



THE JOURNEY CHURCH

SERMON GUIDE 2.27.2022

GENESIS

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 2:18-25

RECAP:

There was a movie made about the life of Martin Luther, the 16th century reformer, in the early 2000's and in this movie is a scene that has stuck with me for years. In fact, it's a scene that I am thankful that I have never forgotten. In the movie, prior to Luther finding relief in Christ, he is working in the monastery with his friar, the monk overseeing him. The friar asks him if he has ever read the new testament himself, and Luther says no with astonishment. The scriptures weren't available to the public back then. Then the friar tells him that he will have plenty of time to read it where he is going. He is sending him to Wittenberg to seminary to teach. The look on Luther's face – he's speechless. He's terrified. He's almost disgusted by the statement. He looks at the friar and says, "You want me to teach? How in the world can I teach anyone? I'm too wicked. Here I am losing my faith and you ask me to teach?" The friar calmly replies to Luther in his fatherly tone and says, "Yes Martin. You will teach. We all teach best what we need to learn most."

"We all teach best what we need to learn most."

I share that story with you this morning because the passage I was assigned to teach in our study of Genesis is the passage on marriage.

My wife and I have been married for 15 years and I'm sure she would agree with me when I say, I still have much to learn on this topic myself. But thank God I am not required to stand up here and give you the Word of Nick on marriage this morning. I'm afraid it wouldn't do you much good. Thank God He has asked me to stand up here and simply

deliver His Word to you. And His Word does everything. So if you would, please stand with me in honor of the reading of this Word.

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

As I was preparing this sermon, I was a little overwhelmed with the fact that a sermon on Biblical marriage could go a thousand different ways. It's hard for me to avoid the temptation of trying to say everything that could be said. However, I've learned that when you do that you end up not saying anything at all. That being the case, I've decided to limit this sermon to 2 questions that I hope to answer for you. Other issues and applications will arise from within these points and we've got a lot of ground to cover just in these two. If you're a note taker, here they are:

What is God's design for marriage?

How does that design glorify Christ?

Now, for you unmarried folks, stay with me. This sermon will be just as much for you as anyone else. I'm not going to be presenting to you 5 tips to lasting love in marriage or anything like that. By the way, the fact that the publishing industry is overrun with such titles should clue you in to the fact that no magic tips exist. We're going a different direction today. I believe that:

Proposition: Understanding God's design for marriage, whether you are single, married, divorced or widowed will increase your love for Jesus.

Like every painting tells you something about the artist, so all of God's work is speaking to us. And so this morning, I want to show you what God's design for marriage says about Him. Let's go to our text now and begin looking for that.

1. What is God's design for marriage?

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

The LORD God said

- Who was the first to notice that Adam needed something here? It wasn't Adam was it? The LORD God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone. Remember, we're looking at the glory of Christ in God's **design** for marriage and I want you to make note of the fact that we can't even get past the first phrase of the first passage about marriage without God making it explicitly clear that this is His thing, not ours.

Not good

- What has God said of His creation over and over again leading up to this point? "It is good, it is good..." The first thing in unfallen creation that God declares as "not good" is that Adam is alone. This is not Adam saying, "God I'm really lonely down here. You know what I'd really like? One of those woman creatures (hindsight 20/20, had Adam said that we might have told him to be careful what he wishes for). But here God's idea, God's design, God's purpose, God's resolution to the first problem in creation is to give Adam a companion that is in one way the same as himself and in another way his complimentary opposite.

Should be alone

- Why is it not good that he should be alone?
 - 1) The creation mandate, the command that God is going to give to humanity cannot be fulfilled by Adam alone.
 - a) Be fruitful and multiply - you don't need me explaining that one.
 - b) Take dominion over the earth and subdue it.
 - i) I think it's safe to say that Adam cannot do this based on the fact that God identifies the thing that he needs as a "helper."

