

a good creation gets better marriage part 1

Man, I gotta tell you, the joy of discovery in God's word is such a thrill. And I think the word that I was using with my family this morning was I just feel amped. To be in Genesis and specifically to be seeing so much truth as things are falling out of my Bible here.

One of the great thrills of the Christian life is discovering the mind of God and gaining clarity about life from the one who made us. And Genesis in these opening chapters has been no disappointment. We've seen so much rich theology and today is not going to disappoint.

We've been seeing an explanation for why it is that we're here and what the purpose is that God has for us. We're building a real foundation about understanding life itself. And many deep truths are discovered from the pages of Genesis.

Last time we were in Genesis, we looked at chapter two, verses 15 through 17. And there we saw Adam's charge, where God gives Adam a charge. He creates Adam and then he speaks to Adam.

He relates to him personally. We saw there that God gives Adam a very generous and gracious command. God puts Adam in the garden, according to chapter two, verse 15.

He tells him to work the garden and to keep the garden. And so we saw this is a divine prerogative. God is ordering Adam.

He's telling him exactly what he wants to do. He's giving him a charge. It shows us right off the bat that as creatures, we are under God's authority.

This is his universe, it's his world, he owns it. He tells us what to do. He has a good purpose for us, for which we're created.

And part of this relates to then the exercise of dominion. If you remember back in chapter one, we looked at the priority of exercising dominion. In fact, this is a primary reason why God put man on earth.

If you look back at Genesis chapter one, verse 26, we see the divine counsel here prior to creation. Then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So the plan before creating man, God wants us to know very specifically, is to create man so that he might exercise dominion over creation.

We said dominion is a regal word, a royal word. It means kingship, to have authority and to subdue and to rule. So God is creating Adam and Eve, delegating authority as a vice-regent on earth.

In fact, then after God creates Adam and Eve, he instructs them in this very way. We read in verse 28, God blesses them after he creates them male and female. And he says to them this, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.

Bring the earth into submission and have, there it is again, dominion. And so from the very beginning, God's plan is for man to rule over the earth. This is the theme of kingdom.

And we've seen that the kingdom is a theme in scripture. I would argue perhaps the theme, but certainly a primary theme. We're gonna see the kingdom lost, or the kingdom fallen in Genesis chapter three.

And then the rest of the Bible is really about God's work in redeeming and recovering this kingdom. That one day the kingdom will be fully restored when all authority is put under the feet of King Jesus. And he reigns and rules in all of his glorious splendor.

But for now, Adam then is part of this dominion mandate as a vice-regent, delegated authority by God, he's given a charge. And the charge he's given is to work the garden according to chapter two, and to keep it. So he's told to work the garden and to keep it according to verse 15.

And so we saw then that this now brings meaning and significance to all of the work that we do. Assuming that your work is ethical and lawful, it conforms to God's moral law, whatever it is you're doing is meaningful work. It's blessed by God.

So that means whether you are mowing the grass or painting the house or taking out the garbage or preparing a meal to eat or wiping a snotty nose or changing a dirty diaper, or whether you're filling the gas tank or washing your hair or even taking a nap or trying to get the printer to work. Everything that you're doing is to be viewed as given to you by God as a sacred trust, a responsibility as you would carry out dominion and you would exercise the little domain that God has given you to rule over and to subdue. So the earth is by design, a place of great industry and commerce and it's pleasing to God when you do your work in that way.

And so God doesn't just kind of drop Adam in and parachute him to a random place on earth and let him go have a scavenger hunt, but rather he fashions a beautiful garden, a garden of abundance and life, a flourishing place with delights. And he puts Adam in the garden and he gives him a brief instruction. According to verse 16, the Lord God commanded the man saying, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden.

And so here's the supreme lawgiver, the good lawgiver. At the outset, we see his command is generosity. It's benevolence.

Eat surely, eat freely. Eat and eat and eat and eat, eat whatever you want, Adam. It's yours.

I made this garden for you. I filled it with trees. It's beautiful to look at.

It's nutritious. It's delicious. It's for the having.

It's only one thing that is forbidden. Verse 17, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.

And we noted last week that this tree did not contain poisonous fruit that the moment you took a bite, it killed you. It didn't contain magical fruit that when you ate it, you suddenly had this potion that kind of unlocked a spiritual awareness. But rather because the fruit had been forbidden by God in the very act of eating the fruit, it was a moral issue.

