

CCH 10OCT21 Genesis 2:4-25 “Introducing Sex”

v24 REMINDER OF Q&A pigeonhole.at/genesis. PRAY.

“Houston we have a problem”. It’s the famous quote from the film “Apollo 13” when an explosion cripples the spacecraft. In Genesis 1 we’ve been seeing how **good** everything is. Gen 1: It was good it was good x6, Gen 1:31 it was very good. But in 2:18, “we have a problem”. For the first time in the Bible, something is not good.

What is it? The fall of mankind into catastrophic sin? No- not yet, we’ll look at that next week. The problem is more minor, but it’s a problem nevertheless: the **aloneness** of Adam. A problem that is wonderfully resolved in the arrival of Eve. So this is a passage that focuses on Adam & Eve, man & woman, sex & marriage. The 4th in our series on Gen 1-4, which give us helpful lenses to view the world properly as God intended.

But as we think about sex & marriage we need to start by acknowledging that we live in a culture which worships sex. We are in a world where a tsunami of sexual images coming at us on every screen, where an addiction to pornography can begin aged 7¹, and where one newspaper recommends that 13 is the ideal number of sexual partners before you settle down². But far from leaving us liberated, the sexual revolution of the last decades has left us confused, enslaved, dysfunctional, and deeply wounded.

And so how we need God’s **life**giving and **forgiving** teaching about sex and marriage. And the verses here in the second half of Genesis 2 are the foundational go to passage for Paul & Jesus when they teach on this subject.

¹ <https://www.covenanteyes.com/2020/09/02/heres-what-3-teens-have-to-say-about-porn/>

² <https://metro.co.uk/2021/01/30/the-ideal-number-of-previous-sexual-partners-is-13-apparently-13990814/>

But before we get there, the first half of the passage isn’t about sex and marriage at all. So let’s look at it briefly. We’ll come onto **v18-25** and God’s blueprint for **marriage** shortly, but in **v4-17** we’re going to look at **three** points, and actually it acts as a kind of recap of what we’ve seen so far.

You know how when England win their finals with a winning penalty shoot out(!), you see the goal again and again from **different angles**. You see rather than there being 2 separate and conflicting accounts of Creation written by different people, as some of the scholars say, we have a second theological camera angle on creation here. Introduced by the word “This is the account of...” v4. Which means we are looking into the resulting situation arising from what has come before. The word comes 10 more times in Genesis to divide up the book.

So Gen 2 says much of what has been said in chapter 1 about **God**, **humanity and creation**, but in slightly different language and imagery. So if you missed weeks 1-4 you might like to go back & listen to the talks on our website/youtube channel, but if you listen carefully now, you’ll get a good summary of what we have covered.

First of all we’ve been focusing on **God. 1) God is so kind.**

The Bible starts with God. And Like in chapter 1, here God is the great mover and shaker. He is in control. We see him here in ch 2 forming, planting, making, taking, putting, commanding and speaking. He is our creator, and you and I exist only because of Him. We need to get off our thrones as if we are king, and bow in worship before our maker. And do you see how **kind** he is. Making a world that is so perfectly suited for humanity. He is the source of all good things we have....

2) So Second we see **Creation. And like Chapter 1 we see how good it is too.** It's beautiful and centred around man's needs. There's lush vegetation to view, food to enjoy, streams, animals, and a beautiful garden here (in fact we get the word "paradise" from a Persian word for garden originating from somewhere in this area in the middle East). And did you see the gold and the resin and onyx v12? These are actually things we find later in the Bible in the Temple and the Tabernacle. So it's not just that God kindly gives us free precious minerals available for us to dig out of the ground, but that humanity is in the royal presence of God who walks with his people in the garden. Our world is the sanctuary designed by God to be the place where we meet with and worship God.

And onto the **3rd recap. Mankind.**

The camera angle shows things slightly differently from chapter 1. Here in Chapter 2 the writer slows down on that theological camera replay to show the **separate** arrival of man and woman, Adam and Eve as we'll see. Having watered the ground to make it suitable for plants, v7, man is taken from the ground, Adam from Adamah, showing that we are made of the stuff of creation, part of it, though hugely elevated over it. And man is put in the garden to work it, reflecting what we saw in week 3 that mankind is made in the image of God to work (and as we saw last week to rest).

So we are hugely **privileged** to be God's workers over his creation, stewarding his creation, working it to make it fruitful, and living in his image. We are given clear commands v16,17, which we will come back to next week. Though we are dust and so there's a fragility which we will come back to, mankind, or rather man at this stage is hugely privileged.

