

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is a suitable partner for him.” ¹⁹ Out of the soil the LORD God had formed every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called every living creature, that became its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal, but for Adam no helper was found who was a suitable partner for him. ²¹ The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. As the man slept, the LORD God took a rib and closed up the flesh where it had been. ²² The LORD God built a woman from the rib that he had taken from the man and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, “Now this one is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones. She will be called ‘woman’ because she was taken out of man.” ²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will remain united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Sermon for Pentecost 18, October 4, 2020

Text: Genesis 2:18-24

Theme: “Spouses, Appreciate Each Other!”

In the name of Jesus, my dear fellow redeemed,

You don’t have to read very far into the Bible before you discover that sin has invaded every part of our lives. Our sinful nature is so opposed to God that even when he blesses us we fail to appreciate that God showers huge blessings on us. When he gives us food we take it for granted or we complain about its taste or texture. When God gives us an automobile or some other mode of transportation we complain when it doesn’t have all the conveniences we want or that it doesn’t run exactly the way we think it should.

Our sinful nature shows itself in another way as well. When God gives us a spouse we so often don’t appreciate his wonderful gift. Through the account of the first marriage we want to consider just what God has given us in our spouses.

It is said that when God created Eve he did not take part of Adam’s head as though he should rule over her, nor did he take part of his foot to be trampled on by him. Instead he took a rib from Adam to be by his side, and close to his heart. Now, you won’t find those words in scripture. Yet, they do reflect some of the truths scripture expresses.

There probably was never a man who appreciated his wife more than Adam did, that is, while he was sinless. And because you and I are sinners we need to be reminded to appreciate our spouses because they are gifts of God’s love. Today, as we look at the Lord’s eyewitness account of the first marriage it is appropriate that we should consider what God has given us, whether we are husbands or wives. Genesis 2

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urges us, “Spouses, Appreciate Each Other”. 1. Because you are God’s gift to each other. 2. Because you are blessings to each other. 3. Because you are one flesh.

Genesis 2 gives us a more detailed account of the creation of the first people. God did not create both man and woman at the same time. This was for a good reason. **“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.’”** Notice that this is God’s evaluation of the situation. Apparently Adam was satisfied with his relationship to God and had not desire for more. But God says he has something even better in mind for Adam. The first man needed a counterpart, someone who would complement him. Without a doubt the Lord was also thinking of multiplying the human race.

So God sets out to show Adam his need. The Almighty Creator brought all the animals in front of Adam so that he would name them. We become aware that this man had much more than a sub-human intellect. He was not descended from the great apes. God had given him an intellect that allowed him to give appropriate names to each animal that come in front of him. Very likely Adam noticed that each male animal had a female counterpart. But among all the animals there was not one that corresponded to him. Certainly Adam understood clearly that he was different from the animals. At that point Adam understood his need for a companion. He can now fully appreciate what God is about to do for him.

So the Lord set out to meet the man’s need. With the deepest concern for Adam’s welfare God put him into a very heavy sleep. He did not want the man to have to experience pain in regard to this important operation.

And so with simple but accurate language scripture tells us God made a woman from the rib he had taken from the man. The word literally means God “built” a woman from Adam’s rib. This suggests that God acted according to his plan a purpose and not in a haphazard manner. He was constructing someone of importance just as he has done with Adam.

The order of God’s creation also indicates that God’s plan is for the husband to be the head of the family and the wife to take the role of helper and supporter. For when God presented the woman to Adam He established marriage as his institution. He also gave family life his blessing and established it as the basic unit of society. Here was God’s best gift to Adam—one who could share the Creator’s blessings and be his wife.

Husbands, when you married did you consider your wife to be a gift from God? Did you believe her to be God’s special blessing to you? But how easy it is for us to pick at our wives faults with an arrogant and unforgiving attitude instead of giving them loving encouragement. That is not to say that wives do not commit sins just as we do. But too often we husbands handle our wives’ faults and shortcomings with picky fault finding and harping.

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Instead, we first will want to consider what God has done for us in giving us a Savior who paid for all of our own sins and faults. When God works faith in our hearts he also causes love to grow—love for him and others. Then we can see our wives as God's gifts and forgive them as he has forgiven us. Peter comments on this very thing: **Husbands, in the same way, continue to live with your wives with the knowledge that, as the wife, she is the weaker vessel. Also continue to accord them honor as fellow heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.** (1 Peter 3:7)

We often consider a gift more valuable if it is something that suits us or meets a need we have. Men, when we picture our wives as God's gifts to us we will begin to see how he has met our needs in our spouse. Then we can appreciate them even more because they are suitable helpers.

That was God's intent when he created Eve—to make a helper for Adam, and one whose needs he could also meet. In every way God made Eve to correspond to Adam. She was to correspond to him physically. She was not an exact replica of Adam. That was not part of God's divine plan. But she was one who would complete Adam. Together they were a family and as husband and wife they could receive God's blessing of children.

