

Man's Need – God's Gift

Genesis 2:18-25

Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 2:18-25. Today we come to the end of the creation week. It was not millions of years or long days, although in the time we have taken in our series it may have seemed like long days. Once again let me remind you that chapter 1 was a telescopic view looking down from the heavens at all of creation giving us an overview of what transpired on each of those six days. Beginning in verse 6 through the rest of the chapter we zoomed in closer to one small point in the entire universe to our planet and considered what took place in creation on days two through six. We talked about the apex of God's creation being man who was the crowning touch to all that He had made. We read that everything God made was very good. He couldn't have done any better and He wouldn't have done anything differently. Beginning in verse 4 of chapter 2 and continuing through Revelation the Bible is all about mankind and God.

In chapter 2:4 we switched to a microscopic view looking specifically at one part of God's creation, the making of man. We found at the end of chapter 1 that God made them male and female making them in His image and likeness. More of that detail is revealed in today's passage.

It is in this section that we learn Adam has a need. He doesn't know it yet, after all he is only hours old. It hasn't dawned on him what that need is until it's revealed in a most unusual way.

The dictionary defines need this way. Need is a necessity or obligation created by some situation; a lack of something useful, required, or desired in which there is a deficiency of something.

I wonder what Adam thought the first time he opened his eyes after God breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul. Imagine what he saw as he did a visual 360 scanning everything around him: looking at the variety and

color of all the plants and trees; watching birds flit around playfully in the air swooping in and out of trees; seeing animals frolicking. His memory bank was blank as he began to catalogue all these first time experiences. It must have been like taking a child for the first time to the zoo with eyes wide open gazing at all the sights and sounds, spell bound by the amazement of creation. It was incredible.

Adam wasn't aware of any need yet, but God was. In verse 18 we see man's need is assessed.

I. MAN'S NEED IS ASSESSED – v. 18

When you have no other life experiences to go on, you don't know there is a need until someone comes along to tell you that you have a need. Marketers know how to create need. They take a product and show you that you're missing out because you don't have what they're selling. They create a need in your life, something you can't live without.

A traveling vacuum salesman went door to door selling his electric sweepers. He would enter the home, go over to the fireplace, scoop out a bunch of ashes and toss them on the floor to demonstrate the effectiveness of what a vacuum could do picking up all the ash on the floor. The ladies swooned over such a device and he sold dozens. His method of creating a need worked well until one day. He entered a home at the objection of the lady of the house, explaining what he was going to do continuing to talk through her attempts to interrupt him. He flung his scoopful of ashes on the floor only to discover that she had no electricity.

Man looked around and from his perspective had everything he thought he would need. But notice in our verse that it was God who spoke – verse 18. "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'"

In this we see God's remark about man's need.

A. God's Remark About Man's Need – v. 18a

Multiple times in chapter 1 we read that God said what He had made was good and at the end of it all He commented that it was not good that man should be alone. Some scholars suggest it wasn't very good until after woman was made, and you ladies are all in agreement. Did God somehow miss a step in the planning stages? Did He make a mistake? Was it a simple oversight or miscalculation?

And of course to all of that we would give a resounding no. We will find it all to be a part of His perfect plan in creating both the male and female unique from the rest of His creation.

At this point on the sixth day of creation man was alone, alone in the sense that there was no one else like him. He could commune with God. He could talk to the animals and we still do that as if they could carry on a conversation with us, but they can't. But none of them were like him either. He couldn't even communicate with apes which evolutionists claim are man's closest relative. All they could do was make those ooh-ooh, ah-ah sounds. Man was alone because unlike all the other creatures God had made he had no counterpart.

Now it wasn't that Adam was lonely. He had God to talk to and he could talk to the animals. But he was by himself, the only one of his kind. He was alone and God said that it was not good. Now that doesn't mean it was bad, it simply means that he was incomplete in its current state.

Professor Cassuto writes "Not good' is strong language. It is not just the absence of something good, but indicates a substantial deficiency."

Kent Hughes says "The observation and declaration of Adam's need is all God's. Adam didn't complain to God. God didn't consult Adam. God did not make a mistake. It was to show man his own need."