So Men. Don't be discouraged, don't be down on yourself. You are given royal dignity and value made in the image of God, deeply precious to him. But Houston we have a problem (v18)..... man on his own is not enough.

Hence the arrival of woman and the creation of the gift of marriage. **v18** Is the problem that man is lonely? Well perhaps, but in the light of what we've seen in chapter 1 that mankind is to subdue and rule over the earth, and in the light of what we've seen in chapter 2 that Adam has a job to do in the garden, I think it's more that he is insufficient to do the job. He needs a HELPER v18. And this is our first P of marriage- **partnership**.

As one preacher put it, it's not so much that he's lonely, but more that he's incompetent! Man needs help in doing this work of caring for the garden. And hence the creation of Eve. And incidentally if any of the women feel let down by the Bible's vocabulary here- that Eve is just a helper, it's worth knowing that that word is normally used of God as the one who brings help! So again, there's great dignity and worth.

So let's look at the arrival of Eve on the scene.

v18 Man needs a helper.

v19 God brings the animals to parade in front of Adam.

v20, Mankind gets the privilege of naming the animals. "Aardvark, Baboon, Cheetah, Dog, Emu, Frog" and so on....

But v20b No suitable helper can be found.

None of these are going to be suitable to help man subdue the earth and work it. Yes a pigeon can send a message, an ox can pull a plough, but these creatures aren't complex enough to help, and above all they aren't in the image of God the worker to rule and to relate to. (those were the 2 Rs of being in the image of God that we saw a couple of week ago).

So God kind of anaesthetises Adam, putting him into a sleep, and does some surgery taking out a rib. And I love what the great Commentator Matthew Henry says about this: *“Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him.”* There may be picture language going on here, but it's really important theology as we'll see shortly.

v22 God brings Eve to the man and he's delighted. Christopher Ash who has written this excellent book “Married for God” on marriage, says that this is the first recorded love song! So there's a wonderful partnership, there's joy and delight.

I think that it's important that we remember this partnership aspect. For those of you who are married today remembering this can save you from loading too much onto your marriage. (see [picture](#)). Let me explain what I mean. Partly due to our culture's intense focus on dating and romance, we can think that relationships are only to be inward looking. The other person is there to make me feel great or to meet all my needs. They exist for my pleasure and happiness. That's to load too much onto the marriage, and no human can bear that. A spouse is not a saviour- that's someone else's job! But this “coupleolatry” actually it also loads too little on the marriage at the same time.

While there is to be a private sexual inward aspect to the relationship there is also to be a public facing aspect- serving God in his world. Christopher Ash calls it “sex in the service of God”. The marriage relationship is to be outward looking, to work the garden, to organise creation, to serve the church, to share the gospel.

So married couples, if you were to ask your spouse in an honest moment how are we doing in working together as a team what would be the answer? “I don't feel a team when it comes to what we do on the weekends, or getting the kids off to school, or teaching the kids the Bible”. Remember this partnership aspect of marriage- it's at the heart of what it's about. Where do you need to have some honest chats about partnership?

And those of you who are single. Do you hope to meet Mr or Miss Right one day? Well marriage is more than romance, it's a partnership to serve Jesus in his world, making him known. And therefore, it's essential that you marry a Christian. How many women (and sometimes men) have been compromised in their Christian witness and service because they have married a spouse who doesn't share their faith, and so there is a clash in this work of partnership. Yes they may be well matched in other areas, but their relationship with Christ will be negatively impacted by their choice of marriage partner. This is a sensitive and difficult area, but it can be tempting to jump into a relationship too quickly. Pray for God's choice in a godly Christian spouse, and if you can't partner together in Christian service and worship, trust God and wait. If you'd like to hear their stories, I can put you in touch with people in our church who have resisted dating a non-Christian and have been glad to do so.

But if marriage is a **partnership**, it's also to be **physical**. one flesh!

Here's the sex bit. I'll try not to blush!

Marriage is the [God given context for sex](#).

One flesh. This is why it's so important Eve is taken from Adam. So that when they come together in sexual intimacy, there's a oneness. Putting it in mathematical terms. ONE (Adam) PLUS ONE (Eve)= ONE (one flesh!). They are back into the unity that they started out as.

In v24 we have the foundational biblical teaching on marriage... (and all of these are challenged in our culture today in one way or another).

