



THE JOURNEY CHURCH

SERMON GUIDE 2.13.2022

GENESIS

Two Sides of the Same Coin

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 2:22

RECAP:

A psychotherapist by the name of John Gray wrote a book in 1992 that outlines how radically different men and women are from one another. In the book, Dr. Gray explains how men and women have different communication styles, different emotional needs, and different modes of behavior. He says that one of the greatest distinguishers of men and women is how we respond to stress. This book doesn't provide any groundbreaking realities. I mean, it doesn't take much examination and reflection to come to the conclusion that men and women are different, but this little book has sold over 15 Million copies. You may know it by its title: *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*.

But how much of our differences are rooted in our nature and design, and how much is a matter of preference and nurture?

When Katrina and I first got married we had a little bit of a culture clash. In my house growing up, we had a laundry room, and we threw all the dirty clothes in the room and they piled up during the week like a mountain. On Saturdays my mom would do laundry. That's just how it worked. Katrina had multiple clothes baskets in our home with one for whites and one for colored clothes. So those first days were a rude awakening when I threw my clothes on the floor and shut the door. I remember the first time she asked me "did you miss?" and I responded back, "Miss what?" Dinner was the same. One of our first meals together I fixed my plate and went into the living room and turned the TV on. She never showed up. When I finished my food and went to the kitchen she was at the table

crying. I knew at that point that I wasn't married to myself. I was married to someone different from men.

Are these differences nature and design, or are they preference and nurture? I want to examine God's Word on that question today. And ultimately, I want to show that men and women are the same by design in many ways, and purposefully different by design in others, and all of it is according to the plan and wisdom of God.

Or said another way: God purposefully makes mankind into two distinct genders--male and female--for the purpose of displaying His glory, revealing His character, and maximizing our joy.

Exegesis of Passage:

We see in Genesis 1:26-27 the likeness and distinction categories both introduced. In vs 26 we hear God say let us make man in our image. It is both the male and female made in the image of God. They are both made with souls and invitation to commune with the LORD. But we see that their creation is two different distinct acts that produce two very distinct creatures: male and female. Genesis 1 is a very macro picture of God's creative work. Genesis 2 gets more into the micro level details. So let's see the specifics of how God creates man and woman.

In Genesis 2:7 we see God create the man from the dust. He is put together from the earth and formed into a living creature. God breathes the breath of life into the man and begins to exist.

But we see in Genesis 2:22 that the woman is not made from the dust like the man. Instead, God makes her from the man. The woman comes from the rib of the man.

****Now a question this raises, and is not incidental is: Why didn't make woman from the dust like the man? What is the significance?***

She is the suitable helper. She fits. She corresponds. She is one flesh with Adam. She is a helper to him in a unique way. She is like Adam and perfectly unlike Adam. She is the exact suitable counterpart to him. That is not just anatomically for the sake of sexual purposes, but way deeper in profound ways. They are each other's God designed compliments. Together they are good. It wasn't good for Adam to be alone. Now he has a corresponding counterpart that is like him, but also unlike him. Together they are very good.

Now, Adam and Eve will marry, have children, and be a family. But this man and woman distinction isn't just a marriage reality, it is a universal reality. Men and women are alike, yet different. Men and women are both image bearers of God with equal dignity, worth, and access to God. They have similar design features. Yet they are very much different, not just in physical characteristics, but in deeper ways as well.

Men and women relate to God in their spiritual lives as men and women. We do not personally come to God as an individual generic human, but as a man or woman created purposefully by Him as a man or a woman. It is God who chose what gender/sex would we be. We had no choice in the matter, and neither did our parents.

Psalm 139:13-16 --

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.[a] Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

So God forms each of us uniquely and individually in the womb. Our genders are not an accident. They are according to the plan of God before even one of our days began. Each of us are fearfully and wonderfully made. And it is important to realize that we as humans are both body and soul. We are not a dichotomy. It is important to hold them together. We're not just souls with these bags of flesh to drag around. We are both body and soul. We may not have a body immediately after we die, but we will be embodied again at the resurrection and for all of eternity. Our bodies matter. Not only that, but our bodies tell us something true about who we are. If you are born a male, then your male body tells you something true about who you are. It isn't misleading or mis-guiding you. Your body has a telos. It's design says something about you, and shapes your life.