A friend shared about a very difficult time in his life. One day his wife just up and left him with three kids to raise. He told me that one day he was

feeling utterly alone and walked out the front door onto the porch and hollered as loud as he could "is anybody out there"? He was met with silence. As he turned to go back in he said "I didn't think so".

Adam was alone, but he didn't realize it yet, but God knew and He remarked about man's need.

Sometimes, like my friend, we can know and feel alone and wonder why no one else knows it or sees it. We might even conclude that people just don't care. Or maybe there is that one person who notices. They pull us aside and ask if everything is okay. We might tell them we're going through a rough patch. We might even share some of the details. Perhaps there is that inward hope they'll pick up the cue and offer some help so you don't feel alone. What generally happens is an offer to pray for us, when what we really need is prayer plus (and you fill in the blank). Prayer is great and welcome but it may not be what helps get us out of feeling alone.

Adam was alone but not having any other relational experiences with another human he didn't realize he was alone. God pointed it out, but He didn't just make a remark about man's need, He had a remedy for man's need.

B. God's Remedy For Man's Need – v. 18b

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

God didn't identify Adam's need and then tell him happy hunting. Hope you find someone, be warmed and filled and oh, I'll be praying for you. God knew the need and said He would do something about it. His remedy – "I will make." God knew exactly what Adam needed. He needed companionship with someone like him and a partner to share in the responsibility of increasing in number and caring for the garden. He couldn't do it alone. Without woman man could not fully realize his humanity. "I will make a helper for him." Let's be clear that God is not implying that woman is somehow inferior to man or that she is to serve him. It is not

a demeaning or derogatory term. That Adam needed a suitable helper means that he needed a helper corresponding to him. She is not the lesser of the two. Remember in 1:27 both male and female were created in the image of God.

What God was going to create would complete the man. They would see that they needed each other. Kent Hughes states that “something very good would fill man’s aloneness”.

So the word helper doesn’t mean or imply servitude but rather literally means like opposite him or according to his opposite. Adam needed someone that would be complementary to him. He needed a counterpart to fulfill him, to make him complete, and she the same. He was without that complementary person.

He was the ham without the egg;
the ice cream without the cake;
the peanut butter without the jelly;
the biscuits without the gravy.

He was missing something that he didn’t even realize he was missing and God brought it up and prepared to do something about it. Only together would they be a tribute to each other and God would be the one to make it happen.

The ESV provides a good rendering to help with understanding the intent: “I will make him a helper fit for him.”

The words “suitable” or “fit”, depending on your translation, suggest the idea of someone who would match him, someone who would supply strength in the area he lacked.

This passage helps us see that in marriage we are be a complement to our spouse, fulfilling the other.

Man had a need that was assessed by God. He made a remark about the need and then offered a remedy for the need.

In verses 19-23 we see man’s need is addressed.

II. MAN’S NEED IS ADDRESSED – vs. 19-23

God’s plan was to show Adam what he needed. In verses 19-20 the proof is distinct.

A. The Proof Is Distinct – vs. 19-20

Let me say it once more so that it sticks to your gray matter. This is not a second act of creation that took place in the Garden of Eden. The author is restating the creative act of God who made all the living creatures. There is no contradiction between this verse and chapter 1 regarding the order of creation. What verse 19 shows us is that these creatures, like man, were all created out of the same elements, but it also shows us that even though man, beasts, and birds were all created from the same elements man did not have the ability for fellowship with them. Man was still alone. We see that by reading on.

In verse 20 God brought all these creatures to Adam. Adam then gave them all names. Now some would suggest that there is no way Adam could name all the animals that were there at the time of creation. Someone estimated that if Adam could name 10 kinds a minute in 5 hours he could have named 3,000 kinds. Notice though that he named only the livestock or domestic animals, birds of the air, and beasts of the field. He didn’t name any of the sea creatures or the creeping creatures, although it’s possible that came later, we can only speculate. It’s also possible that he named only the animals that were in the garden and not those located outside the garden. Again we don’t know.

Naming these animals implies intelligence on the part of Adam. I had a history professor in college who believed that Adam could only grunt. I disagree. I think he could and had intelligence. Giving these creatures names wasn’t just some whimsical or fanciful play on words.

