

*Note: This is the sermon manuscript that Ben carried into the pulpit. Feel free to use it in any way to advance the kingdom of God.*

**The Family:  
The Perfect Team  
Genesis 2:18-25  
Englewood Baptist Church  
Sunday morning, April 11, 2010**

Over the course of history, we have observed the rise of many great duos. There was Wilbur and Orville Wright, **the Wright Brothers.** Thanks to Wilbur and Orville, you and I can fly roundtrip to thousands of destinations on the earth.

In the 40s, there was **Abbot and Costello.** William Abbott and Lou Costello, an American comedy duo and the proud owners of the classic “Who’s On First?” Routine.

Years later, came **Barbie and Ken.** The most famous couple in the toy industry. They have always been so flawless and perfect, while also sporting fashionable clothing and accessories.

Then there was **Batman and Robin,** the dynamic duo that graced the television screen for decades. Two crime fighting heroes who defended Gotham city and made cool noises with their fists as they delivered justice.

And of course, there was **Peanut Butter and Jelly,** which has radically impacted the life of Lynley Mandrell.

The world has seen the rise of many great duos. I could go on and on. But today, I don’t want to talk about superheroes, or comedy duos, or even cartoon creations. Today, I want to talk about the perfect team that God created to form the family. I want to talk about marriage, and God’s plan for this beautiful partnership.

You see, long before there was government or churches or schools or hospitals...before all human institutions came the institution of marriage. God built the home upon the mutual respect and love of one man and one woman.

Let’s look at Genesis 2:18+. The first marriage is about to happen.

**What Do We Learn From the First Marriage?**

**1. The man needs the woman. (vv.18-20)**

Six times in Genesis 1, God declares goodness and perfection over his craft.

- He created the land and the seas and called them “good.”
- He created the plants and the trees and called them “good.”
- He created the lights in the skies and said, “So good”

And on and on and on he goes...until this rhythm suddenly broken in v. 2:18, where God says, "The man is alone...this is not good."

Now, let me just stop right here and say a word to single people. So many unmarried people read this verse and they misunderstand. The bachelor says to himself, "I can never be happy unless I find my match." Marriage is a requirement for contentment. Now, if your mind goes there, it goes farther than the Bible. For we should not forget that Jesus never married, Paul never married, and the apostle Paul even called his singleness a gift from God in 1 Cor. 7. The worst thing you could do to ruin your life is to force marriage and to settle for less than God's best in this area. This passage is teaching the sacred nature of matrimony. It is not shaming the gift of singleness. So don't confuse the two and don't become discouraged. God has a plan for single people too. If you are here today, and you are a single, I want you to stop by a connection center and get The Message of Singles I preached last year. You need to hear what God says to singles.

But let's get back to the text. God says, "It's not good for man to be alone. He needs a helper." Now, I understand ladies that the word "Helper" can come across a little condescending. It sounds almost like "little servant girl" or "a maid" for his castle. That's how we read it in our day, but that Hebrew word for helper is the same word that God uses to describe Himself as the helper of Israel. Moses referred to God as his "Helper" and it wasn't condescending. It wasn't "a weak sister" he referred to, but a powerful aid. Without the help of God, Israel was doomed. In the same way, the text implies here that Adam was in big trouble without a teammate, a partner.

Now, what I love about v.19-20, this parade of animals, is that the Lord let Adam figure it out on his own that the woman was essential to his life. It's as if God knew that man would need to experience loneliness first in order to appreciate the partnership.

I'll never forget when Lynley and I were dating, she lived in Arkansas and I lived in Florida. She would come once a month for a weekend visit and she would stay with some of the female staff. At the end of that weekend, I would take her to the airport and I would feel this overwhelming, overpowering sense of separation. I knew that she was going to be my wife, but we weren't married yet. And even though I hated that feeling of loss and loneliness, God used that pain to increase my love and my appreciation for her.

This is one more reason why living together before marriage increases the likelihood of divorce. When a man has to wait for his woman, when he stands at the altar and knows that this pain of loneliness is cured, there is a deeper love and admiration for his partner. Living together causes marriage fulfillment to leak. It is not good for the man to be alone, but it is good for him to experience a season of loneliness. He needs her. And she needs him. They should be "married."