It was a moral violation. And in that moral violation, in the act of eating itself, man transgressed a boundary that God had created and that brought suddenly corruption in the awareness of good and evil. And Adam began to taste, and he began to taste instantly a physical death and spiritual death.

And so we're gonna look at that more when we get to chapter three, but here in chapter two, God has a very specific purpose. His purpose was to highlight the creation of man. We already saw that back in chapter two, verse four.

That key phrase, these are the generations, serves as a heading for us. It shows us that we're going from the sequential day by day account of creation in chapter one to now a new focal point where we zoom in, we look very carefully at mankind. If you were to just look at this chapter, it just comes up over and over and over.

Verse five, the issue is that there's no man to work the ground. Verse seven, we see the Lord God form the man, and we see the man becomes a living creature in verse seven. Verse eight, we see God make a garden, and who does he make it for? He makes it for Adam, and he puts Adam there.

Verse 15, we see God taking Adam again, the man, and putting him in the garden to work it, and we see him commanding the man in verse 16 and 17. And so this is really all about highlighting God as the divine actor, and then Adam is the primary object. So he's primarily being acted upon by the Lord.

God is still the central figure, Genesis chapter two, but the primary object is man. And so when we come to verse 18, gloriously, God turns his attention to tending to the needs of this man. Now, according to our timeline, everything in Genesis chapter two, verse four, through Genesis chapter two, verse 25, takes place in one day, day six of creation.

We're gonna get to that in a little bit here. I'm gonna walk you through that. But it is here in verses 18 through 25 that we have the very first marriage.

Okay, this is the very first marriage, the very first wedding ceremony. God is the one that is presiding over this ceremony. I gotta tell you, we're gonna learn a lot from this.

We're taking at least two weeks on this, possibly a third. But this is very critical for our understanding, to understand marriage right out of Genesis. I mean, it is very obvious to us that we live right now in a society that denigrates and desecrates marriage, both in the direct attack of marriage, as in the institution itself, and then in many ways that are maybe a bit subversive, but even things like separating sexual intimacy from marriage is automatically an assault on marriage.

Just here to think for a minute about some of the ways, the rise of the notion of free love, that as long as sexual intimacy is taking place between two consenting individuals, that's all that's necessary to make it okay. All the ways that marriage is misunderstood and undermined, things like no-fault divorce and civil unions or perhaps polygamy or open marriages. And then nearly a decade ago in our country, the Supreme Court, the highest court of the land, of course, in the Obergefell decision, attempted, you can't redefine marriage ultimately, but attempted to redefine marriage, to say that it could be two men joining in union or it could be two women joining in union.

Of course, Hollywood is accepting and even glorifying of adultery and fornication and infidelity. And then there's been the rise of pornography and self-gratification that separates sexual fulfillment from the context of marriage and makes it all about me, all about self. And all of this is undermining God's design.

It's all an attack on the authority of God who designed marriage and sex for a very specific purpose. And so the attack on marriage really is saying that we then are the authority. We have the authority to determine for ourselves what is good and right and true.

These definitions are up for grabs. And so certainly what we want the church to be then is a place where we can give a message of hope to those who've made shipwreck of these things. That the church has a message of hope that God can heal and cleanse the broken.

And that he saves immoral people. That God saves adulterers and he saves infidels and he saves prostitutes and pimps and homosexuals. He saves people who are enslaved to pornography.

And that through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, you can have a new identity. And when you're new in Christ, you've been washed, you've been cleansed, you've been fully forgiven. You're no longer defined by your sins, but by your union with Christ, you're declared just.

And if you're in Christ, then you're called a saint. You're called a holy one, one of God's holy ones. And so we see that we speak true to a culture that has perverted marriage and yet the message is to repent and then be made new in Christ.

So we have a message of hope for those who are broken. And yet when I study Genesis 2, I start thinking about marriage. The primary corrective that I see for us is actually messages that we need to hear as the people of God.

So what I see is that we tend to think wrong about marriage in two ways. I think we tend to think wrongly about marriage principally. We tend to think wrong as God's people about marriage principally.

That is to say we view marriage wrong from a theological perspective. We oftentimes misunderstand the purpose and the design that God has for marriage. We can either make too much of it or too little of it.