- It's **permanent**- a man leaves his mother and father to make a new family unit that is to be lasting (God's ideal is no divorce)
- It's **exclusive**- a man is united to his wife and not to anyone else (no adultery)
- It's **heterosexual**- a man (no same sex marriage). More on this tonight with our guest preacher Chris Lowe.
- And it's **public** – a public leaving of one household in an act that is publicly recognised and then coming together (no to cohabitation).
- It's **sexual**- one flesh- the union of bodies bodily expressing the union of lives. (So there's no place for a low view of sex, or a sexless marriage!)

Sex is a wonderful thing. The Bible is not against it at all. It's celebrated in the Bible, there's a whole book about it- Song of Songs.

Sex does an amazing thing. It takes two people, complementary, male and female and unites them together at the deepest level. The word in verse 24 for uniting or joining is translated in the old versions as to cleave.

You may have heard of marriage as "leaving" and "cleaving". So the two are united together in the most intimate way.

In youth group circles I've seen it illustrated with glue. Two pieces of cardboard are glued together. That's an illustration of sex. But sex is incredibly powerful, the most powerful body language. And if that couple is ripped apart, through unfaithfulness or divorce there can be great damage.

But what is clear from the order of this verse is that marriage comes first and then sexual intimacy.

It's important to get this clear in the cold light of day, rather than trying to figure it out when the lights are down and you are on your own with a member of the opposite sex who you aren't married to. It's in black and white here in Gen 2. The Bible's teaching from page 1 is that sex is for marriage. "A man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh".

Our world just laughs at this idea. If it feels good do it, sex is just a bit of fun, and it's good to experiment until you find someone with whom you are compatible.

Our good and loving father wants to protect us. Using another illustration, fire is a great gift when it is in a fireplace, but in a sofa or a tower block it can cause great damage.

The world lies and tells us that the most exciting sex is to be found outside of marriage. But within marriage, a couple can learn the language of love and serve one another. The God given place for sexual intimacy is marriage. Couples are to work at their love life, and not be ashamed to reach out for help when there are problems.

The third aspect of marriage is not found in this passage, but in how the New Testament picks it up. As I've said, Jesus and Paul quote this passage as the NT's foundational teaching on marriage and sex. But Paul does a strange thing in Eph 5. He quotes our verse and then says it's talking about Jesus! See [slide](#).

3) Marriage is a **pattern** of Christ and the **church**.

Maybe you have found this talk hard, because you are single and would love to be married, or because there are elements of your marriage that you are sad about, or things in your past that you are ashamed of. Maybe to be honest your relationships haven't exactly followed God's good pattern. Well there's really good news.

The ultimate fulfilment of this passage is found in a relationship with Jesus. A lover who never fails us. The ultimate spouse. This shouldn't surprise us. The Old Testament is all paving the way, and pointing forward to the arrival of Jesus, **the** bridegroom.

And the people of God are likened to a bride. And even though we have been unfaithful (as we acknowledged in our confession from the book of Hosea), God is an incredibly patient and forgiving husband. He loves us and wants us back. Instead of divorcing us for our unfaithfulness to him, he has come after us in his Son, who has laid down his life for his unfaithful bride.

And when you become a Christian you become united as one with Christ. "All I have I share with you". He takes your sin and wrongdoing onto himself and pays for it in his flesh and blood on the cross. And he gives you his perfect record of righteousness as a gift.

▲ I've told some of you the true story of a Christian couple who were dating and who went out for a meal, and over the meal, she opened up about all of the mistakes she had made in the past. Out it all came in a torrent of tears. Her boyfriend stood up, and she assumed he was going to walk away. But instead he got down on one knee and said, "I love you anyway, will you marry me?". That is Christ's love for us. GRACE!

And all of us need to hear that there is forgiveness in Christ for sinners who turn back. The church is a hospital for sinners not a museum for saints! Yes we need to turn from our sin, we need with God's help to put it to death. But wonderfully, Jesus wants us as his

So if you are single, and you may be single all your life. Don't see it as second best. If you are a Christian you are united to Jesus, and he loves you, and he will never fail you. Human marriage ends at death. It is temporary in that regard- pointing forward. Singleness is considered a gift in the Bible, and it can be a great blessing for serving Christ. Our church needs to be a place where we value single people whether single, same sex attracted, widowed or divorced and rally round them, bringing friendship and love.

And husbands and wives. Yes marriage can be hard. It's "dancing in the minefield" to quote a lovely song I shared over the weekend. Of course, bringing two sinners together into one flesh after the fall is going to be hard. But it's wonderful. And brothers and sisters, as you love your spouse with unconditional unflinching committed love you are showing the world how wonderful Jesus' love for a broken world is.

Let's pray.