And so we relate to God based on our gender. Why is that? Because our gender informs all sorts of other things in our lives. It informs our sexuality and what is permissible for us. It shapes our abilities, our desires, and our roles. Men and women share many of the same abilities, but we are distinct in our abilities as well. Even our baseline desires are different. One Christian author even states that at baseline: women desire to feel loved above all things, and that men desire to be respected above all things. It's not that men and women don't want both, but if forced to choose between one, men almost always choose respect, and women almost always choose love. This isn't a coincidence. We are made, by design, different. We are psychologically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually

different from one another, on purpose. We are also distinct in our roles we serve in God's plans and decrees. We have distinct roles in the family and church.

Men have distinct functions and roles like: providing for the family, protecting the family, showing love and tenderness, leading spiritually, providing discipline, and setting the direction. Women have distinct functions and roles like: serving as a help to her husband, bearing children, being nurturing and caregiving.

****Now the question that can be asked is: Why did God choose to do this in this way? What is the reason for God creating and distinguishing in this way?*****

There are a few answers to this question that we need to explore.

- **For God's glory:** Why does God do anything He does? For His own glory. In the sovereignty and wisdom of God, He knows what kind of world will give Him the most glory. He knows what kind of creatures will give Him most glory. And that answer we see is a humanity made of male and female. They are two sides of the same coin. The one humanity expresses itself as male and female. God is glorified in this.

- **To Compliment Each Other:** Notice in the Garden God says it is not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Adam existed and lived before Eve came along. We do not know how long he lived this way but God declared it wasn't good. It wasn't complete. What is the reason for that? There wasn't another creature that was his kind. There was nothing like him. Adam may not have even realized this incompleteness, but God saw it. So God gave Adam the task of naming all the animals, and it is in examining them and studying them, he realizes there was not one like him. He gave names to all the animals that were brought to him. But there was no helper. Notice here, there are many creatures that can serve as a helper to man (dogs, horses, oxen, etc.). What this means is that the type of helper she is to him is not like that of other animals. She will be uniquely made to compliment him in ways nothing else can. So then God literally does surgery on Adam and opens him up (Genesis 2:21) and forms the woman. Then she is brought to the man and he names her. But notice what he says: This is at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man (Genesis 2:23). She is the same, but profoundly different. She completes him. She is the opposite of him, not just in her size, anatomy, and shapes, but in deep spiritual and emotional ways. But as his compliment, she is a perfect fit.

- **Procreation:** Men and women are made to go together anatomically. The coming together as one flesh brings forth children. More image bearers are produced as the two complementary individuals join together in one flesh union. This is reserved for a covenant of marriage relationship. We will talk about marriage in the coming weeks. But the purpose of marriage is the display of Christ and the Church. But this is one of the reasons God chose to create it this way.

****So that should be the end of the question right? Men and women are both made by God as image bearers, but we are different as male and female and we all embrace those distinctions and live our lives accordingly. Right? Hardly.****

When we get to Genesis 3--you should be noticing a theme each week as we talk about all of God's good design, we always say "but Genesis 3"-- we see our first parents sin. We see them rebel against the command of God. After they sin they hide.

Question: Who did Satan approach in the Garden to eat the fruit and who ate the fruit first?

Answer: Eve. The woman did.

Question: Who did God go to after they hid and ask, "What have you done?"

Answer: Adam. The man.

He held Adam responsible. Why? Because he serves as the head of the home, and therefore, bears the accountability for what they do. Yes, each individual bears responsibility, but God has an order and roles defined that He has chosen. We can deny those, ignore them, or rage against them, but it doesn't change them.

Then we see God bring judgments against them. The man's toil and work will be a burden and difficult for him. The woman's pain in childbirth will be increased. Why is this God's punishment for both? Because as they live out their God-given roles to be fruitful and multiply and take dominion over the earth, it will be permanently marked by the pain of their rebellion. Each of their primary roles will be marked with difficulty.

In addition to that, one of the outcomes of the fall is that men and women, in our fallen states, invert our roles. Men become passive, fail to lead, and defer to the woman. And the woman becomes aggressive, grabs leadership, and tries to assert dominance over her husband. Now, listen, this doesn't mean everyone does this equally or all the time. It just shows that our sinful state produces sinful impulses. It also doesn't mean a man shouldn't listen to his wife's counsel or get her wisdom, and it doesn't mean a woman that makes choices or plans things is trying to dominate. Don't hear what I'm not saying.

