

Genesis 2:18-25

Here Comes the Bride

A young woman was once applying for a Civil Service Job. Her maiden name, as well as her married name, was Green. To clarify this on the application, she penciled in: Green before marriage.

This was certainly what Adam and Eve could have put before this, the world's first marriage. But they also had that unseen presence in their marriage - that presence illustrated by a braid. A braid appears to contain only two strands of hair. But it is impossible to create a braid with only two strands. It would quickly unravel. What looks like two strands requires a third. The third strand, though not immediately evident, keeps the strands tightly woven. In a Christian marriage, God's presence, like the third strand in a braid, holds husband and wife together.

As we continue to study in Genesis, we not only see here the continuation of the creation story, we also learn some important principles about marriage and other related matters.

Notice first, the woman prepared for the man in vv. 18-22a. The first thing we see is that the *desire was foreseen by God* (v. 18). It is not good, God said, that man be alone. Contrast this to His statement after each day of creation that "it was good." However, on the sixth day, after the initial creation of man, the naming of the animals, and the awareness that it was "not good" for man to be alone, God created woman. And with this crowning creation God then declared, "it is very good."

God did not intend man to live in isolation. Man is a social creature who, by nature, needs community. God foresaw this need before Adam even experienced it. About 2000 years later, God would reveal Himself to Abraham as Jehovah-jireh, the Lord who provides, or the Lord who sees (Genesis 22:14). Here, as God foresees the desire of Adam, He acts as Jehovah-jireh, in that He both sees the desire of Adam and provides for it!

We need to let the Lord provide when and whom He pleases. This is especially a true word for young people and unmarried adults! True, God has gifted some with the gift of singleness or celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7 (when was the last time you heard somebody praying for that gift?!)). But many without that gift are not content to wait upon the Lord. They jump into and out of relationships, which is really just a carry over from dating. Think for a moment about dating. A guy begins to go with a girl. They date for a number of months, but then someone else comes along. So they break up and start dating somebody else, somebody who they like better; until the next person who's better comes along, at which time they break up again and move to the next person. For many, the pattern continues over and over and over. And for many, it's a pattern that's extended into marriage. And we wonder why we have such an epidemic of divorce today. Until the advent of dating in the recent past we didn't have nearly the problem of divorce that exists today. Perhaps that's because people weren't preparing themselves for disaster and divorce as many are doing today through their dating habits! Let me tell you, God sees your need for relationship, and He will meet it! If you'll be content to wait on Him, He'll meet that need in the most perfect of ways.

Notice how He did so with Adam! We see next that this *desire was fostered by God* (vv. 19-20). Remember, God's time is not always our time. Rather than meet that need right away, God first fostered it. He brings the animals to Adam - but none of them were fit for him! Think about this now; what did Adam see? A lion and lioness; a stallion and a mare; a rooster and hen; etc. Every animal that paraded by Adam had its mate. Perhaps this led Adam to say, where's my mate?

Many young people today submit to unbridled passion prior to marriage. What is that passion? Perhaps it is God fostering your desire for your future mate. He's not given you license to act upon that passion. Instead He's given you something even more wonderful to deal with it - self-control! The sad statistics are telling - those unfaithful before marriage find frustration within marriage. God was fostering Adam's desire.

But notice also that *desire was fulfilled by God* (vv. 21-22a). It is common in marriage ceremonies to say, "God did not take a bone from Adam's head that she might rule over him, nor from his foot that he might rule over her, but from his side that he might protect her, from near his heart that he might cherish her." This is taken directly from this passage. Here we see the world's first surgery, from which flows the world's first marriage. Some speak of a marriage made in heaven. This one certainly was, for it is entirely by the work of God!

It's interesting to note that when God made man (2:7), the Hebrew says He formed him from dust. But a different Hebrew word is used here in 2:22. God doesn't form a woman, He builds her. In referring to man the word used is *yitzer*. It denotes a process in which the work is done with great accuracy and exactness. But in speaking of woman the word used is *yiben*. Woman is fashioned not from dust (a dissimilar material) but from a rib (a similar material). I believe this is why Paul says, "A man . . . is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man" (1 Cor. 11:7).

Folks, that's not a sexist statement. Remember what God is doing here. He's fulfilling a deep need Adam had. It's a need that can't be filled by the animals (thus showing silently and implicitly what would later be explicitly stated in Scripture, that bestiality is abominable to God). It's a need that can't be filled by one exactly like him (thus also showing silently and implicitly what would later be explicitly stated in Scripture, that homosexuality is abominable to God). It's a need that only be filled by one taken from him - one who's of him, yet distinct! Indeed, God fulfilled Adam's deepest desire by fashioning Eve.

Notice also, though, the woman presented to the man in v. 22b. Have you ever wanted to be a fly on the wall? How interesting it would have been to see the look in Adam's eyes when he woke! I read of a lady who said that after the last child left home for college, her husband was resting next to her on the couch. He had his head in her lap and she removed his glasses and said, "you know, honey, without your glasses you look like the same handsome young man I married." "Honey," he replied with a grin, "without my glasses, you still look pretty good too!" Eve looked so good, that Adam immediately declared, "whoa, bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh!"