I will make him

- Who is doing the work here? That may seem obvious but I want to belabor this point. Marriage was God's idea as a result of His assessment by His design and executed by His own hand. This is why we can't redefine it. You know why you don't get to decide that all of the Lord of the Rings books will now be titled, "Frodo

and Sam's Bogus Journey"? I mean, you can call them that but it doesn't make it so for everyone else. You calling them that doesn't have any effect on reality whatsoever. You know why you don't get to do that? They're not yours to rename. You didn't author them. You don't own the rights to them. This is exactly why redefining marriage is such a big deal. In fact, we could say that the phrase "redefining marriage" is a contradiction in terms. Meaning, you can't redefine something that you didn't define in the first place. You can't redefine marriage any more than you can redefine humanity. You can't just decide that turtles are humans now. That's absurd. This isn't about politics or the "religious right" or anything else. This is about the Lordship of God over His creation and the sinfulness of our lust for autonomy and self-rule.

Helper fit

- We hear the word helper and we almost exclusively think of someone less than. It's offensive to our pride, yes, but it's also just lost on us what the word really means. It doesn't mean assistant - I'm imagining the wealthy executive sending someone off for a latte and can't even remember her name. Those are our connotations of this word. But you know what this word really means? It's super deep... **One who helps.**
 - Not my assistant waiting on me, but the one that I call on when I can't do it. One whom I need. One who makes me better.
 - This same word is used all through the OT about one particular person. Can you guess who it is? Think about it - One who helps, One that I call on when I can't do it. One whom I need. One who makes me better. **GOD!**
- Fit for him. Can also be translated "corresponding to." In God's design the man needs not just any creature to help him. He needs a specific KIND of creature to help him. He needs a woman. He does not need a mirror image of himself.
 - This is relevant in our thinking about human sexuality, of course. But beyond sex – he needs one corresponding to him. He does not need a homosexual partner but he also, at his most basic level does not need a brother or a best friend either. Man needs a woman. He needs a wife to help him.
 - What is God doing for the man here? He is providing for his needs. And, who determines what man needs? What kind of love, what kind of partner man needs? Not man. God does.

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** [corresponding to] for him.

Out of the ground

- Why is this here? You're going to see a special distinctiveness of the woman in this passage. As Brandon showed us in his sermon about kicking dogs, mankind (man and woman) are distinct from all the other creatures but here woman is going to get the spotlight. This is her moment.

Brought them to the man to see what he would call them...and that was its name

- It's interesting that the Lord brought them to Adam. And we'll see that He also brings the woman to the man. He also named the animals. What is happening here?
 - Adam is exercising his place of leadership and authority over creation as God has instructed him to. God named Adam, Adam did not name himself. He gave Adam the task of being the benevolent representative in his rule over creation and Adam begins doing what His Father has done.

But for Adam

- The way that this is worded "*But for Adam*" implies that he noticed that the other animals had the same but opposite complimentary counterparts.

Not found a helper fit [corresponding to] for him.

- As we've already said, a helper who is able to help him. One corresponding to him. A creature that will do, with respect to himself, what he could never do alone.
- One of the greatest lies of our age is that the Bible subjugates and oppresses women. Nevermind the fact that the concept of women's rights would not exist apart from the Christian worldview. But I don't want you to miss something here: Creation is not complete without the woman. God does not rest until he makes the woman. God honors and elevates women. Women are unique displays of His glory in a way that only they can be. And, guess whose idea that was...God's of course. This is how He does it:

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**.

While he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh

- Again, God is doing the action here. He took one of Adam's ribs. Remember when I said that this passage is showing us the significance of the woman and her distinctiveness and honor as compared to the rest of creation. She is the only living creature not made from the dirt.
- Eve, being created from man, also shows us that she is one with him. Equal in value and worth in every way. Man was made from the dirt and the animals were made from the dirt but we know that they are not equal in value. So instead of Eve being made from the dirt, leaving us to speculate that maybe she might be a lower form of human, God makes her from the exact same substance as the man. In fact, He makes her **from him**. You see, we've already discussed that she is different. You know what this tells you? That it is common sense that equality is not sameness. You already understand that just from this practical example in the creation of Adam and Eve. However, this is the lie we're all being fed all the time. That, for men and women to be truly equal, we have to flatten all distinctions. You can't say that men are more suited for this or women are clearly designed for that. Our modern sensibilities, the spirit of the age says that's bigotry. But that's because they want you to believe that equality is sameness. It's not.

Made into a woman

- Let me just beat this horse to death – who is the actor here? God. And what did He do? He made her. And what did He make her into? Another human? An androgynis person? A non-binary person? Just simply a person and we have constructed this idea of gender and forced it on her? No – He made her into a woman. His idea. His masterpiece. His design. His solution to man being alone.

