

One – Genesis 2:18-25

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Whoosh!*

1. A despondent and heartbroken woman was walking along the beach when she saw a bottle in the sand.
2. She picked it up and pulled out the cork. Whoosh! A big puff of smoke appeared.
3. A genie then said, “You have released me from my prison. To show you my appreciation I will grant you 3 wishes. But take care, for with each wish, your mate will receive double of whatever you request.”
4. The woman asked, “Why? That’s why I’m so depressed. That bum just left me for another woman.”
5. The genie just shrugged his shoulders and said, “That is how it is written; that is how it is done.”
6. The woman thought about it for a moment then said, “I want a million dollars.”
 - a. there was a brilliant flash of light and when she looked down saw a massive heap of thousand dollar bills piled up all around her to her knees.
 - b. at the same instant in a far off place, her wayward husband looked down to see a pile *twice* that size.
7. She said, “Genie, I want the world’s most expensive diamond necklace.”
 - a. there was another flash of light and when she looked, there in her hand was the precious treasure.
 - b. and a second later in that distant place, her husband was looking at a necklace twice as large and rich.
8. She asked, “Is it really true that my husband now has 2 million dollars and twice as many diamonds as I do; that he gets double of whatever I wish for?”
9. The genie said that indeed it was true.
10. She said, “Then for my last wish, I want to be scared half to death.”

B. *Today • A Reminder*

1. In our study today, we're going to be taking a look at what God intends for marriage.
2. Now, this is ground we've covered often –
 - a. but like so many things in the Faith, it's one of those lessons we need to be constantly *reminded* of.
 - b. the challenges and pressures of daily life conspire to blunt the edge and dull our focus in this area.
 - c. we hear a good sermon or Bible study on marriage and make a commitment to put it into practice.
 - d. but after a few weeks and challenges, we've forgotten all about what we learned.
 - e. those of us who've walked with the Lord for a few years know well that spiritual maturity isn't entered by learning *new truth* - but by *practicing* what we've already learned.
 - f. my task as pastor is often found in reminding you of things you *already know* but maybe have lost a handle on.
3. If you listen to religious radio, chances are you have heard a lot of teaching on the *role* of the husband and the wife.
 - a. there're lots of books and resources out there that contain *great counsel* on how to have a better marriage.
 - b. but in most of the reading and research I've done, I've found that there's something missing from most marriage enrichment resources –
 - c. and that's a foundational theology of what God intends marriage *to be*.
 - d. it's in Genesis 2 that we find this.
 - e. and it's gleaned from the lesson we've been learning the last few weeks called the *Rule of First Use*.
 - f. the first time we encounter something in the Bible sets the pace for that thing throughout the rest of the Scripture.
 - g. that means what we find here about marriage is crucial to our understanding of what God intends in our relationship with our mate.
4. I ask those who're *single* to pay *particular* attention to what we're looking at.
 - a. these things aren't just for married couples.
 - b. what we're going to take a look at today has special application to singles.

II. TEXT

A. Genesis 1:31

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

1. This is the 7th time God has said His creation was good.
2. At the conclusion of each day's creative work, God looked over what He'd done and said – "It is good."
3. Here we are at the end of the 6th day and as He looks over ALL of creation He pronounces, "It is **VERY** good!"
4. Now look at v.18 of ch. 2 -

B. Genesis 2:18

{18} And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

1. Take careful note of where this is – ch. 2.
2. In what chapter do we read about the Fall? Ch. 3.
3. So God said there was something in the creation that was *less than good*, even *before* the entrance of sin.
4. What *wasn't good* was the *aloneness* of Adam.
5. The remedy, the solution is a *companion*, someone *like* him, but different enough to make it interesting.
6. The story's told of how Adam was talking to God on one of their daily walks in the Garden.
 - a. he asked, "God, why did you make Eve so gorgeous?"
 - b. God replied, "I wanted you to be *attracted* to her."
 - c. Adam thinks about it, then asks, "Then why did you make her so stupid?"
 - d. God answered, "So she'd be attracted to *you!*"
7. The *purpose* of marriage is revealed in Gen. 2:18 - The purpose of marriage is to solve the problem of *loneliness*.
 - a. we need to understand that there's a vast difference between *being alone* and *loneliness*.
 - b. *being along* is simply the state of *being by ourselves*.