Let’s call that Aardvark

That looks like a kangaroo

Let’s call that a Pelican because its mouth looks like it can hold more than his belican.

That’s an eagle

Platypus

Porcupine

Bear

Every animal received a name, something by which it would be called, something that made it unique from all the other animals and whatever he called it, that was its name. He didn't have to change his mind. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that naming the animals required more than consideration of outward traits "but as a deep and direct insight into the nature of the animals". There was consideration about the nature or character of each animal or bird.

Naming the animals was his first act of dominion, accepting the responsibility to rule over them.

After naming all the animals we read at the end of verse 20 that "for Adam no suitable helper was found." He didn't find it among the birds or the animals. There was no one among the creatures he named like him.

John Phillips notes that "By naming the animals, God deliberately awakened in man a sense of need, an awareness that hungered for human companionship and above all that he needed and wanted a wife." Phillips then adds an important note: "God will never awaken a desire that He cannot and will not satisfy in His own good time and way."

The proof of his need is distinct because there wasn't any suitable helper among all of creation. In verses 21-22 we see that the plan is divine.

B. The Plan Is Divine – vs. 21-22

Once again we are met with the sovereignty and power of God in the creation act. He caused Adam to go into a deep sleep and it was while in the sleeping that God took one of Adam's ribs, closed up the flesh and formed Eve from that part.

Now scholars will tell you that the word rib can be interpreted as rib or as side. Rib seems to fit the context better although either is possible. If God had taken her from Adam's side, it was probably the

left side because when Adam woke up he was all right. (Some of you caught that.)

19th century commentator Matthew Henry provides some valuable insight into the reasoning God may have had in selecting the rib from Adam's side in order to fashion Eve. "She was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

I like that.

Men, be defenders of her and devoted to her. Protect her, love her, and show her respect. She too is made in the image of God with the same thumbprint of God in her creation. She was not an afterthought. She was created to meet a need as your counterpart, your complement, your like opposite, your fulfillment. The plan was divine.

In verse 23 we see that the purpose is determined.

C. The Purpose Is Determined – v. 23

Now, there may be considerable debate about what Adam and Eve looked like. It's my opinion that they were perfect in form and feature. They were the original Ken and Barbie. Dr. Dobson used to say that the only thing imperfect about the Barbie doll was that she had Mattel stamped on the bottom of her foot. I guess we'll find out when we get to heaven and yes, I believe they will be there.

Adam woke up from his sleep and took a look at Eve standing there in her all together loveliness and the first thing he said, the first recorded words of man were poetic. Let me give you a loose translation from Hebrew – "Wow."

If I could go back to my earlier illustration, God was a master marketer. He created a need and Adam saw Eve and said she was just like him, that's what he had been looking for all his life – of like hours really. She was his wow-man.

Here's some sound advice, when we wait for God or wait on God, He gives us what is best.

Let me say just a word to husbands. If it's been a while since you found the "WOW" in your wife look again and you wives – "WOW" him.

As he did with all the other animals, Adam named her.

A pastor friend preaching on this text said that Adam took one look at her and said "Woe----man, woe---man, wo-man, woman.

Here was his counterpart. She was the mirror of Adam with some agreeable differences. His name, man, is imbedded in her name, woman. There is no gender neutrality, no gender confusion about identity. And that leads us to our last point and perhaps the most important part of the text. It is in verses 24-25 that we see man's need is abolished.

III. MAN'S NEED IS ABOLISHED – vs. 24-25

This is a challenging passage not because it's difficult to understand but because a lot of people don't like to hear what it has to say. The United Methodist Church just had a big clash over this topic. I'm going to do my best to keep it concise but consistent with God's truth on this issue of marriage because this passage is the anchor on God's perspective of marriage and it supports the context of 1:27 that God made them male and female and that male and female were joined together.

Jewish Tannaitic tradition taught that God made Adam bi-sexual. He then divided Adam into two people making them male and female. Only by coming together could they be complete.

