Sermon Let There Be Husband and Wife

Scripture: Gen 2:15-25 Sunday, January 21, 2018

As I begin a new phase of my life, I have sensed God nudging me to fight for and support the institution of marriage. It will not be an over claim if I say that the institution of marriage has been under serious attack in this country. I am a numbers person but in this one case, I will not be quoting any statistics to you today because I don’t think I can talk marriage statistics without choking up myself. But when I say that marriage as an institution is under attack I mean it in every sense possible. People all over the US and much to my shock, even more people in rural areas than urban areas are having sex outside marriage at a younger age, more even than the urban areas of the country. More children are born out of wed lock than in marriage. The nuclear family of 2018 looks very different that the nuclear family of 50 years ago. Technology has made the delivery of pornography easier and so pervasive that it is now the highest cause of divorce in the US. Simultaneously, the threshold to quitting a “till death do us part” relationship is getting lower and lower. Of course, the attack on marriage includes challenges to the very definition of marriage itself.

In the midst of all this, I am personally sensing God is calling me to the fight for the institution of marriage as God originally designed it to be. In the last six months I have had the privilege of conducting 2 marriages, and counselling many individuals and couples. Today we have a newly married couple in our church and we are praying that more would join. So I think the topic of marriage is something I am going to keep coming back to many times this year. I think too that the topic of marriage is relevant to singles as well because of married couples you may be relating to or even to understand better the institution of Christian singleness. In the future I do intent to address singleness specifically but today want to start addressing the concept of Christian marriage. To do that I want to start with the very first Biblical texts addressing the issue so that we can see God’s intended design from the ground up. Today, I am going to focus on the Gen 2:18-25 text. This text is one of the most important texts on the topic of marriage because most of the other Biblical texts refer to this one. Our Lord Jesus himself quotes this text when he speaks on marriage. Apostle Paul’s marriage texts in his various letters are also based on this Gen 2:18-25 text. So that is where we are going to start in our marriage series.

I want to start with a preface. And the preface is a brief comment on Gen 1, God’s creation account of the universe God made in which the first couple will be placed in. In the Gen 1 creation account, the essence is not how God created the universe because the “how” is beyond human understanding even with today’s advanced understanding of science. The most accessible information in Gen 1 is the glimpse it gives us of the structure of the universe. And what we see is this. The source of the universe is God. God lays out a blue print for the universe. The blue print for the universe is His Word. And in order of importance he then creates light and darkness, then matter, then the lower order living forms like plants, then higher order living forms like animal life and finally the highest order living form, human beings made in the very image of God. And the purpose of all this creation right upto the Garden of Eden was to create a home for free willed intelligent beings whom he could have a relationship with.

God created everything in the universe with structure and purpose. It is good to lay that on the table so when we dive into how God created the institution of marriage we will be better able to appreciate the structure and purpose of this beautiful relationship that God created.

With that, let’s turn our attention to our text for today focusing on the creation of the first couple. Our verse starts with, “The Lord God placed a man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it”. Earlier in verse 7 we see God forming the man out of the dust of the earth and breathing His breath into his nostrils which brought the first man Adam to life. A quick translation note. Whenever in the NLT says “the man”, they are translating what in Hebrew is literally “the Adam”. So to clarify I am going to use Adam instead of “the man”. Ok so God brings Adam to life and immediately places him in the Garden of Eden. God also says, Adam was given a job of taking care of this Garden. Esentially making garderer as the first job ever created as well. After that God gives Adam his first spiritual instruction. God tells him, “you may eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit”, God tells him, “you are sure to die”.

Then in verse 18, the story takes a turn. Because at this point, God for the first time changes his tone and says, “it is not good for Adam to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him”. Then the next two verse takes us in an unexpected direction. Because after saying “it is not God for Adam to be alone”, God seems to go on an animal creation spree. He creates all kinds of wild animals, birds and livestock and brings them to Adam to see what Adam would name them. Of course we know that God is not creating the animals after he created Adam. The narrator here is simply introducing animals into the picture to help both Adam and the readers understand what God already understands. Adam’s loneliness. Because by bringing all the animals to Adam, Adam gets to explore the rest of the living beings God created. He does with them what he is supposed to. Adam names them all. By naming he is describing their essence and demonstrating his dominance over them. But after he does all this Adam only realizes how different he is from all these creatures. And when there is no one who is like you, there is no one who can relate to you. And that is what loneliness is about. And nothing he could do in his world could remedy his loneliness. You see, Adam by himself was fully capable of fulfilling the call that God has placed on his life. Adam had talent, resources, and a clear direction from God. But with all that, there was something missing in Adam’s life. Now at this point we don’t even know if Adam was fully aware of what was missing in his own life. Except that when Adam sees the animals, you see the animals were created male and female and God even blessed the animals in Gen 1 verse 24. God blesses the animals to be able to reproduce and crate offspring after their own kind. And when God brings the animals to Adam and he studies them, he has an opportunity to see male and female animals in pairs and then he has an opportunity to realize that there is no one like him on the planet whom he can relate to like even the animals have male and female of the same kind that can relate to each other.

