ways. When used anatomically, it refers not just to the bone of a rib, but to **bones and flesh** (like a side of beef or a rack of ribs).

The Sumerian equivalent is *ti* and it means “life.” We have seen this word before in the “living” creatures and Eve will become the mother of all “living.” To be taken from Adam's side means that she will likewise have life. She is literally, our **Lady of the Rib** (don't see many Catholic churches named that), or as the Sumerians called her, **the lady who makes live**.

I should point out here that it is interesting that they pierce Jesus' side and from it the blood that started the church began to flow. His bride, too, came from his side. Calvin writes, “**In this manner Adam was taught to recognize himself in his wife, as in a mirror...**”<sup>4</sup> In the same way, Eve saw Herself in Adam. Likewise, it is essential that the Church derive her identity from Christ from whom she is derived.<sup>5</sup> I'll return to this idea before we are finished.

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<sup>4</sup> Calvin also writes, “**Yet I am more in favor of a different conjecture, namely, that something was removed from Adam in order that he might embrace with greater kindness a part of himself. Thus, he did lose a rib. But he was repaid for it with a far richer reward, since he obtained a faithful and lifelong companion. Even more, he now saw himself made whole in his wife, where previously he had been but half a self. And in this we see a true likeness of our union with the Son of God, for he became weak that the members of his body might be endowed with strength.**” Commentary on Genesis 2:21.

<sup>5</sup> See my friend and fellow ARBCA pastor Chris Marley's article “Our Lady of the Rib,” on the typology of Eve and the church. <http://www.credomag.com/2013/10/17/10762/>



In the original creation it will be, as many have pointed out, an equal kind of life. God did not take her from Adam's head, meaning she is above him, or from his foot, meaning she is below him, but from his side, meaning that she is his equal in being, **true human**. Indeed, some have even suggested in scholarly studied based on the words that she is literally the other half of Adam. But hers is also a derivative life. She comes *from* the man, whereas man comes *from* the ground. This has important implications theologically in the NT.

Think about the words female or woman or in Hebrew *ishshah*. Each word describing the woman has man as its root (male, man, *ish*). The NT picks up on this and says in more than one place that man was made first, and then the woman, and that it is here in this pre-fallen, good original creation condition, that our roles and functions find their only proper understanding. This is not evil, or patriarchal, but the original design and function of humanity apart from sin that is introduced later.

The egalitarianism and feminism that has swept the world over is nothing but making that which is pre-fall, evil, that which is trans-cultural, culturally relative. It is a blurring of the very distinctions that make us unique and special in our own ways. We could spend many hours on the ways that womanhood has been fundamentally altered by our culture,

and feminists themselves try to turn woman into man. It starts with little things, and even fair things: the right to vote or the right to work. It moves into other areas like the military and church offices. Many of you would like me to say this is right and that is wrong here. I will do that on some issues and on others, I will remain silent. I am a pastor and my realm is the church. Women are not to be pastors or have authority over men in the church, and this very verse is used by the NT to say this very thing.

But rather than get into the specifics, many of which require wisdom as much as fairness to think through properly, and without which can and in many instances do become very legalistic very quickly—especially in areas that the Bible does not talk about and which women are merely exercising their humanity equally—we should stop and think about what this kind of thinking has done to our families. Think about the stresses that have been placed on many women who don't want to work, but now have to because two generations of feminism have made it impossible to live in our country without two incomes. Think about what it has done to our children, to not have mothers at home, teaching them, raising them in the nurture of the Lord. Think about how motherhood is looked down upon by even many Christians. “What do you do,” one woman asks the other. “Oh, I'm a stay at home mother.” “Why would anyone want

to do that?” or “What do you do with yourself all day long?” and the condescension in the voice is matched only by the smug look in the eyes. Think about how it has emasculated men and made many men lazy and worthless fellows. Think about how the ideologies have worked in other areas, such as the sexual problems mentioned earlier and that we will discuss again soon.

People don't like to hear this today, even Christians. It sounds like chauvinism, male superiority, sexism. It is nothing of the sort. At least, it certainly does not need to be. Certainly, men can use this to sin against their wives, but the abuse of a thing does not make the thing evil. To conclude this, all I ask of you is to sit there and think about the Genesis story. Just the story we are looking at right now. Then, you either come away saying that it is true or it is not. If it is, then it has wide ranging implications that the church needs to think through again, even as we also continue to think about how women are human beings, made in the image of God, and given to help the man carry out his commission.