In chapter 1 God created a male and He created a female. In chapter 2 we read that they were created to complement each other, to be a counterpart to one another. These last two verses of this chapter are about the right view of marriage, that marriage is according to God's Word and He is the authority on it and the author of it since He was the one who

instituted it between a man and a woman. This is the only divinely sanctioned relationship in the context of marriage. Culture can legitimize it. Courts can legalize it, but a marriage between two people of the same sex is, in the view of God, illegitimate. It does not matter what society allows as legitimate or the courts acknowledge as law, God has the only and final word when it comes to marriage. When it comes to the sanctity of marriage God will not be mocked.

God says here "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh."

Man here refers to a person born a male, not someone who self identifies as a male or who went through gender reassignment. Wife here refers to a woman not someone who self identifies as a woman or went through gender reassignment.

Notice what they do in marriage. First there is the parting for marriage.

A. There Is Parting For Marriage – v. 24a

A Campbell's soup commercial opens with a husband sick on the couch feeling miserable. His wife is getting ready to leave and he moans that when he was sick his mother would always make him a bowl of chicken soup. She leaves for a moment and returns tossing him the phone and says "good, call her" and then walks out the door.

Husbands and wives there must be a leaving, there must be a separation from your parents. Dr. Tony Evans tells the story that shortly after his daughter was married she called him up asking for some money because they had a financial need. He kindly but firmly told her no. She was now under a new head and had separated from the family into a new family. Her husband had that responsibility to provide and if there was a need to call and ask.

Now there isn't anything wrong with going to parents for advice or help with needs, but bear in mind that this is saying there must be a separation.

In ancient Israel sons left their home when they got married but lived near the parents because he would inherit the land. Leaving his parents was a way of putting the needs of his wife before his parents. The same word is used in a negative context with the nation of Israel who had left following God.

From a positive viewpoint the word leave implies a covenant in marriage. Marriage is not a contract that can be broken although we do. Marriage is to be a binding contract, which leads into the next point. There is parting and then there is permanence.

B. There Is Permanence In Marriage – v. 24b

You are to leave your parents and cleave to your spouse. The word literally means to cling to like glue. This idea is further noted in the text that the two shall become one flesh. It speaks of the unity they were to have, oneness that is created.

Jesus talked about the permanency of marriage in Matthew 19:4-6.

Paul spoke of it in Ephesians 5:31-32.

Paul references marriage as picture of the union the church has with Christ. With the very first couple, marriage was designed to be a picture of the oneness between Christ and the Church.

Walvoord and Zuck write “God intended husband and wife to be a spiritually functional unity, walking in integrity, serving God, and keeping His commandments together. When this harmony is operative, society prospers under God’s hand.”

Husbands and wives are you leaving and cleaving?

Are you parting and is there permanence?

If not, maybe you need to check the glue you’re using. Let the adhesive be the Word of God, loving Him with all your heart and your spouse as yourself. I tell all the couples I counsel for marriage that the degree to which they love God is the degree to which they will love their spouse. In an imperfect world when two imperfect people come together learn to practice the principles of I Corinthians 13.

There is one final point found in verse 25.

C. There Is Purity In Marriage – v. 25

This verse tells us that there was freedom from shame because at that moment they were in a right relationship with God and with each other. There was nothing between them from which they would need to hide. That they were naked and unashamed speaks of moral innocence, but even more than that it conveys the idea that in the covenant relationship of marriage their bond of love for each other would overlook any potential flaws in the other.

This verse also implies that only in the context of marriage between a husband and wife can sexual desires be legitimately satisfied. Anything outside the context of Biblical marriage is immoral as it’s outlined in Romans 1. Within the context of this passage there is sexual monogamy between the husband and wife, the husband being a male and the wife being a female. That is the God-established and God-honored pattern of marriage.

There is to be parting, permanence and purity within marriage. Man had a need. God assessed it. God addressed it. God abolished it.

Whether or not you are married, we all have one thing in common. We all have a need because we are all sinners. God assessed the need and remarked about it but provided a remedy for it. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. He addressed the need by showing us the proof of our sin, had a plan to take care of it and revealed the purpose – so that we could be saved. Christ’s death on the cross abolished sin so that by accepting His perfect plan there is the parting from the former life, we are to permanently cling to the Savior, and living a life of purity. Our life in Christ is a call to live without shame as we endeavor to live a godly life in Christ. Communion is a way of celebrating God creating for us this wonderful gift, making us one with Him.