- 1) lots of folk can be alone without being lonely -
 - 2) some people like being alone!
 - c. but *loneliness* is different: *loneliness* is a *painful emotion* in which we *feel isolated* and cut-off from significant relationships with others.
 - d. and quite frankly, being *lonely* has little to do with the *presence* or *absence* of other people.
 - e. it's possible to feel lonely in the midst of a crowded room.
 - f. it isn't the *presence* of others that removes loneliness -
 - g. it's *interaction* with others who *know and love us* that solves the problem of loneliness.
8. Think about Adam at this point in Chapter 2.
- a. he's just been created and placed in an *idyllic* setting.
 - b. all he's known so far is being alone, and he's content in it.
 - c. but from God's perspective, Adam's aloneness isn't good.
 - d. God has created him with a soul that will *soon need* the presence of a companion.
 - e. again - from Adam's perspective at this moment, he's just fine but God sees a need.
9. How much does God see in *us* that's a *need* we're oblivious to?
- a. as we wander along humming a carefree tune thinking we're cool, God sees in us a gaping *soul-hole*.
 - 1) a desperate need that we're blind to –
 - 2) a brokenness only He can heal.
 - b. the process of spiritual growth is a progressive unfolding of self-knowledge about how far from the image of Christ *we are* and the work God needs to do to conform us to that image.
 - c. over time the Holy Spirit reveals our need, one after another.
 - d. then and only then does He set about to *meet* those needs.
 - e. He *pains* us with *revelation*, so we might then see His healing & give Him even more praise & thankfulness as we realize His work in our lives.
 - f. that's precisely what He did for Adam - Look!

C. Genesis 2:19-20

{19} Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever

Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

{20} So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

1. Why are these verses inserted here?
2. V. 18 tells us about God's intention to make Eve, then v. 21 tells us He did.
3. Why insert vs. 19 & 20 *here*? They seem like an *interruption* to the story of Eve's creation.
4. They're no interruption at all - they're vital to the story.
5. Remember, Adam is alone, but he does not *feel lonely*!
6. So God gave him a task - name the animals.
 - a. now, Adam was a sharp guy; it didn't take him long to realize that all the animals *had a mate*
 - b. there was Mr. & Mrs. Lion, Mr. & Mrs. Pig, a male and female of each of the animals.
 - c. as the last of them passed before him, Adam realized that he was unique – he didn't possess something the animals all did – a companion.
 - d. what God knows and has declared is *not good*, Adam now knows and agrees.
 - e. he is alone - even more, he is now *lonely*! He *feels* it.
7. And now that Adam *knows* his need - God takes action to meet it.

D. Vs. 21-23

{21} And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

{22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

{23} And Adam 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."

1. Notice Adam recognized Eve's essential *difference* from the animals and *equality* to him.
 - a. whereas he had *given* the animals *their names* - and by so

- doing, had shown his *dominion* over them --
- b. he doesn't *name* Eve; he *gives* her *his* name.
 - 1) in Hebrew, the word for man is "Ish"
 - 2) Adam calls her "Isha"; the feminine form of "Ish."
 - c. he acknowledges she isn't something essentially *different* from him,
 - d. she is a *part* of him, and he of her - they share the same constitution and nature.
 - e. he doesn't have *dominion* over her as he does the animals; she is his *equal*.
2. Now – there's a crucial lesson here • As soon as Adam came to the awareness of his need, God didn't send him on a mission to *find a mate*.
- a. after just naming all the animals Adam might have thought there were a few candidates that would prove a suitable companion.
 - b. a dog may make a good pet, but not a very good companion for conversation.
 - c. the cat only shows you attention when it wants something.
 - d. the closest thing in *resemblance & behavior* to man was something from the apes.
 - 1) the gorilla, chimpanzee, or maybe an orangutan.
 - 2) they're a little hairy and not very clean but they fairly intelligent.
3. But God didn't send Adam on a mate-search; He put Adam to sleep *lest* he set out to meet his need in his own wisdom.
4. God had a better plan – a match made in heaven.
5. There's an important lesson here for singles.
- a. if you're lonely & desire a mate, don't *monkey* around looking for someone.
 - b. you'll just get yourself into a *hairy* situation.
 - c. you'll end up with some gorilla or orangutan.
 - d. *rest* in the Lord and let Him bring someone to you *in His time*.
 - e. in the meantime, He'll do to you what He did to Adam --
 - f. some *surgery* that will prepare *you* for the day when He brings that right person to you.
6. Then you'll look at her or him and say, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