Though the Bible does not go into detail on this subject, we are safe in saying that Adam's wife was to be his complement, mentally and emotionally. The Lord endowed her with just as much intelligence as Adam. Since she was taken from Adam God says she would be a helper for him and we should have no doubts as to her ability to complement her husband in that way. She could reason with Adam; she could help him plan how to care for the garden. We can only imagine how much she helped stimulate his thinking. And yes, she could laugh with Adam.

But what made her the best possible companion for Adam was the fact that she was suitable for him spiritually. Both of them had the same creator. That meant each of them had a living soul. They were beings meant to live in fellowship with their God. When God made her and brought her to Adam to establish the first family unit, she knew God as a loving Father and could worship him right along with Adam. Yes, she was in every way suitable for him.

We could compare this to the meshing of two gears. The physical dimensions of the gears may be very different. One may be small, the other a bit larger. Yet, when the teeth of those gears meet they mesh together and one helps the other. Together they can do a great deal of work. But just as one gear is the drive gear and one is the driven, so husbands and wives have different roles.

Now it is certainly true that in God's eyes men and women have equal value in his kingdom. Paul makes this clear in Galatians: **There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus.** Yet God

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gave husbands and wives different roles in life and especially within marriage and the family. The husband is, by God's design the head of the family, the loving leader, while the wife is the helper and supporter. This is evident in the order in which God created man and woman. It becomes even clearer when we hear God's word through the apostle Paul in Ephesians. He says: "**Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. ... Husbands, love your wives, in the same way as Christ loved the church.**" The machinery of marriage runs most smoothly when both husband and wife function in the role God has given to each.

Husbands, appreciate your wife's role as your helper, don't make her your subject. As an example, perhaps it is not wise to insist on operating the family finances if it is obvious that your wife is more capable of it than you. Instead of insisting on doing something that does not suit your abilities, it may be much wiser to recognize that she is a helper suitable for you.

Much of what I have already said focuses on husbands. In some measure the same things apply to wives in appreciating their husbands. But Scripture focuses on husbands because God asks husbands to take the lead in loving.

The husband has the assignment of teaching the other members of the family how to love. That is a tough job. Most of the time we are far less than perfect examples of love. In our sinful hearts we harbor bitterness, resentment and a lot of selfishness. How can we husbands ever fulfill the role God has given us? The only way is to look to the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. See how he, in perfect love, cleanses you of all your sins, even where you have sinned against God's design for you as a husband. When you cling by faith to his love for you it will be the driving force in your life as you seek to be the loving leader in your household.

Of course, Adam was perfect and new his place as the loving leader of his newly established family. He appreciated his wife as a gift from his loving Creator and saw her as a helper suitable for him. But he also appreciated her because she was his own flesh.

As soon as Adam had received the woman as his wife he said, "**This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' because she was taken out of man.**" In this way Adam expresses his oneness with Eve. Somehow Adam was aware of what God had done to create Eve. Most likely God gave him some explanation of what would take place. Adam shows his understanding of God's intent for marriage. God wants marriage to be a oneness, a true united front. The Lord makes no provision for pre-marital sex or extra-marital sex. God blueprint for marriage calls for one man and one woman in a life-long union of love and commitment.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and remain united to his wife and they will become one flesh.” The God fearing husband and wife make a commitment to one another. Leaving father and mother again points to the establishing of a new family unit. Where the parental family once was most important, husbands and wives first and foremost make a commitment to each other.

This commitment is freely given and freely received with no strings attached. In other words God’s idea of commitment is not, “I’ll love you as long as you meet my expectations of a wife or a husband OR I’ll love you as long as you don’t criticize me”. The Christian marriage commitment to be one flesh is unconditional.

Husband and wife express this relationship most intimately in the physical union, God’s gift to the couple joined in marriage. But it is also expressed in a oneness of interest and purpose. This is especially important in the Christian marriage in which husband and wife are heirs together of the gracious gift of eternal life.

And again, husbands, you as the loving leader of the family are responsible for striving for this oneness. It is important that you set the agenda in your family. Are you going to make faith in Jesus Christ the cornerstone of your family’s life? Do you and your wife share that conviction? Have you constantly sought to foster God’s /Word in your home? So often, even in Christian homes, we find husbands abdicating their responsibility to foster this oneness with their families. We become over-obligated to our work or we selfishly pursue our own goals. Those things often weigh heavily in the breakdown of marriages. We must also beware of enticements that the world places in our path. More than a few husbands have thwarted God’s will for marriage and chased another woman only to have it blow up in their faces. Sin always does!

The only way that husbands will appreciate their wives and wives appreciate their husbands is to first see God’s redeeming love your you. Then you can truly appreciate your spouse as a gift of his love. The God who met your greatest need—the forgiveness of sins—also seeks to meet your earthly needs by giving you a spouse. Love her; Love him; appreciate her; appreciate him. And by God’s power live in marriage according to His will. Then you will find all the blessings God wants you to have. Amen.