Brought her to the man

- Let me just say this because some of you need to hear it. Men and women. God is the one who recognized Adam's need. God is the one who resolved Adam's need and God is the one who brought that resolution to him. Some of you are looking for a husband or wife and you need to know that God calls you to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. What that looks like in individual lives will be different. But I do know this – you will not get to the end of your life and die miserable and alone saying, "My service to God kept me from finding a spouse, if only I would have sought the Lord less." No – you will either die single, totally fulfilled by the Lord in every way or you will walk right into the path of the one He intends for you to marry. Either way, he will give you the grace to say, along with the classic hymn by Charlotte Elliot, ***"If but my fainting heart be blest, With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest, My God! To Thee I leave the rest, "Thy will be done!" "Thy will be done!"***

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.**

At last is **bone of my bones** and **flesh of my flesh**

- **Not** Adam's partner in life while they both pursue their own dreams and desires. We've all seen something like this portrayed on tv or in the movies: A man and woman both have these grand dreams of life and then get married. It's all exciting for a while. Then they have kids and one of them (usually the woman in these stories) puts her dreams on hold in order to help raise the family while the man continues to work and climb the corporate ladder. One day the woman has some identity crisis that ends up becoming a marriage crisis because she realizes that she'll never be able to live the life she dreamed of. She'll never be able to get out of life all that she had hoped for at the beginning of this marriage. The whole storyline is framed as if the woman is the victim and that her dreams were stolen from her. Because the man continued on in the path in which he was going, he is villainized (sometimes rightfully so, depending on the story). It's all set up to show that it's just not fair and the climax of the story is always the woman finding a way to reactivate that dream, sometimes at the expense of the marriage. And of course, because she deserves to be able to fulfill her dreams this is perfectly acceptable. They've just grown apart and it's time for her to be able to live her life now.
 - Now, there is nothing wrong with chasing your dreams and a husband and wife should be making those decisions together as to how and what is possible based on their own situation. Dreams aren't the problem. Hyper Individuality is. Listen, folks, if God has given you a spouse, no dream supersedes your responsibility to that. And if He has given you kids, and you see your problem as if now being a parent is preventing you from fulfilling your dreams, there is a really easy solution to that. You need new dreams. Dreams that include the family that God has given you.
 - My point here is that if you don't want to be one flesh, if you don't want to lay all of your dreams and ambitions and hopes for life down for the high calling of fulfilling God's design then it's best you don't marry.
 - If you disagree with me on this point, I'm ok with that but stay with me for the rest of the sermon today and make a note to go back and read 1 John

2:15-17. Your dreams need to be subservient to your marriage. You can tell me I'm right later.

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

- Remember what we said about God naming Adam and then Adam naming the animals? Who names the woman? Adam names her, not because he is better or of more worth than her, but because he is responsible for her.
- Adam was given responsibility for creation, before Eve was created. The Lord brought all that was under his care to him to see what he would name them. His work is paused while God knocks him out. He awakes and gets back to work. His naming of Eve is not a sign of superiority but a sign of responsibility. As we'll see in Genesis 3, when she sins, Adam is held accountable.
- And what does he name her?
 - Literally the word man with a feminine termination. Because of our crazy culture, you have to listen carefully so that you don't hear what I'm not saying. But the word is literally "female man." But, don't think of this like "girl boy." Think "man-kind." Man, in the sense of mankind. She is female mankind. The significance of this is what we've already pointed out. Her value, worth, equality, honor. This is not just man. This is a very special kind of man. Again, mankind.
 - Why? Because she is from him. Part of him.

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

- Here we have Moses inspired commentary on the whole event. The institution of marriage (to which Jesus also appeals to in Matthew 19) is grounded in the timing, design, means and function displayed in the creation of woman.
 - He leaves his father and mother (and the woman doing the same is implied) and holds fast to his wife.
 - ***And they shall become two individuals who are their own persons. Who strive to keep romance and intimacy alive while they individually seek to live their best lives. Who seeks to get the most out of life and the trick is just finding a teammate that will understand that life you want for yourself and support you along the way?***
 - No, the two shall become one flesh. Listen, if your career is more important than your marriage, your social life, friends, parents – or more subtly, if you say something to your spouse like "it's not fair for me to have to choose between the two" – then you are living outside of God's design and you need to deal with that.