But please do hear what I am saying. This is a very real thing, and Scripture outlines this for us to see.

This is why the flattening of gender distinctions is such a big push today. Rather than celebrating the beauty of how we compliment each other, we live in a culture that aims for an egalitarian view. In this view, we want to make men and women interchangeable. We pretend as if we are not different by nature, and we chalk up everything as a social construct, but we wonder why we live in a society with such confusion about identity, crippling anxiety and depression, our children have to see therapists at younger and younger ages. It's safe to say that our rebellion against God's design isn't producing physical, spiritual, and emotional health, but destroying us.

Imagine if we designed a car to run on gasoline. We designed it and everything about it to function with gasoline as the source of fuel for the engine. Now, imagine that someone who owned one of our cars decided that olive oil was a liquid that resembled the color of gasoline and decided to start using that instead, perhaps because it was cheaper and it didn't smell as bad. What is going to happen to the car? It's going to break. The olive oil will destroy the car. Why? Because we have ignored the designers' way of building the car to function and chose to do it our own way. If we ignore the designer's function, we shouldn't be shocked when it breaks.

The same is true as it pertains to gender. We are made by God, specifically with the gender He has given us. Our gender is made to function a certain way, by God's design. When we flatten these, and ignore these, we do it to our own peril. Our society does it to its own destruction.

Application:

1. Gender distinctions are God's good design, not man-made.

There are some man made gender distinction categories that we need to rightly dismiss. Not all girls like pink. Not every boy wants to be a firefighter. These are socially constructed distinctions. There are some girls who love to play sports and there are some boys who would rather dance. I want you to understand something, when you create false categories like this, one of the results is that when a girl doesn't like pink or does like sports, she can wrongly conclude that she must not be a girl, and be a boy instead. Hence, we get the transgender solution. The same for boys, just because the boy doesn't like football and prefers drawing doesn't mean he's really a girl. This is why we can't foolishly adopt man-made distinctions as concrete realities.

However, there are real gender distinctions that are real, and they are good. The things we've discussed about how God has made us different are glorious things. We don't apologize for them. We don't blush or shy away from acknowledging them or praising them.

Let me add one example of how we see gender distinctions as God's design and not man-made. It plays out within homosexual relationships. Whenever you see two men together or two women together in a romantic, homosexual relationships, you will notice that almost always, one of them will take on the masculine role and one will take on the feminine role. It happens almost every time without discussion about how they are going to do it. The reason for this is because there is something embedded so deeply within our conscience about how these genders are made to complement each other that when two of the same sex get together, they always sort themselves into these God-given roles, even if they are not in a God-honoring relationship.

2. We should embrace God's creation of our identity as a man or woman.

Each person here is either a male or a female. A man or a woman. What you are is by God's choice and design. Obedience to God begins with embracing that role as a man or woman. If you are a woman, trust the wisdom of God in making you a woman and seek to be a woman that honors and glorifies God with your life. Embrace those roles and responsibilities He has given you and do not covet being anything different. Men, the same goes for you. Embrace your God-given role.

3. Resist the cultural habit of flattening or denying God-given gender realities.

The culture we live in has largely flattened the differences between gender where it wants to advance its agenda. So it loves to celebrate the milestones of women in new roles (like Kamala Harris as first woman VP), yet it then acts as if men pretending to be women who are crushing weightlifting records and swim meets against women are somehow heroes. This kind of chaos is disorienting and we are sent very clear messages about how we are supposed to feel about it or talk about it. Major figures have been banned from social media for criticizing the transgender movement.

Our kids are being educated in this crazy ideology. We are told that we are not binary creatures of male and female any longer, but can be any number of genders. There were 70+ last time I looked. This movement is terrorizing our kids. Boys and girls are being issued puberty blockers before they even have the ability to spell puberty. We are lopping off the breasts of young women because they say they are men, and in some cases not even required to inform their parents about it (despite the fact they are

underaged). One of the books worth reading about this insidious movement is Irreversible Damage by Abigail Shrier. I had Pastor Nick and Pastor Larry of our Next Gen ministries read it. We have to understand what kind of world we are living in, and what kind of things our students are being taught.