Now notice v. 18, it says that this helper was created for him. She was "suited, custom fit, for him." What that means is, "She is his matching opposite." Like a bolt and a nut, they fit together and they become tight. They become so close that the Bible says they are "one flesh."

Now, here is the problem with our differences. Before we are married, those differences are attractive. Opposites attract. This is true. So a young lady says, "I love how spontaneous he is" when she dates him. After marriage she says, "It drives me crazy that I can never predict his behavior and choices." Before marriage, he says, "I love how organized she is." After marriage, he says, "Can I just leave my socks there for one night? Does everything have to have a place?" What once drew him to her has now served to drive them apart. Why is this? Why has this happened? Let me tell you what happened.

Just turn over to Gen.3 and you will see. It is John 3:16 in the New Testament that gives us the reason hope for our family. It is Genesis 3:16 in the Old Testament that gives us the reason for our fighting and frustration. For this is what that verse says...

Without going into great detail here on the impact of Eve's sin on marriage, the clear meaning of those verses is this. Before the fall, there was harmony in marriage. After the fall, there is hostility in the home. She seeks to rule over him, he seeks to rule over her. There is a battle of the sexes that began with our separation from God. There is only one thing that destroys marriage. Just one. Sin.

In God's plan, the opposites were supposed to pull them together like a plus and minus magnet. But when we walk in our flesh, when we walk without the Spirit, we become enemies and we repel.

In paradise, Adam longed for a partner, a special person to come alongside him. A helper, a companion, a wife.

So what does God do? In v. 21, he grants the man the desire of his heart. Look with me at v.21+...

## **2. The woman was created like man: supernaturally and specially.**

Remember that Adam was not spoken into existence like the land and the seas. He was not created out of nothing. From the dust he came. And here it says that God put Adam to sleep and made Eve from the same stuff as the man. This truth bears great significance for it teaches us that she was given the same bones, the same flesh, the same DNA, as her husband. She was created like him so there is no reason for him to boast or to put her down. They were both created with equality, and with equal splendor and significance.

I love the way Matthew Henry writes:

***"[She was] not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon 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." --Matthew Henry***

Eve was created wonderfully, and v.22 says that she came to Adam on the arm of the Father. Figuratively speaking, God walked her down the aisle. He brought her to the man. He gave her to him, to protect, to love, to appreciate.

And Adam fully appreciated her. She was perfectly sinless. She was perfect in body and soul. She was there for Adam to adore. And he did adore her. “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called “Isha” for she was taken from “Ish.”

Notice, Adam names her after himself. I found this interesting. These are the first quoted words by any human being in the Bible. The first thing out of man’s mouth in the Bible is a pickup line. “Check her out. She is something.”

And there is even great significance in his assigning her a name. Her name in Hebrew is “Isha” for she was taken from “Ish.” He embeds his name in her name like a teenage boy that takes pride in carving his name plus her name on an oak tree. He was captivated by her. She was not his weak sister or silly servant. She was his silver and gold, his deepest treasure.

Let’s let’s stop right here and acknowledge a lie that we have all believed at one time or another. Here is the lie about marriage that Satan sells us:

**As long as I marry the right person, I should not have to work at the relationship to stay in love.**

False. This is not true. When we look at the “love at first sight” encounter in Genesis 2, all of us who are married can identify with that early feeling of infatuation. Marriage counselors never have to coach people on the art of falling in love. That happens quite naturally. And so we think that as long as we select the right person, then we are going to wake up every morning, rub the sleep out of our eyes, look over at that angel and say, “Hallelujah, I get to spend another day with her.” We think that those feelings should always remain in the “right” marriage.

And this is what we forget. When we went on the first date with that person, we poured hours of energy into the planning of that event. We were careful with our speech and spoke words of encouragement and measured every loose statement. We wanted to please this person and impress them with every act of service. Literally, we “broke our necks” trying to please one another. It was a heavy investment. And one that we were happy to make.

But what happens on the other side of “I DO” is this: we gradually reduce the effort and the strong attraction begins to sink. It’s subtle at first, as she starts to do her thing and he does his thing. But if this “roommate relationship” continues, it normally ends up in a pastor’s office with the following words, “I don’t feel anything for him anymore. I have no feelings for her.” Then, what happens is either divorce or what I call “functional divorce.” Two people sharing a home, but living separate lives. They are like two ships passing in the wind.