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

Both naked and were not ashamed

- There's a lot to be said here but I just want to draw your attention to the most obvious thing. They were pure and spotless. As the Lord described His church in Eph. 5:27,
27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless

Understanding God's design for marriage, whether you are single, married, divorced or widowed will increase your love for Jesus.

Conclusion to point 1: We began with the question; what is God's design for marriage? We could summarize it like this:

1. The woman was made for **man**, from **man** and to be forever united to **man** in order to fulfill God's mission on the earth.

How does that relate to our second question?

You don't need to turn here, but I would certainly make a note of this so that you can go back and dig deeper later. In Ephesians 5 we have the longest single passage on marriage in the New Testament. Providentially, it's also the passage that explicitly tells us that marriage is a pointer to Christ and the Church. Paul gives practical commands that basically say, wives respect and submit to your husbands as to the Lord - which doesn't mean submit to him as if he is the Lord. But, rather, submit to the Lord BY submitting to your husband. This is the Lord's design. In following that design, you are submitting to the Lord. And, husbands, sacrificially love your wives, lay down your life for her. Seek her good above your own, nourish and cherish her, treat her as your own body. Then he says this:

"This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."

Now, go back to our summary statement on God's design: The woman was made **for** man, from man and to be forever united to man in order to fulfill His mission on the earth. What part of that statement rubs people the wrong way? "**For man**", that's right. And then, here in Ephesians 5 women are being told to submit to their husbands. That makes

us uncomfortable in our culture right? However, look at this. Take that same summary statement I made and replace the man with Christ and the woman with the Church.

The **Church** was made for **Christ**, from **Christ** and to be forever united to **Christ** in order to fulfill His mission on the earth. Do you see it? This is how God's design for marriage glorifies Christ. Even for the single, the widow, the divorcee. Christ does not exist to tell us something about marriage. Marriage exists to tell us what Christ is to you, believer! Married folks, that's why following His design is so important. It's a matter of accurately representing your Bridegroom in Heaven.

2. How does that design glorify Christ?

Look at the parallels:

Who submits to who?

Woman to the man / The church to Christ.

- It's also important to define submission here. Just like our definition of the word helper earlier, the problem with the word submission is twofold. One, our pride doesn't like it and two, our culture doesn't use the term the way that scripture does. This has nothing to do with subjugation and everything to do with humble selfless trust in God by falling in line with His design. A good way to think of this is – as a woman, if your submission to your husband does not look like the church's joyful, trusting submission to Christ then it's not what the Bible is talking about. And men, if your leading your wife does not look like the self denying, life laying down, love of Christ for her good, then you're not leading the way the Bible commands you to lead.
- And if you don't like that idea of submitting to a man, I've got news for you. You don't like Christianity. Christianity is all about submitting to a man. We are all in trusting submission to Christ – if we are Christians. You may say, yes, but He is also God, He is perfect. Ok, well that perfect God has commanded you to submit to your husband so there's that.

Which leads us to the next point in our Ephesians passage; the man is the head **of the woman, as Christ is the head of the church.**

- What does that look like? Well, what did Christ do?
 - Loved, gave Himself up and takes responsibility for the Church's well being – especially her spiritual well being. He is to love his wife as his own body, nourishing and cherishing her. And the woman is to respect the husband.

- Now, a word on what we mean when we say, “love.” There is such a thing as Romantic love but it’s not what you see in the movies and music. I was just discussing this with one of my daughters this week. I hate to be the one to tell you this but no one falls in or out of love. Love is not some all powerful force at whose whims we all bow. A Lot of people get married, or at least committed to a relationship, not because they love the person, but because they love the feelings they are experiencing and they don’t want to lose them. They think that by getting the other person to commit to them forever, they are ensuring their possession of that euphoria forever. Guess what happens when that wears off – and it does wear off. You know what I’m talking about, not affections, not attraction. I’m talking about that obsessive infatuation at the beginning. It wears off just like it wore off a few months after you bought your new car or new house. If that is what you are labeling as love, then you’re destined for failure. You’ll be forever chasing that fix. And once you realize you can’t manufacture it, someone else will come along and all the sudden, you’ll start feeling those things again and you know what you’ll think, “I must be falling in love with this person. I’ve fallen out of love with my spouse, we’ve just grown apart.” All because your sinful flesh and insecure heart has been fooled into thinking that infatuation has anything to do with love. That’s not how Christ loves you. If you have those feelings for your spouse, enjoy them, thank God for them. But remember that they are not a litmus test of anything significant.
- “If your definition of love is little more than the warm fuzzies, physical attraction, and the ability to have fun together, your relationship may demonstrate not how much you love the other person, but how much you each love yourself! What you have found is a person who helps you love you better than anyone else has!” *Tying the Knot*

Conclusion:

So how do we bring this to bear on our lives? It’s fairly simple, but it’s anything but easy.