We're gonna look at that over the next couple of weeks. And secondly, I think we're prone to think about marriage wrong personally. That means if you are married, you probably tend to think about your own marriage wrongly.

It's hard to keep our categories straight sometimes regarding our roles and our responsibilities. We tend to think about marriage primarily as it relates to our own personal fulfillment and our own personal satisfaction and our own personal agenda for the relationship and our own personal expectations. So we come to Genesis 2 and we just get this tremendous God-centered vision for marriage that is so refreshing.

And I would say, dare say, it's not only counter-cultural outside of the church, but somewhat counter-cultural at times to even our own church culture, I think, that we adopt. So that being said, let's read our passage this morning and then we'll begin to dive in. Genesis 2, beginning in verse 18.

Then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him. 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. 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.

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. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

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

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. So much to unpack in these verses about God's original design for marriage. And immediately when we come to verse 18, it's a little bit arresting.

We're to begin in Genesis chapter one and we're reading the account and then we get to chapter two, verse 18. We'd be a bit surprised by what we read, okay? I don't know how you feel

about predictive text. I have a love hate relationship with it, which is to say, I think I should probably love it, but I just hate it.

So when I'm trying to send a text message or craft an email, the software begins to complete what it thinks I'm going to say. I would say almost always it gets it wrong. It's not what I want to say next, so it just kind of gets in the way of what I was trying to say, which was not what you just predicted I was gonna say.

If you were to take Genesis chapter one, just go to a word processor, I didn't do this, but I'm assuming, and type it out. You're typing out, you're typing out, you're typing out. You get to Genesis chapter two, verse 18, and you start typing.

Then the Lord God said, it is, I think predictive text says, good. It is good. Why? Because that's been the pattern so far.

When God spoke light into existence in chapter one, verse four, we read, and God saw the light was good. When God separated the water and the dry land in chapter one, verse 10, we read, God saw that it was good. Then he makes vegetation, he covers the earth with it.

In chapter one, verse 12, God saw that it was good. Then he makes the sun, he makes the moon, he makes the stars and the galaxies with billions and billions of stars. And in verse 18, chapter one, verse 18, we read, and God saw that it was good.

And then the real fun gets going in creation when God starts to create animate life. So now there's gonna be creatures on the earth. According to chapter one, verse 21, to creating the birds and the sea creatures, God saw that it was good.

If you're tracking with the timeline, that brings us through day five. Daybreak happens on day six. And God creates livestock and beasts and creeping things, according to Genesis chapter one, verse 25.

And again, he saw that it was good. As we have a good creator, who's by nature good, he does all things well, what he makes is intrinsically good. That is to say, it is morally good, it is pleasing, it is delightful, it is pure, it is always done well, it's qualitatively good.

So all the way up through the animals, chapter one, verse 25, everything that's been created is good. God makes Adam. And in the short window between making Adam and chapter one, verse 31, where we have Adam and Eve, and God says, it's very good.

We have a little window of time where it's just Adam and the animals and the rest of creation. And it's there on day six, in that short window of time that God says, this is not good. Literally, it is not good for Adam to be alone.

Adam being alone is not good. And so instantly, every woman in the room is feeling a sense of validation. It is not good for my husband to be alone.

Or if you're a mom of a little boy, you're probably like, it's not okay, he cannot be alone. And most of the time we read this, even amongst Reformed theologians, and the perspective is that Adam is lonely. Adam has a relational emptiness that he needs to have fulfilled, and so God is gonna create a woman to resolve the loneliness and to bring him comfort and companionship.

I wanna pause it for you this morning that that is not the primary reason why God creates Eve for Adam. I don't think that's the issue with Adam being alone. And in fact, we're not gonna look at it in depth this morning, but the Bible has a prescription for loneliness, friendship, fellowship, family.

Throughout scripture, these are given, postulated as the antidote to loneliness. Marriage is actually not described in scripture as the solution to personal loneliness or personal aloneness. Right here in the text, if you look at what God makes, the language is so instructive.

He says, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a companion for him. I'll make a buddy for him.

I'll make a coworker or an employee or a love interest or a romantic helper, a romantic partner, excuse me. No, God makes a helper. That word's significant that Eve, by design, she's gonna be known as one thing here.