- a. “This is the one; my soul-mate.”
 - b. “This is a match made in heaven.”
7. Now I know what some will say; “But if I don’t help God out by looking around and searching here and there, how will I ever find someone?”
- a. all I can say is that over the years I’ve heard that excuse used by people looking for a mate in places they don’t belong.
 - b. if you want an ape, go to the zoo.
 - c. if you want a godly husband or wife, then go to the Lord, *rest in Him*.
 - d. trust Him to *bring you* a mate.
8. You know – in most of the world and throughout most of history – marriages were *arranged* by the parents.
- a. marriage was considered far too important to leave to the decision making skills of young people.
 - b. so it was the parents who were wiser and more experienced who paired up their children.
 - c. I realize this idea seems archaic and backward,
 - d. but what if you had the perfect parents who knew you better than you knew yourself and loved you with an infinite love and cared about your happiness more than you could fathom.
 - e. would you trust your choice of a mate to them – I think so!
 - f. well – that’s God!
 - g. He knows exactly what you need & He desires to bless you beyond your wildest dreams!
9. May I suggest that you leave the choice to Him,
10. And in the meantime, rest in Him.
- a. let Him perform on and in you the soul surgery that’s necessary to prepare you for the day when He brings to you that special someone.
 - b. when you awake – you’ll realize this is the one –
 - c. “bone of your bones and flesh of your flesh.”
11. Okay – so far we’ve discovered the *purpose* of marriage – to solve the problem of loneliness.
12. In the next verses we find the *goal* of marriage – how that purpose is fulfilled.

E. Vs. 24-25

{24} Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

{25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. The *Rule of First Use* applies with *special force* at this point.
2. Here's God's *summary statement* about marriage.
 - a. here in the union of the first man and woman –
 - b. we see the pattern and intent of God for what marriage is to be about; the direction in which it's to aim.
 - c. and that is – ONENESS!
3. This passage is so crucial it's quoted by both Jesus and the Apostle Paul when they taught on marriage! [Mt 19:3-9; Eph 5:28-31]
4. Look at v. 24 again -

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

5. In marriage, a man or woman leaves behind the identity they've drawn from their previous relationships and forges a new identity with their mate.
6. This new identity is defined as a "oneness" with them.
7. The goal of marriage is to become one!
 - a. this "becoming" speaks of a *process*
 - b. a husband and wife do not attain *complete oneness* on their wedding day.
 - c. it *begins* at that point, but it carries on in the weeks, months, and years that follow.
8. Marriage is a *process* of "becoming" and the goal is ONENESS.
9. It's God's plan that marriage be two people, who through love, devotion and commitment blend their lives to make a *new life together*.
 - a. they do not cease being individuals,
 - b. but their individuality is taken up into something bigger and better than the sum of their parts.
 - c. marriage, as God intended it, takes on a life of its own that adds to and enhances the life of the participants.

- d. I've had the honor of officiating at many weddings
 - 1) and a common practice is the lighting of the unity candle

[explain]

- 2) option – blow out or leave lit
- 3) I wish there were w way to lean the two candles into the middle so all wicks would blend; the flame would rise even higher and burn even brighter – that is what God intends a marriage to be!
10. To be one with your mate means to be *intimate* - to know and to be known.
11. The essence of becoming one is the process of growing in your knowledge of your mate and them growing in their knowledge of you -
12. And that is why v. 25 has to be added at this point . . .

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

13. For years I thought this was merely a kind of PS: to the story of creation.
 - a. but now I see it for what it really is.
 - b. it shows us the *kind of intimacy* that God desires for marriage; the depth and level that *oneness* is to move to.
 - c. it's complete - holding nothing back, hiding nothing.
14. Adam and Eve were without sin and because of that, there was no shame, no guilt.
 - a. so in their innocence they could be in one another's presence completely open and transparent.
 - b. their nakedness went well beyond their bodies - it went to their *souls*.
 - c. it wasn't till after the fall that they *hid* themselves and tried to cover their nakedness.
 - d. they were so guilty and ashamed they even tried to hide from God.
 - e. when Adam was confronted with his error, he shifted the blame to Eve.
15. Husbands and wives follow the first parents very closely here don't we?
 - a. instead of taking responsibility for our failure -
 - b. pride drives us to shift the blame and lay our troubles at the feet of others; all too often our mate.

- c. if our marriage is less than we know God would have it, we tend to heap the failures round our mate like kindling round the legs of someone who's to be burned at the stake.
 - d. if *she* would just change, then our marriage would be better.
 - e. if *he* would just get his act together, then we could be one.
 - f. and all the while – she senses his rejection and he hers so neither will come to the other -- and the oneness that is the essence and goal of marriage is thwarted.
 - g. the result – two lonely, hurting people!
16. But from the beginning, it was God's original plan that a husband and wife be ONE, in a relationship unmarred and unhindered by guilt and shame.
17. The goal of marriage is still the same = ONENESS!
- a. God desires a husband and a wife to be *intimate*;
 - b. learning to love one another and be committed to one another *despite* our faults and failures.
 - c. you see, deep in every one of our hearts is the need to be known and still loved, despite our faults - and *until* we find that, loneliness will prevail
 - d. we long, we ache to go back to the Garden from which we were banned by sin,
 - e. marriage is the place God has given for us to discover what was lost in the Garden.
 - f. it's the *refuge* He's given us to know and experience the power of *His* love and forgiveness in terms of a relationship with someone else.
18. And the fact of the matter is, until we find that kind of intimacy, however halting and imperfect it may be, we will feel the sharp piercing stab of *loneliness*.
19. Marriage itself does not guarantee an end to loneliness - some of you here this morning are married but you are still lonely.
20. And all because you've not known or understood the purpose and the goal of marriage.
- a. you got married however many years ago because you were in love.
 - b. but those feelings have now changed, they've cooled; and in some cases gone out.
 - c. since you got married because you were in love, now that you