Here comes God down the aisle with the bride. He presents her to her husband. And friends, the world has never seen a lovelier bride. Today many brides wear white; a symbol of purity. This bride was so pure, so innocent, that she didn't wear anything!

And there was no shame involved either! This was to be Adam's wife for the rest of his physical life.

Matthew Henry says, "Adam was a figure of Him that was to come; for out of the side of Christ, the second Adam, His spouse the church was formed, when He slept the sleep, the deep sleep, of death upon the cross, in order to which His side was opened, and there came out blood and water, blood to purchase His church and water to purify it to Himself."

Let me tell you, we don't have to wish to be a fly on the wall at this wedding. If you know Christ, you'll see an even greater wedding than this. In the New Testament, Paul, in the context of speaking about the husband / wife relationship, says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Ephesians 5:25-27). There's coming a day of presentation. The church is the bride of Christ. The day will come when our bridegroom, Christ Himself, will literally present us to Himself in the beauty of holiness, the purity of innocence, the grace of forgiveness!

Notice finally the woman protected by the man in vv. 23-25. We see first the *intimate connection* between the two (vv. 23-24). Literally in Hebrew Adam says, "at last, this one - bone of my bones . . . etc." It's more a Hebrew poem containing 13 words. Three of the words are feminine in gender - the first, the last, and the middle (the 7th word). In poetic fashion, Adam is declaring this woman to be his first, his last, and everything in between. She's all he needs!

There's a word play here in Hebrew that even comes over into English. In v. 23, Adam says, she'll be called ISHah because she was taken from ISH. This is even seen in English; she'll be called woMAN, because she was taken from MAN. This shows the intimate connection that existed between these two. They had the same nature, yet a different gender. They were the same species, yet had a different appearance.

Verse 24 is interesting also. It is made in a day when there were no parents! What basis did Adam have for making such a statement? Many would use this to cast doubt on the account saying it is mere religious rhetoric. But really this makes beautiful sense when we understand what's happening. Jesus said, "'Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" (Matt. 19:4-5). Jesus makes it clear then that it's NOT Adam, but God, Himself, making this statement. God is showing what His intention for this relationship is to be throughout time! There was indeed an intimate connection between the two.

We can also see the *innocent condition* of the two (v. 25). As one commentator said, "they had no clothes on their back because they had no sin in their conscience." We'll examine this in more detail in chapter three. The thought here, however, is definitely of chastity and moral purity. Many have asked, was there even a sexual relationship before the Fall? Did Adam and Eve not worry about no clothes because there was no sexual desire? Obviously, there *was* that type of relationship. When God created them on day 6, what did He say? ". . . be fruitful and multiply and replenish the

earth” (Genesis 1:28). If you’re going to say the sexual relationship didn’t exist before the Fall, you better be prepared to describe a new way for procreation to occur!

God has always demanded purity in the relationship between the sexes. It is only within the marriage bond that sexual desires can be legitimately satisfied. When desires are fulfilled that way, there is no shame. But when we step outside the plan of God, we ultimately only frustrate ourselves. In 1985, Actress Amy Irving was expecting a baby by movie director Steven Spielberg. The two signed a contract in which Spielberg was legally responsible for everything a father would be if they were married. A family lawyer came up with a support agreement. Spielberg had the same rights and responsibilities as a father. Said Irving, “Somewhere down the line, Steven and I may celebrate our love for each other and get married. We're so married in our hearts it seems redundant to think of a wedding now.” Then why all the contracts? No, these were two individuals doomed for frustration!

But not Adam & Eve! At this point there was no consideration of frustration. The Fall had yet to occur. They lived in a state of moral innocence, thus there was no shame at complete exposure!

Friends, the word of God declares the day will come when we will stand before God. On that day, all will be uncovered; our thoughts, actions, everything will be exposed before a holy and righteous God! It behooves us then to live in such a way that we’ll stand without fear before Him; not with our head hung in shame, but willing to meet His all-searching gaze!

During courtship with a young woman named Julia Dent, Ulysses S. Grant once took her out for a buggy ride. They came to a flooded creek spanned by a flimsy bridge. Grant assured her it was safe to cross. “Don't be frightened,” he said. “I'll look after you.” “Well,” she said, “I shall cling to you whatever happens.” And she did! Grant drove on in thoughtful silence for a few minutes, then cleared his throat and said, “Julia, you said back there that you would cling to me whatever happened. Would you like to cling to me for the rest of our lives?” She accepted, and they were married in August 1848.

In Genesis three we’ll see, that as Adam and Eve continued to live, they eventually came to the creek of temptation. Throughout history that creek has risen higher and higher. There appears to be a bridge that spans the creek, but in reality that bridge is not just flimsy, it’s rotten. It can in no way hold you because it is a bridge made up of our own morality, our own good works.

But then the Lord Jesus came and built a sufficient bridge - in fact, the only bridge that sufficiently spans the chasm! It was the bridge of His cross! What do we do? What Julia did - cling to him whatever happens, saying “nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling!” Will you cling to Him today?