She is known as Adam's helper, okay? Starts to just instruct us as we think about God's intention of marriage. And what I wanna, you start to get the sense we're here is marriage is about more than either spouse. God has a grander purpose for your marriage.

And so most assuredly, Eve is going to serve as Adam's companion. She's gonna be his best friend. She's gonna be his confidant.

She's gonna be his partner, his lover, his co-laborer. She's gonna be all those wonderful things. But she was made because Adam needs a helper.

And here she is, his suitable helper. What is a helper? Well, a helper provides assistance, okay? One who provides assistance. It does not indicate a lesser status.

In fact, in the Old Testament, God is very often called the helper of his people. So God is not under us when he comes to help us, but he does come to our aid. He assists us.

Exodus 18, four, God is our helper. And so we know to help then is to actually bring some type of assistance. I mean, sometimes somebody pitches in and you kind of wish they didn't.

And you say, listen, I know you're trying to help, but please don't, it's not helpful. To help is to provide assistance for another. So Adam here then is getting a helper.

And we're trying to figure this out. Is this merely that he's getting an assistant gardener? You know, like sometimes you go to a small retail shop, you have two employees, you have the manager and you have the assistant manager. Like the head gardener and the assistant

gardener, is that all we're talking about here? And what's interesting about that, if you were thinking about just mere work, it would actually be more beneficial if God just gave Adam another man, if we just need another set of hands.

God's designed man by nature with a greater physical capacity for physical work, generally speaking. Bone structure, muscle structure, testosterone, all of those things to get busy in the garden. And so if the issue was merely, man, I got a lot of hedges to trim right now and I could really use another set of hands, the best helper would just be probably another man to come and work the garden.

So here's Adam and a good creation. It's not good that he's alone. He needs a helper.

Of course, two are better than one in terms of gaining a return. But what is it that the Lord is talking about? Well, look at this, a helper fit for him. Helper that's suited for him.

That's not as if God just needs variety now in creation. Okay, I made a man, that was cool, check. Now I'm gonna make a woman, that's cool, check.

Interestingly enough, he doesn't fashion the woman simultaneously to the man. He could have created them both at the same time, man and woman, poof, here you are, both out of dust at the same time. Rather, God makes a woman after making the man in such a way she corresponds to him in his role, the responsibility that he has been given, the charge of exercising dominion.

And so a married woman is, of course, far more than a wife, but she does find her primary source of purpose in marriage in relation to her husband. I think, frankly, the language of helper suitable is unimprovable in terms of conveying the sense of what's going on here. In that sense, she is the counterpart to Adam.

So not the antithesis, as in black and white, or oil and water, but rather like a harmony or complimentary, she's different, but she's related. And so I want you to see here that the helper is made because God has given Adam a job to do, namely to go exercise dominion, and Adam cannot do that without a woman. So you need the woman certainly for procreation, but also for bringing up a family, for raising children, for ruling over and subduing the earth.

The family's going to be the nucleus here by which they carry out this great commission mandate. And so what is required then is the counterpart, the helper fit for him. I mean, Adam so far has all kinds of animals that could work.

He has horses and donkeys and beasts of burden. The issue is not that he needs more horsepower, rather he needs a helper suited to his needs. There's a purpose here that's bigger than Adam.

It's bigger than Eve. It's bigger than their own personal desires for family life and companionship and sexual fulfillment and children. And there's remarkable lessons to learn

here in this idea that man needs a helper.

Look at verse 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.

The man gave names to all the livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. Now, sometimes people come to chapter two and they get a little concerned about the language there where you read in verse 19, now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field because it kind of sounds like God made Adam and then he made the animals, which is reversed from chapter one. Chapter two is not talking sequentially here.

When you read the now, the emphasis is to say not the timestamp that God made Adam and then he made the animals, but rather to say how it is that God made the animals. How did he form them? And so look at the language there in verse 19. Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens.

And so the emphasis in chapter two is to understand that God was the one who formed the animals and he formed them out of the same stuff that he formed Adam. Okay, that is the key point, our shared origins. So I'm gonna say in Ecclesiastes chapter 3:19, for what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same.

As one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath and man has no advantage over the beast for all is vanity. All go to one place, all are from dust.

And to dust, all return. The point here is that God made the animals out of dust. You notice one other clue there in verse 19, the verb is translated, out of the ground the Lord God had formed.