- no longer feel that way, you wonder why you're still married.
 - d. listen - I have an important word for you -
 - e. don't cash in your marriage because of you've lost that lovin' feeling.
 - f. realize the incredible potential your marriage possesses!
 - g. in your mate is someone who knows you and you know, probably better than anyone else.
 - h. now, you might say, "Yeah, and I don't like what I know!"
 - i. it's that *very challenge* that God can turn into a huge blessing.
 - j. He's giving you the opportunity to love your mate IN SPITE of all that stuff - just like God loves *you* in spite of all *your* stuff.
 - l. and besides, isn't there stuff in your life that you know is yucky, that you want you mate to love *you* in spite of? (good theological word there, *yucky*)
 - m. you know there is!
21. Listen to the collective wisdom of many of couples who have gone before -
- a. feelings come and go.
 - b. but genuine intimacy and the deep-seated sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that come from it is something that builds and grows over time and is only nurtured by a loyal commitment that is not hindered by feelings or the lack thereof.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Keep At It!*

1. If you're a couple that's been married for several years now and you've just gotten real comfortable in life, I want to encourage you today to press on in the process of becoming one – of *deepening* your intimacy.
 - a. routine is comfortable - but it can become *boring*
 - b. don't let your marriage become boring!
 - c. press on into new levels of intimacy, of knowing one another.
 - d. when was the last time you really talked about your marriage?
 - e. when was the last time you shared your dreams and desires with one another?
 - f. men,
 - 1) when was the last time you asked your wife what it is you do

that *bugs* her?

- 2) when was the last time you asked her if there was anything about *her* life she could change, what it would be?
 - g. ladies,
 - 1) do you know what your husband is thinking about the future?
 - 2) have you asked him to share with you what it is he finds the most scary about his life?
 - 3) now – I must say this to the ladies –
 - a) most wives long for their husbands to talk to them on this deep level
 - b) they beg them to do so
 - c) but what happens sometimes is that once a guy does open up and share honestly, she freaks out!
 - d) inwardly, she's hoping that when he opens up it will be a fresh spring of tenderness about how he loves and adores her
 - e) when it's a murky pool of gunk, she gets hurt and feels insecure
 - f) and that's why some men don't open up to their wives – they don't have the confidence of knowing their wives will respond with mercy & grace.
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2. Keep pressing forward in deepening your intimacy; be purposeful about it.
 - a. what is your mate passionate about?
 - b. what drives him or her? Do you know?
 - c. maybe the answers to these things have changed in the last 5 years.
 3. Good marriages can become better.
 4. So press on, because the fact of the matter is, if we aren't moving toward Oneness in our marriage, we're moving away from it.
 5. For those couples who *aren't doing well*, whose marriage has been one long trial - take a look at what it is you *expected* from marriage.
 - a. guys - did you think you were getting a live in maid?
 - b. gals - did you think you were getting a romantic hunk, a shining knight, a chivalrous and industrious provider who would pamper you and take care of you for the rest of your

- life?
- c. the best place to start healing your marriage is to go back to the beginning and repent of these selfish motives and expectations and embrace *God's plan* and purpose for your marriage.
 - d. to know and be known - and to love *in spite of it all!*

B. You Need Jesus

1. All of this presumes that you have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life
2. Everything that we've looked at today can only be lived by those who're in *right relationship* with God.
3. Unless the vertical is in right alignment, the horizontal will be unfocused.
4. It ought to be obvious that the kind of marriage we've looked at today requires a healthy dose of trust and forgiveness, to say nothing of love & grace.
5. Where are you going to get these?
6. You're fooling yourself if you think that *you* have these in sufficient supply to meet your mate's needs.
7. God will use your marriage to bring you to the end of yourself so that you might become the channel through which He can manifest His love and forgiveness to your mate.
8. A good marriage begins and is sustained, by giving yourself to God through faith in Jesus Christ
9. If you look at a braid it looks like 2 strands woven together
 - a. the fact is - two strands could never make a braid; it takes three
 - b. but in the process of weaving, one strand is hidden
10. So is marriage; it is the weaving together of a man and a woman.
 - a. but they cannot do this on their own;
 - b. they need the invisible presence of Christ if they are to make it.