I believe it is a beautiful, wonderful thing that God made women to be women, and not for women to be men. I think it is a glorious, wise thing that God made men, and for them to be and act as men, and not as women. This should not be controversial. This is biblical truth but in our culture it is controversial. In this culture the church must develop some backbone and spine to speak the truth.

Let me say a quick word to the folks here struggling with gender identity issues or who have taken steps to change your gender. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. The gender God has given you is not an accident, but done from wisdom and love. A part of walking in obedience to God is to step into that, not deny it. We as a church are willing to walk with you through that. We're not here to tease, make fun of you, or deny your feelings. We don't deny you may have these feelings, but we want you to walk in the truth and not let your feelings be your authority. Just know you have a church here, and a pastoral team here, who would be honored to pray with you, minister to you, help you understand God's will for you in light of your gender, and to give counsel and wisdom about navigating these things. You are welcome here. Jesus not only can save you from your sins, but he walks with you through your trials. You can find peace and satisfaction in how God wonderfully made you.

4. Men and women both share the spiritual gifts, and only the office of pastor is gender specific.

I believe every spiritual gift listed in the Scriptures for believers (teaching, leadership, administration, mercy, hospitality, etc.) are shared by both men and women. So much is made about what women cannot do. The Bible only restricts one area, and that is the role of pastor/elder, which is not a gift, but an office of the church. Women absolutely have teaching gifts and leadership gifts. The only place they cannot exercise those is in the office of pastor/elder. The reason I share that is so much debate rages in the church world about this. There are 10,000 ministries where men and women can both use their gifts to the glory of God and we spend our time fighting over the 1 that God restricts solely the role of man.

In my sixteen years of pastoring here, I've witnessed this issue crop up a few times, where wonderful people who were so gifted, and such a blessing to the church, couldn't settle their heart on this reality, and left the church. But as a church, we are

complementarian in our view of men and women in ministry, we are not egalitarian. We hold a firm conviction on the Bible's teaching on the role of men as pastors/elders, not as a way of maintaining power or male hierarchy, but as a way of obeying God's Word.

Additionally, here's what I've also witnessed over the last couple of decades. Churches that have flattened gender and embraced an egalitarian position are often the first to embrace other unbiblical ideas on sexuality. The reason why is because most of them adopted both views as a result of cultural influence, not the Bible.

5. The finished work of Jesus puts men and women on equal footing at the cross.

Paul speaks to this when he says:

Galatians 3:28 -- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Men do not have a special access to God. Women do not have a special access to God. Both men and women find their access the same way: faith in Jesus. Galatians 3:28 to eliminate or remove those God-given distinctions that He created and called good. Instead it removes those artificial distinctions that often get adopted.

In some Jewish thought, and in much of the ancient world, there was an idea that women were inferior to men. Christianity, through the work of Christ, has single-handedly done more for the advancement of women and elevating the value of women than any other religion or philosophy in the world. It is only a recent invention to pretend Christianity is restrictive of women.

God purposefully makes mankind into two distinct genders--male and female--for the purpose of displaying His glory, revealing His character, and maximizing our joy.

Men and women are not the same. We are different. This is by the design of God. It glorifies Him and shows us something about His nature. There is something about men that reveals to us the nature and character of God, that women don't show. There is something unique about women that reveals to us the nature and character of God, that men don't show. Together, men and women showcase the glory of God. Not only do we show God together, but we complement each other and are intentionally made as counterparts that fit together.

The more our society embraces this, the closer we are to the truth, and the greater our flourishing will be. The more we deny it and ignore it, the further removed from the truth

we become, and the more destructive it us. May we individually walk in the truth, and may we as the church speak the truth in a world groping around in the dark, looking for their identity. May we be, and point them to, the light.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of God making Woman the rib of Man?
2. What does Psalm 139:16 reveal about God's design for our gender?
3. Do you think we will maintain our gender identities in heaven with our glorified bodies? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the reasons why God chose to make men and women distinct from each other.
5. Why did God hold Adam responsible for the fall?
6. How do man-made distinctions create issues within gender?
7. Have you had to deal with the effects of gender flattening?
8. Discuss what Paul means in Galatians 3:28 as it relates to men and women's access to God.