So the point is just to say, by the way, as Moses is starting to tell us about the animals, we just wanna note, because it wasn't clear in Genesis chapter one, when God formed the animals, he had formed them using dust. And so, Adam's in the garden and God begins to bring the animals to Adam. God has supreme authority over the animals.

So he commissions them to come to the garden to the man and he delegates this job to Adam. And I just, I mean, I just marvel thinking of how incredible this would have been to see this taking place. As I was driving in this morning, there was three bald eagles eating another animal in the farm right outside of here.

In this lineup of animals, you'd have had right there, the field mouse and the hawk, just standing in line together, waiting to get their names. Even the meanest animals that we think of, I mean, the hippos, they would have been happy, right? The rhinos would have been just very relaxed. Even the honey badgers would have been polite.

Like everybody's getting along. And whether they all came up on a ridge or whether it was a

line that they're just walking through, God is bringing the animals to Adam so that he can name them. What is the point in this exercise? Do you not want us to miss this? First and foremost, this again demonstrates dominion.

See, the right to name something demonstrates authority. We previously discussed this. God is the one who gives the sun and the moon their names.

God is the one who named the day and called it day and called the night night. He names the sea. He names the dry ground.

And then God names man. And so now God is in charge of all of creation who possesses absolute and supreme authority, delegates naming rights to Adam, says, all right, now it's your turn. You go exercise some dominion.

I'm granting authority to you that you now get the privilege and the responsibility of naming the animals. This is Adam exercising dominion, and he is clearly in charge. He's ruling over the creatures.

The creatures don't get a name Adam. They don't get a name themselves. Rather, they're beckoned to show up and to receive whatever name Adam chooses to give them.

Now, the point, of course, it's not that every animal needs to be named. So we'll see here, there's a bunch that got left out. The text says, Adam names every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens.

So what about the sea creatures? Well, they didn't get named that day. I mean, basically the rule is this. If you can find your transportation to get here to the garden today, on day one, you get a name.

And if you can't, you don't. And so apparently it would seem the sea creatures weren't named, or the creepers, they weren't named. But the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens came to Adam, and he begins to name them.

Now what happens is people usually come to this, I've come to this before and think, it seems a little far-fetched. I'm not a biologist, but there's a lot of animals. Days are pretty limited.

There's a lot of things happening in this one day. I'm just feeling like maybe we're fudging a little bit. Because right there it says that it was every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens that got named.

And so what I wanted to do is just kind of walk you through briefly how this could have happened, okay? I don't think this is how it actually happened, but this is how it could have happened. I will say it at 0600, six o'clock in the morning, God on day six, at daybreak, makes animals out of dust. Okay, how long do we wanna say that took? Five seconds? Five minutes? And it could have happened instantly.

We'll say five minutes. We'll say God really enjoyed the process of creating animals. He took five minutes to make the animals.

Then at 605, God makes Adam, and he forms Adam out of dirt. We'll say he does that in a minute, and then he gives Adam a couple minutes to kind of adapt to his surroundings. Then he starts to instruct him, and he tells him, you're gonna go to the garden, you're gonna work there, you're gonna keep it, you're gonna eat anything that you want.

I made it for you, it's abundant, by the way, don't eat of one tree. What is that, like three minutes? Okay, so we're at about 610, somewhere around there in the morning, and we have all the animals created, we have Adam created, he's been instructed. And at this point, God begins to bring the animals past Adam so he can name them.

Now, a couple things to understand in the naming here of every animal. We understand taxonomy, which is the classification of animals, things like domain, kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species. If you were to go down to the level of species, so we're talking like, you know, every kind of Labrador retriever you could think of as being named at the species level, kind of that finest, last point of genetic distinction, you have maybe between seven and 11 million species, we don't even really know.

But if you were to just pop that up a little bit to the families, there's 6,000 animal families. Now, we don't know pre-flood, we don't know in terms of genetics, several thousand years ago, how many families of animals there are, but if you were to just take that number of 6,000, then that's pretty easy to think through how Adam would have named all of those. You'd think the average speaking rate at a university graduation ceremony is three seconds per name, okay? You're reading first and last name there.

So, three seconds per animal, that would have been kind of a nice, leisurely pace. He could have just been saying it one at a time, monkey, dog, cat, just working through quickly, one at a time, second by second. If he spoke at 9,000 words a minute, which is about what I preach at, he would have had nearly 75,000 animals named by the end of an eight-hour shift.