And this falls so short of God’s design for the relationship in the home. God brought Eve to the man, and he assigned great priority to the relationship. In fact, this leads us into the next verse which Jesus later quotes in the New Testament.

V. 24, “For this reason...

### **3. The man and woman established “first loyalty” with one another.**

The words we use today are leave and cleave. I have always found this phrase troublesome because the word cleave sounds to me like a meat cleaver in a butcher shop. It's job to separate the beef. But that word doesn't mean separate, no quite the opposite. The word means to stick like glue. The word means to cling. We might say it better today by saying we "should leave and cling." To hold fast like a 1000 lb. Velcro.

So many marriages today fail because one of the persons refuses to "leave" the parents. This doesn't mean, literally, of course. You don't have to get married and move to another continent. You just have to reassign priority to your relationships. And the most important relationship must be with your mate. You and your spouse have got to become best friends.

So let's just talk practically about this.

### **3 Warning Signs That Your Spouse is Second Loyalty**

- **You share big news with someone else first.**

You get a job promotion and the first person you call is your Dad. You need to call Dad. He'll be so proud, but your first call needs to be your wife. You honor your mate when you make her your speed dial. There's something painful about discovering that you were included second in the "should know" category.

- **You are increasing your free time with friends without discussing it with your spouse.**

Now, this is normally something that men get blamed for, but I've seen this game go both ways. He has a day off and she informs him mid morning that she'll be gone all afternoon shopping with a friend. It might be a good thing for her to have an outing, but when there is no communication, this is hurtful. What she says is, "Time with me comes after time at the mall." You are second.

- **You are keeping secrets from your spouse.**

I'm not talking about a surprise birthday party. I mean that you find yourself deleting text messages you didn't want him to see. You are hiding bills or receipts you didn't want her to find. There are these little secret parts of your life that you are withholding because you know your spouse would not approve. You are growing comfortable with deception. Beware of these things because deception does not lead to intimacy.

If you want your marriage to rise to higher levels, then you must make all other relationships second to THAT relationship.

Now, with the time remaining, I want to ask you to turn to Ephesians 5, where Paul quotes this Genesis narrative and sheds further light on the meaning of marriage and why God created it.

Turn with me to Ephesians 5:31. Listen to these words about the mystery of marriage.

Now, why does Paul call this a mystery? The reason this was a mystery was because people in the Old Testament could not conceive of a church that would be born that would be called the bride of Christ. They had no way to comprehend that the Messiah would become the groom who would go and prepare a place for his bride, who would come back thousands of years later to reclaim that bride.

So Paul says, this human, earthly relationship is a reflection of the heavenly relationship between Christ and his people.

Now, why does that make a lick of difference to you today? Let me tell you why this information matters. It changes our motives for serving our spouses. If we are not careful, we find ourselves loving our wives with selfish motives—that they will love us back, or let us go fishing, or meet our physical needs. That's not really love. That's called bribery. When we give hoping to get a greater return.

But, when I love my wife for Christ's sake, I make my marriage an act of worship. Do you get that? It's one thing to buy my wife flowers so that she'll be compliant to my request for a football game. It's quite another to buy my wife flowers so that the Lord is honored through my act of service. I make sacrifices for my wife, for her sake, but even more so, for His sake.

It's a profound mystery.

Let me paint a picture for you here and give it a twist that you may not have thought of before. Christ is coming again to this earth. Even as you saw Him go, He will come again, the angels said. So imagine that day with me. The heavens are opened and the trumpet sounds and the Son of Man appears on the clouds with power and great glory and with tens of thousands of holy angels shining like the sun. He sends them out to gather His elect from the four winds and raises from the dead those who died in Christ. He gives them new and glorious bodies like His own, and transforms the rest of us in the twinkling of an eye to be fit for glory.

The age-long preparation of the bride of Christ (the church!) is finally complete and He takes her arm, as it were, and leads her to the table. The marriage supper of the Lamb has come. He stands at the head of the table and a great silence falls over the millions of saints. And He says, "This, my beloved, was the meaning of marriage. This is what it all pointed toward. This is why I created you male and female and ordained the covenant of marriage. Henceforth there will be no more marriage and giving in marriage, for the final reality has come and the shadow can pass away."