So why does not God create male and female human beings together, just as he created male and female animals. After he always wanted both animals and humans to reproduce and fill the earth right? Well, you see the different between animals and humans is that animals do what they are programmed to do. With human beings, God knows when we earn for something, we value it more. God in verse 19 and 20 is taking Adam through a process where he is realizing what is missing in his life and beginning to yearn for someone who can relate to him. Someone who is like him and can help him. So what is this helpmate going to help him with? It is not his job because that he is capable of executing his job by himself. What Adam cannot do by himself is receive the blessing that God had always tended for humankind. In Gen 1 verse 27 it says, God blessed humanity with these words, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and govern it.” By himself, Adam could do everything that God had asked him to do but by himself he was inadequate to receive the full blessing that God had in store for them.

So remember the sequence now. God creates Adam, gives him a job in the Garden of Eden and then God shows him his incompleteness and inability to receive God’s blessing without a helpmate.

Then God makes His next move. God puts Adam into a deep sleep. This is the first recorded surgery in history. So God takes out one of Adam’s ribs, closes his flesh back, creates another living being, a woman and brings this woman to Adam.

This is the climax of the story because this is the first time we hear Adam speak. Adam is delighted and exclaims “At last! This one is bone from my bone, flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman” because she was taken from a man”. Ok lets take this scene in.

First of all, if you can picture this, this is actually a wedding ceremony. And the moment Adam sees Eve is like the moment on the day of the wedding when the bridegroom sees the bride all dressed up and looking gorgeous. Her beauty takes his breath away. He is uniquely drawn to this woman. He finds her uniquely attractive and so does she. You see this first look chemistry is symbolic of a larger reality. That is other deep ways something about the woman is uniquely suited for the man and something about this man is uniquely suited for this woman. They are truly made for each other. By God. Notice also as Eve is brought to Adam, who brings Eve to Adam? It is God himself. So if the officiant were to ask who gives this woman to be married to this man, who would answer? It is God himself.

Let me highlight for you the special dignity this passage gives woman.

Yes in the creation sequence, the woman is the only living being who is created directly from flesh. The man and the animals are created from dust. She is not only made by God but brought to Adam by the hand of God. She is crated with a calling. A calling to be a helpmate. And what is special about that? Well, God considers Himself to be a helper. Ps 54:5 says, “Behold, God is my helper. The Lord is the sustainer of my soul”. This is a theme found throughout the Bible. Finally, our Genesis account makes it clear that the woman is the key to unlocking the blessing that God intended for humankind. Adam cannot bear offspring by himself. Just a quick word here. If you are thinking, what if I don’t have children? Well, there is a lot that the Bible says about couples who don’t have children but I just want to mention briefly that just as you don’t have to be married to bless the institution of marriage or to bless married couples, you don’t have to be a biological parent to bless children, right?

Ok so what do we have up till this point we have looked separately at the creation of Adam and Eve. The first man Adam was created from the ground, placed in the Garden and given a job, take care of the garden and rule over the earth God made. He had all the resources to fulfill his calling successfully. Adam was not made needy. But Adam was lonely. And unable to receive the full blessing that God intended for human beings.

So God creates a woman. And here again God did not create a woman and let the woman wonder what her purpose was. God gives her a purpose and a job right at the beginning. And God himself brings the two of them together with no input from Adam and Eve.

So, what is the practical application of what we have heard from God so far. Well, if God brings you a man or woman who makes your heart skip a beat and you say, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, a person of the opposite sex who really gets you, men don’t be afraid to reach out and make a commitment. And woman don’t reject such a man.

But I also want to present a caution to you. You see our scripture does not say, Adam completed Eve or Eve completed Adam. They were both complete in themselves, capable, gifted and clear of their purpose. There is a temptation to be drawn to someone who can compensate for our weaknesses. I am not talking about differences in gifting, where one is a numbers person and the other is not. Those differences are natural and perfect in a marriage. But I am talking about one being hardworking and the other lazy or one being a very self controlled person while the other has no impulse control and gets all their self-esteem from shopping or something like that. Those weaknesses are too much for spouse to handle and they will bring both or you down. Another thing you spouse was never meant to compensate for was your brokenness. You see Adam and Eve were not broken without each other. When you bring a brokenness into a marriage relationship it is like a crack in a tile will run right through your tile and into your spouses tile as well and in the end you will end up with two broken people. Your spouse was never meant to fix your brokenness.

The question then is, who can get married? Because we don’t live in the garden of Eden. We live in a fallen world where everyone of us has our own shortcomings and brokenness. That is where our walk with our Lord comes is. If we have a deep enough relationship with our Lord and Savior, He comes into us to heal all our brokenness, transform us with a renewed mind. Now we are whole enough to bring another person into our live. Now there are really two to become one.

Then you can make a “till death do us part” commitment to each other. Then you can truly be husband and wife to each other as God intended it to be. Of course there is a lot more to be said about marriage in this passage and the other marriage passages in the Bible. But I wanted to keep coming back to marriage this year because I thought it would be wonderful if our church community would be a place where Christian God ordained marriages are blessed and nurtured and respected. When you do things God’s way there is a tremendous blessing to be had. May our church community be filled with Godly marriages and may he make us fruitful and multiply us in many ways. Let us pray.