So, whatever it was, however many animals were named that day, God providentially brings the animals to Adam so they can move through it. I expect he was pretty decisive in being able to name the animals. You know, like sometimes you're behind that guy in the ice cream line, and you're thinking like, did I get in the car buying line? Because it seems like a lot of analysis for like a scoop of ice cream, it's gonna take three minutes, we've got all the questions like, are the pistachios organic, or are the pistachios, you know? Like, Adam probably just looked at the animal and just named it one by one.

You're a bear, you're a lion, you're a tiger, you're a house cat, goes through all of the animals, and yet there was a point to this exercise. See, God could have named all of the animals, he didn't need Adam to do it, certainly he was delegating dominion and authority, but Adam spent however long he spent, and so we say it was eight hours? Eight hours. Eight hours looking at all

of the beasts of the field, at least in terms of their families, all of the birds of the air, at least in terms of their families, and saying, I don't see anyone yet that's like me.

Adam wasn't alone in that there were no other animate creatures, Adam was alone in that he was the only human being. And maybe it was at that point, he looked at a dog and he just said, well, I guess that's gonna be my best friend. See, the Lord had a plan to show Adam, even before he created Eve, the necessity for a wife, it was burned in his mind, and in fact, that's where we're gonna see Adam's great delight when he finds one now.

Verse 23, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. I've been convinced, because I just saw all the animals, and I saw that there is not one that matches me. And so of course, toward the end of that day, God then puts Adam to sleep, performs a quick surgery, wakes him up, brings Eve to him, and it all happened in one day.

That's what the Bible teaches, it all happened in one day, it was one day, day six of creation. There's no reason to doubt the authority of Scripture, or the clarity of Scripture. How is it that God made Eve? Well, it's significant, according to verse 21, 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.

I love this, it's divine authority again, there's no consent form before anesthesia. Yeah, God just puts Adam to sleep, he knocks him out. According to Jewish tradition, God took one of Adam's right ribs, usually we picture the lowest one, but the text doesn't say.

All we know is that he took one rib bone, and he used that rib then to form the woman. Verse 22, in the rib, that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Man is formed out of the dirt, the woman is formed out of a rib from the man.

You understand there is significance to this, that God chose to use part of the man in fashioning the woman. We get so used to reading this, but this is God here immediately demonstrating the sameness and the solidarity, the connection between Adam and Eve, as she's drawn from Adam physically, genetically related and yet also distinct. And so Adam wakes up and he immediately sees the significance.

Verse 23 says, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. I thought, man, that sounds honestly a little dramatic, like people wait a lot longer than eight hours to get married or however long was between when you got created and when the Lord brought Eve to you, but he's contemplating his existence without a wife. He would have had so much excitement in that moment.

Bone of my bone, he says. She's like me, but she's not like me. She's not a brother.

She's not a father or a buddy, rather this helper that God has fashioned for me is a female. She's a woman. She should be called woman because she was taken out of man.

Hebrew name for man is Ish, woman is Isha. So the idea here is that you're taking Adam, who is

a creature, who's masculine, and out of him you have another creature that is like him, but she's feminine, it's a she. If you notice, even now, woman derived from man, female derived from male.

Clear distinction. The man is first and then the woman, and yet the two shall be united. Verse 24, therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Complementarity and solidarity. And the man and his wife, according to verse 25, were both naked and were not ashamed. This is every dimension of relational intimacy, unhindered and uninhibited.

And so we're gonna come back and we're gonna look at these verses in more detail as we understand God's design for marriage. But I wanna just look at a couple of brief principles here as we draw out lessons from this first marriage as we see. First of all, I want you to understand the divine prerogative, the divine prerogative.

You're saying Adam did not come to God and say, hey, I see an unmet need here, and I've thought up a good solution that I would like to make a request for. Rather, God is the one who defines the need, he identifies the problem. You notice right there in the language, it was the Lord God who said in verse 18, it is not good that the man should be alone.

And then the divine prerogative, God's the one who takes initiative to bring the solution. I will make a helper fit for him. God is the one who provides for Adam.

What's the lesson for everyone? Well, it's to believe that God knows what you need, and he knows what is good for you. He doesn't need to consult you, and he's wise and good. I mean, I have no idea what Eve's personality was like.