- For the married man
 - Treat your wife as your equal. Bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. But do so in an understanding way as Peter says. Lead her, not as a tyrant, but as Christ leads you. Put her welfare above your own even to the point of death. Make loving her your second highest priority. Second only to loving the Lord your God. She is more important than your career, more

important than your friends, more important than even your kids. You are one flesh with her. Nourish and cherish her as such.

- One of our elders, Scott, gave me some insight on these two points and these are something that all men struggle with, I think. Validate her. You want to say “yes and amen” to this sermon. You want to say, “I agree, God’s design is best?” Well, God’s design puts her on a pedestal, not you. “The woman is the glory of the man.” In your interactions and day to day communications, does she feel like that? You might say, “I do what I’m supposed to, how she feels is not my problem.” Well, good luck with that approach.
 - Don’t check out. If you want to be the leader, then you’d better lead. You can’t have the title and shirk off the work. Don’t leave your wife to do the dirty work in disciplining your kids (again I’m preaching to myself here and she and I both know it). If she doesn’t feel like you’re steering the ship, if she doesn’t have a sense of restful peace about that then it’s probably because you’re not steering the ship.
- For the married woman
 - Submit to your husband. If he is leading you into sin, resist for the Lord’s sake. If he is leading you in something that is not sin, but maybe you know a better way, offer him your counsel and then leave it in the Lord’s hands. If you choose to not follow him (again barring sin) then you are not trusting the Lord.
 - If those ideas are so far removed from what your marriage looks like, call on Christ. He is more than able to restore all that has been destroyed by sin. We will also walk with you on that. Shawn Casto is working on some resources right now as a matter of fact and he’d love for you to reach out to him with your needs in this area.
 - For the single person – whether that’s because you’re waiting for marriage, you’ve been widowed, divorced or you’re called to a life of singleness. Serve God where you are. There are things that you can do for the Church in your position that married people will never be able to do. Your freedom from marital and parental obligations, whether temporary or permanent, whether you’re young or old, is also part of God’s design.
 - Look at the picture that God has given you of the way that He loves and cares for you through your union with Christ. The **Church** was made for **Christ**, from **Christ** and to be forever united to **Christ** in order to fulfill His mission on the earth. He loves you as His own flesh. He nourishes and cherishes you. He continually seeks your good. Look at marriage as you

would that beautiful painting and marvel at what it tells you about it's Creator.

The thing I want you to take away from this message is the opposite of most marriage sermons. Most marriage sermons end up saying, "you can make your marriage better by following the example of Christ's relationship to the church." And that is true.

But what I want you to hear today is that you can love Christ more and know His love for you more by looking at the picture He has given you in the marriage of man and woman. He cares for you dearly, church.

And this is how I'd like to close. With our eyes on Christ. In marriage, we all fail again and again. But the good news is that He does not have grace for us simply *in spite of* our failures. His grace was not an afterthought. If you are in Christ this morning, you need to know that He proposed to you knowing exactly what you are. As Hosea says, He betrothed *Himself* to you. He doesn't just know what you are, but also knows what you will be. He is the perfect Bridegroom who laid down His life for you.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the one thing in creation that God said was not good? Why did God say that?
2. Why was it not good that man was alone?
3. What is the significance of Eve not being made from the dirt as man and the other creatures were?
4. What is the significance of Adam naming Eve?
5. How does the woman being made for the man, from the man, and to be forever united to the man correspond to the Church being made for Christ, from Christ, and forever united to Christ?
6. How should wives submitting to husbands portray the Church's submission to Christ? How should men leading their wives look like how Christ leads His Church?
7. Read Ephesians 5:22-27. How is marriage a reflection of the Gospel?