

MALE AND FEMALE

GENESIS 1:26-27, 2:7-9, 15, 18-25

INTRODUCTION

Paul reminded the Ephesians that they “were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” He reminded them of where they came from. This is a great preventative to pride. It is easy to look on the struggles and sins of others and keep them at arm’s length, but not if we remember that we are ourselves strugglers and sinners.

The church is the place for homosexuals, people who consider themselves transgendered, as it is for people who struggle with difficult emotions of any kind. All humans matter to God. He loves us all and sent His Son to die for us. Keep this in mind, not only as we go through this series, which, because of the current cultural climate, could wrongly be accused of seeking to alienate people. The opposite is true. We are here to speak the truth in love, and to love those to whom we speak.

TEXT: GENESIS 1:26-27, 2:7-9, 15, 18-25

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . . 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. . . . 18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

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.

20 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.

21 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.

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

23 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."

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

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

OBSERVATIONS:

1. THE ADDITION OF EVE WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OF ADAM'S CONDITION.

God did not want Adam to relate to Him alone. He did not want Adam to simply manage animals and gardens either. He wanted man to have another human being to relate to. He did not make Adam another man as a human companion. Instead, He made a female.

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

God created Adam with a need, an insufficiency. He was in need of a helper, but not just any helper, one fit for him. He paraded the animals in front of him. We can safely guess that Adam saw that they were all male and female. None were fit for him.

Then, having shown Adam his own need, He gave him a nap, and got to work.

Eve, the first woman, was the work of His hands.

He made Adam of the earth's dirt, but not Eve. He made her from a part of Adam's body. Why? We are never told exactly, but we are given a strong clue, for when Adam sees her, he declares that she is, "Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." God let Adam know where she came from, and this caused him joy. He knew that she was like him, that she was human.

Some wrongly guess that Adam contained both sexes within himself, and that God took the female part of him out when he made Eve. Such speculation is foolish and divisive. There is no evidence of Adam having two sexes within him. Furthermore, he is always referred to as a man and as a male. Therefore, one would have to add to Scripture something that is not there to say otherwise. There is no need to think that Eve's femininity existed within Adam before she was formed, just as there is no need to think that Adam's masculinity existed in the dirt before God made him.

What we do know is that she was made just for him, and that her appearance was declared by God to be very good.

She is to be his "helper." This is not a reference to value, but to function. In other words, it is not an insult. God calls Himself our Helper in the Scriptures. Help is a function, but the word does imply Adam's leadership, as he has been given a mission to thrive in the Garden and to rule it. Eve is presented to him as one who will help him accomplish what God desires of mankind.

As chapter 1 of Genesis already made clear, she equally shares the image of God, and is therefore fully human apart from him, and equal in value to God and in relation to the rest of creation.

2. MALE-DOMINANT LANGUAGE IS NOT NECESSARILY WRONG, NOR IS IT HARMFUL TO WOMEN.

Adam declares that the name of Eve was to be woman, because she was taken from man. In other words, the word he would use for her was a derivative of the name that God had given him. He was man. She was to be woman, therefore. Now, the Bible was not written in English, so let us consider the words the Bible uses. Adam says that she shall be called “Isha,” for she was taken from, “Ish.”

Because she was made from him, and he was ish, she was isha. This language is called male-dominant, patriarchal, or “sexist,” today, and we are told we must avoid speaking like this. Yet, we see that God not only allows Adam to speak as such, implicitly endorsing it as the pattern to be followed in future generations. Adam has not yet fallen into sin, so this male-dominant language was not formed as a way to “keep a sister under the thumb of a man,” but was celebrated and good. How wonderful it was to Adam to portray his connection to this wonderful human creature in the language he used! It is the language equivalent to matching t-shirts!

3. AN ON-GOING PATTERN OF MARRIAGE WAS ESTABLISHED WHEN THERE WERE ONLY TWO HUMAN BEINGS.

Popular scholarship, centered on evolutionary theory and feminist narratives, says that the human family, formed around a father and mother raising children, is an outdated and prehistoric tradition that not only need not be respected, but should also be set aside. For this reason, there is no philosophical problem in the modern world with setting up families purposely with single parents, or two men, or two women, or even other combinations of adult and children.

Indeed, the traditional family structure, centered around a man and woman, is seen as a tool of oppression, based on a long-past time when the brute strength of men determined the social order.

God counters these sophisticated lies with the truth that what is best for mankind is for a man to marry a woman, to have children, and to raise the children to repeat the process. As the Bible says:

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

In this original formulation of marriage, Adam and Eve are expected to set a pattern to be followed throughout the generations. After all, at this moment, they have no mother nor father to leave. But one day, they will be both mother and father, releasing their own children to marry.