I mean, she couldn't have been like reserved and out there. She couldn't have been loud and quiet. She couldn't have been smart and dumb.

I mean, she had some personality that was unique to her, and she would have had a physical appearance. She didn't have all the hair colors, she had one hair color, and an eye color, and a stature, and a form, and a figure, and a face, all that God had designed for Adam, where he said, this is the one that I'm giving to you. You have one, that's it.

And she's gonna be suited for your needs. See, God is wise, and he knows exactly what you need. If God has given you a spouse, it is the spouse that he designed for you.

It is the helpmate suited to your particular needs to accomplish the plan that he has for you, in his good and wise course. And so you are to view then, if you're married, I'll say this, if you're a married man in the room, to view your wife as a precious gift from God to you, warts and all, weaknesses and all. I mean, Adam, obviously, at this point, didn't have a lot of options to choose from, so, you know, like we might say romantically, baby, you're my one and only.

For Adam, like, that's obvious. There's one and one only. This was the particular wife that God had given wisely to Adam as the helper suited to his needs to help carry out the mandate that he had been given.

And furthermore, to understand even the language of helper, we must recognize that Eve finds her purpose in relation to her husband and not the other way around. I mean, does that sound off to you? Does that rub you the wrong way at all? I appreciated one Reformed author was saying, you know, sometimes when we talk about roles in marriage, we talk about submission, I get a little bit ashamed almost to talk about it. See, we have been taught in the spirit of the age around us that it's anathema, the thought of a woman finding significance and purpose, even in the role of supporting another, namely her husband.

Rather, the lie is told that for a woman to fulfill her full potential, she must be independent from a man. And yet here, God, God who's a helper of his people, there's no shame in that, creates Eve to help Adam fulfill the calling that he's been given. They're gonna do that together, side by side, they're gonna become one flesh to carry out the mandate that God has given them.

We're gonna spend time continuing to flesh this out, but I just wanna help us to understand here, marriage in the role of the great dominion mandate that God has given and why this is so important. See, I said in the beginning that we have a culture that denigrates and desecrates marriage. If I had a concern in the church culture, it's that sometimes we work marriage in other ways and we make it more than what it's actually designed by God to be.

One author says, Americans overload the nuclear family with too great a responsibility for providing persons with a sense of identity and significance in life. Goes on and in speaking of marriage says, marriage that is primarily about having a companion is dangerous for in such marriage, each becomes not only a lover, but companion, friend and confidant with whom most or all leisure time is spent. Goes on and says, and such a pressure of relational expectation creates a marriage that is in itself unstable and it contains the roots of its own destruction.

Point is that if the focus of the husband and the wife is on themselves, that contains the roots of instability. He goes on and says in contemporary Western marriage, the marriage partner has been culturally defined as the most significant other in adult life. This has given a marriage and altogether new weight which has created an emotional burden of its own.

There are very high expectations and tensions and dissatisfactions are likely in consequence. Goes on and says, couple centered marriage dissolves into self-centered marriage and self-centered marriage is like a leech. And so the recognition here then is that even when we talk and think about marriage, the marriage itself is a means to a greater end.

It's not the goal itself. Rather God gives Eve to Adam to help serve the creation mandate. And for you and I then that relates to bringing God's kingdom to bear on this earth.

This is not what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, when he's giving instructions to the married and to the unmarried. If you're married, it's to be used in relationship to the furtherance of advancing the kingdom of God through your marriage. And if you're unmarried, then you're using your gift of singleness to advance the kingdom through your singleness.

So we're gonna spend more time looking at this in the coming weeks. Our time is gone for this morning, but I wanna encourage you with God's great design here of marriage, that God created marriage to exist for more than marriage itself. So he ultimately depicts the marriage of the marriage land.

We'll see that in coming weeks. Let me pray with us. Lord in heaven, thank you so much for grounding us in truths that we often forget and we lose sight of.

I pray that you would help us Lord from a perspective of making marriage something that you never designed it to be. And Lord at the same time, then to see our families used as a vehicle for discipleship of discipling the next generation and better serving you on this earth, recognizing that if you've provided us with marriage, Lord, it's because you've deemed at that time that we would better serve you together than on our own. And so Lord, we thank you so much for all of these things.

We love you. We pray in Jesus name, amen.