### *One Flesh*

We begin the third and last section at the end of **vs. 22**. God completed the surgery, and covered up the place with flesh. After Adam awoke, God brought the woman to him. “**This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.**” This is a declaration of what Eve was and where she came from.

I'm certain there is something here of Adam being beside himself, in awe and wonder at the marvel before his eyes, sort of like you find in the beat-poem in *So I Married An Axe Murderer* where Mike Myer's character says, "Woman. Wo-Man! Woahhhh-man." But this is more than just a reaction. It is actually a legal pronouncement.

This is actually Adam's **marital vow**, and God is presiding over the wedding. What Adam is doing upon making this pronouncement is entering into a covenant with his new bride before God Almighty. In saying 'bone of my bone' Adam is taking the woman to be his wife. It is his vow. Not only is she bone of his bone, but she will be bone of his bone, forever. In this way, the covenant between the man and woman is a type of the covenant between God and the man made just verses earlier in the covenant of creation that we looked at last week.

We can see this in the next verse when it says that "**man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh**" (24). This verse is one of the more quoted in the NT, appearing in **Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; 1 Cor 6:16; and Eph 5:31**. In every case it refers to marriage.

Sometimes it refers to **what has gone wrong with marriage**, such as divorce. Jesus famously teaches that divorce was not so in the beginning, but God made man and woman

to be together forever, to be “one flesh.” It is a spiritual bond that unites them closely so that they can carry out the mandate. Divorce is a disruption of this original design, and a profoundly painful separation of what is not supposed to be torn apart. Anyone who has gone through a divorce can testify to the pain and irreparable damage it has caused them. Divorce is ruining our world.

This is not to stand here and berate anyone who has undergone a divorce. Not at all. Moses allowed for it because people are sinful. It is to say that Christians must do everything in their power not to go this route, but to be the first to forgive and to repent. Even for those in second or third marriages, this applies. The past cannot be undone, but the present and future are still before us. We make a mockery of the marriage covenant and of the covenant God entered into with humanity that stands behind it, if we are not, like God himself with Israel, patient and longsuffering to the point of hurt. Again, this is not to suggest that people have to tolerate dangerous sinful situations, like being under the hand of a wife-beater or something. It is to say that **we must strive for the ideal and let it become the norm again.**

Other times, this passage is used to talk about **men uniting themselves with prostitutes.** This is an example of any kind of deviation from the ideal, be it prostitution, homosexuality, polygamy, or worse. God made a woman for

the man. He did not make two women, but one. He did not make a man, but a woman or as the cliché puts it, God did not make Adam and Steve, but Adam and Eve. She is *ishshah*—woman. He is *ish*—man.

Only when we pervert creation and turn it on its head can anyone say that something other than what we have all grown up knowing is wrong could suddenly become right. Again, Christians must stand up here, at this most basic point of all culture, and not become like the world. Again, this is sadly, exactly what is not happening. As you begin to take surveys from most any church around, you will quickly discover that anything and everything besides the Genesis 2 example is said to be good and normal. It is not. And this is madness. The church no longer knows about creation, no longer believes in absolutes, no longer understands the goodness of the original design and the profound ruin that sin has introduced.

Let us consider the last verse. “**The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed**” (**Gen 2:25**). The image is one of guiltlessness, innocence, goodness. This, combined with the whole garden setting is certainly **a sexual image** (just read Song of Solomon), and rightly so. God made the sexes and God made sex. And God made it good and wonderful and pleasurable. But **he also gave it a context**. In that context, there is nothing better and nothing that deepens a bond and

nothing that helps further the dominion mandate. Christians, especially fundamentalism, have gone off track sometimes in turning sex into an evil thing and not teaching the people about its goodness and wonder, and encouraging it in marriage. This only causes harm and destruction.

But so does having sex outside of that context. There is nothing more destructive, more harmful, more damaging, more chaotic, more powerful to create evil. And the world is mad with sexual passion as has never been in all of world history until this very moment. The perversion is everywhere; it is ubiquitous. It is in our homes—on our TVs, in our magazines, on our computers. It is in our government, in our education curriculum for little children, in the news, in the movies, in our jokes, in our sports, in our clothes, and most of all, in our hearts. Our culture has simply given us ways of expressing what is in our hearts that are not helpful, but harmful. That which is the very best and highest thing in all creation has become the most basic and fundamental cause of the downfall of our civilization, make no mistake about it.