4. TWO BECOMING ONE IS CONFINED TO THE UNIQUE SITUATION OF A MALE AND FEMALE IN MARRIAGE.

The leaving of father and mother to join to another woman forms a union known as marriage. This union depended on the complimentary nature of the two different sexes. Adam was given a woman to marry, not a man. Then, in the times to come, this pattern was to continue when a man was to leave father and mother and join with a wife of his own. He was not to leave father and mother and join with a man.

Thousands of years later, Jesus would confirm and strengthen this understanding of marriage when He says:

"Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Mat 19:4-6 ESV)

There are ways that a man can connect with the woman that is unique. This goes beyond the physical in ways we cannot fully explain nor understand. A woman is a man's complement. The two are able to relate in a way that two men or two women cannot and should not.

Furthermore, God blesses the union of male and female in marriage. He "joins" them together. He does not join together two men, nor two women. We will discuss this more in next week's sermon.

5. THE BINARY NATURE OF SEXUALITY IS INHERENT IN CREATION ITSELF.

God created male and female. He did not create a third sex. He did not create fluidity so that a person is neither male nor female, but some kind of hybrid.

Some might object saying that some people experience same sex attraction, or that a man may feel more like a woman than a man, or vice versa. Additionally, what about intersexed persons, etc.? In all these cases, the experiences of individuals and their interpretations of those experiences are influenced by the fall of man into sin, and do not trump the Word of God. To be specific, if a man thinks of himself as a woman, there is something distorted in his thinking and feeling, but he is still a man. It is just as if a man feels he is a god. This feeling does not make him one. We are all Adam's children and tainted by sins. The fallen nature affects us in many ways, including in gender confusion.

6. BEFORE THE FALL, MARRIAGE REMAINED HARMONIOUS.

God invented marriage before the fall of man into sin. Eve had no problem with being called Isha, or helping the man complete his mission. The man had no problem treating his wife as beautiful, good, and wonderful. There were no sexual hang-ups or arguing. As the Bible says,

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

Neither felt the need to hide from the other, both were confident in their being loved and accepted by the other.

Sin would soon enter and bring trials and disharmony to every part of their lives.

CONCLUSION: MARRIAGE REMAINS FOREVER.

Human marriages do not remain forever. When death comes, the marriage ends. Furthermore, Jesus lets us know that in the New World, we will not marry any longer. That could lead us to believe that marriage is a temporary construct, designed for the good of man for a limited time. But this is mistaken. Actually, marriage lasts forever in the Divine, but human marriage is only a temporary reflection of a heavenly reality.

We learn this from Paul in Ephesians 5:

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Eph 5:31-32 ESV)

Paul quotes our text in Genesis, where God instituted marriage. This is the same text that Jesus quoted in Matthew (that we just reviewed). Now, Paul gives us a new insight: marriage, when the two become one, is a reference to Christ and the church.

What is the church? In this case, it is the church universal –in other words, all people from all times who ever received Jesus as Savior are members of the church. In some way, when everything is over, and the New World comes, Jesus will play the part of Groom, and the church will play the role of Wife.

Jesus left His home in Heaven, came to earth as a man on a mission of courtship. His goal was to rescue His bride from the devil, to wash her clean of her many sins, and to make her beautiful and presentable to His Father in Heaven.

Jesus is the groom who dies for His bride on a cross. He is the One who rises from the dead and returns to Heaven. He is the One who awaits, as His bride gets herself ready for the end of the age –that is, Jesus waits until the church finishes her good works, and as many people who will be saved are saved. Then, He returns for His bride, the church.

This is the picture given in the Bible.

With this in mind, I end with two important points of emphasis.

One is that our mission at Harvest is not frivolous, but the right thing to do. We exist to increase the health and size of God's church, everywhere. We are concerned with the health and beauty of His bride.

Two, mankind has no right to fool with the definitions of male and female, nor the arrangement of marriage as God designed it. To do so is to mar the picture of God's salvation. For a man to marry a man in the name of Christ is to blaspheme God, as it is for a woman to do the same. These things we deal with are no mere trifles. Jesus will return and we will all give an account for the sacred things we trampled upon.

In the words of C. S. Lewis:

With the Church, we are farther in: for there we are dealing with male and female not merely as facts of nature but as the live and awful shadows of realities utterly beyond our control and largely beyond our direct knowledge. Or rather, we are not dealing with them but (as we shall soon learn if we meddle) they are dealing with us. --C. S. Lewis. God in the Dock