### *The Church and Bride of Christ*

So how can we let this situation before the fall become the norm if we live in a fallen world? The answer lies only in understanding and believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been heavy on law throughout this sermon, because we

need to hear the law as it regards our destruction of the original condition. This creates all the more need of good news. **If our lives are in ruins** from our own making—divorce, pornography, adultery, bad self-image, or in the making of others—rape, molestation, cheating, **the answer is only found in Jesus Christ.**

You see, God did not merely create the man and the woman and give them the task to do together. Indeed, in the very next verse, the fall will occur, man and woman will be (as Meredith Kline suggests), divorced themselves. They will be in ruins. The pristine pre-creation lasts for a total of a single verse.

But God had a plan all along. This plan was to send Jesus Christ to become **the husband of a new bride**, a new Adam taking a new Eve in a new Garden through his bloody side. Jesus offers us all the forgiveness we will ever need. He is always patient with our sins, always there to forgive them, always ready for us to come to him in repentance.

If you have **been hurt** or **have hurt someone else** in regards to what we have been speaking about today, then the only way to make the creation the norm is to start with yourself in the new creation. You have to personally come to understand the great forgiveness that Christ offers and extends to you. It matters not if you have been the one to hurt someone else or if you have been the one who has been



hurt. Only those who have been forgive much will forgive much.

Of course, this means that you first have to repent of your sins, and many people do not think that they are doing anything wrong to even repent of. Indeed, isn't this **the most dangerous thing** of all as it regards our madness? If homosexuality is fine, then who needs to repent? If there are no sacred vows that matter, then what does it matter if you have been divorced? If morality is what you make it, then God doesn't have anything to forgive. And you, my friend, will very quickly find yourself being the most unforgiving of all people on planet earth. Living like this necessitates that you will become hardened and judgmental towards everyone else around you, as you try to ease your conscience by bringing everyone else down to your level. Just look at the vile, extreme hatred that comes from those who think they do nothing wrong when challenged with the fact that they do.

On the other hand, Christians who have been forgiven much, who have repented and continue to repent of their sexual and marital sins, **will be and must be** the most forgiving of all people. How could it be any other way? This does not mean that you can change someone who is dead set on destroying you, but it does mean that in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can begin acting again like

Genesis 2 is the norm. You do so not through power or pride, not through lashing out and destroying, but through humility, recognizing your own sins and being quick to forgive others.

If you have been hurt in any of these ways, if you are on the difficult end of a touch marriage, only Christ can allow you to receive the forgiveness of others and to begin trusting again. But it has to come from him and through your covenant with him in Christ. That is the only covenant that truly lasts forever, for even a marriage that lasts until death is still severed at death. But Christ never severs his covenant bonds with his bride. The true marriage is Christ to his church, and he will never leave or forsake her. **Our marriages, by extension, can reflect this marriage**, because our strength comes not from one another, but from God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, forgiving us on the cross for putting him to death.

And let me not leave out single people either. Do not be angry about being single, but find your love in Christ and know the depths of that bond. Then you begin to know of the fullness that comes only through him. Know that he cares for you as a husband cares for his wife.

One day there will be **a wedding of the lamb**, and a great feast that will make all things right. Until that day, we must behave as Christians. We must recapture the biblical ideal.

We must tell the ancient story of our first parents. We must not distort it. We must tell it in all its glory. As I said earlier, I believe woman to be the highest thing in all creation, for God saved her for last. Our theology of women must reflect this. We can't be taken in by the Gnosticism that promises freedom only to give captivity, that promises equality only to give slavery. Women, more than men, need to see men recover this truth, to see what it means for men to be Godly, to love their wives as Christ loves the church, and to see that the things we are talking about today are not burdensome, not sexist, but freeing the only thing that will put society back together again.

It is almost too late for our world. The night is dark and it grows darker. We must shine the light of marriage and marital sex and our co-laboring in Christ, our families, our children, our devotion to our Lord before men. We don't have to preach at them, telling them how evil they are. Rather, we need to start preaching to ourselves, putting our own houses in order, turning our own families into the kinds of things that people will be envious of, so that they might see that our faith is true and that it can help them, if they too will humble themselves as we must do. We have enough troubles of our own, but we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.