

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
October 7, 2018
20th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16
Hymns: 243; 625; 416; 644 (38:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Genesis 2:18-24

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

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."

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

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: “It’s my life, I can do what I want!”

When we hear these words from a teenager one can sense that trouble is coming, and not only the rebellion that is evident in the words, but in the headlong rush into the world that will lead to a painful conclusion. That is what every loving parent will fear and try to avert for the children they love.

How our Father in heaven must cringe every time His children protest that His will, complaining that His rules are ruining their lives! God is a God of order and not a God of disorder. What we may see as senseless intrusion into our lives is in fact a loving God seeking our blessing and endeavoring to avert the disaster that our willful ways will bring into our lives.

This is clearly evident when it comes to God’s plan for the family. God’s way is all about security and order, yes, for children, but also the married couple that they might not only live this life in harmony but walk the path together that leads to eternal life.

This morning’s text is the divine record of God instituting marriage way back in the beginning in Eden, however the message of this event is one of God’s blessing for us all, whether we be young or old, single or married or widowed. Today the Holy Spirit leads us in --

THEME: Embracing God’s Blessing of Family.

Through a study of the divine record the Holy Spirit would instill within us -

I. A Proper Appreciation of God’s Plan.

Genesis 2:18-20 And the LORD God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*”

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.

The Lord starts by making a startling observation about His creation, He says “NOT good!” “It is not good that man should be alone.” Is this an “oops” statement by the Lord, that He suddenly realized that He had made a mistake? In no way! This was part of the plan. The Lord had already created the rest of the animals as male and female, creating both at the same time with the same command. The separate creation of Adam and then Eve was a deliberate move by God to create a teachable moment. And yes, Adam was the one to whom and through whom that lesson would be taught. That lesson remains important for us yet today, both for men and women. Adam without Eve was less than the “very good” that the Lord designed for His creation. Adam with Eve was to be that “very good” that was to characterize all of God’s creation. This lesson was to lead first Adam and then all of us to realize that truth.

The Lord caused all the animals to proceed before Adam that Adam might name them. That was not only an indication of the responsibility that the Lord was to hand over to mankind regarding the stewardship of God’s creation, but also to give Adam the opportunity to observe and conclude that something was missing for Adam. Adam was missing that helper, that companion that was comparable to him. All this was done to instill that special appreciation of Eve at her creation.

And so --

Genesis 2:21-23 “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.”

God’s plan had a very important, may we say intense message. By taking a rib from Adam to use in the creation of Eve God was declaring the intimacy, the closeness that was to define the marriage union. Did Adam get the message? It is clear that he did! “Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh.” Adam was brought to a full realization of exactly how important Eve was to be to him as his

wife, they were to be one in life, one in purpose, to serve the Lord in His creation of which the Lord was then ready to declare “very good!” Adam regarded Eve as an extension of his own being, and was to care for her and about her in that manner. The Apostle Paul, reinforces this message when he writes: “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” (Ephesians 5:28)

God is a God of order and not disorder. What God created as He instituted marriage in Eden was the highest good, and the basic order for the family.

II. God’s Order Is for Our Good.

The recognition of this being the order established by the Lord is presented for us in the concluding verse of our text.

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

It was all established in God’s design: Eve complemented Adam, bringing God’s plan to completion. They were created to fit together not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. God made them different from one another that they might supply for one another every needed blessing. The Lord God instituted this as a lifelong union. That God instituted marriage means very simply that it is **His** institution, not ours. He established it with its parameters. Marriage belongs to God. God’s design was for harmony, mutual love and support, and a lifelong blessed union.

So then what do we observe in life? This truth that Adam being alone was “not good,” does not indicate that something was evil within Adam or his existence, but something was missing. And that is what is still felt by those who are making their way through life without that blessing of a spouse within God’s framework of marriage. The rest of us should be attentive to the needs of those who are missing that blessing. It should not only be a matter of prayer, but a recognition that the Lord has called and gathered us to be family that in Christian love we might supply support and community for those who are making their way through life alone. This seems natural enough when we are physical family, but it is

too easy to forget and neglect when we are simply fellow church members or neighbors. What a blessing it is when we reach out to others in caring support. This is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we exercise, a gift given to some more than others; a gift for which we are to be truly thankful. Such support is not only for the elderly; it is also for people of all ages. While some church programs reach out to supply this support we can all strive to love and support one another. It is amazing the difference a phone call or a card can make assuring someone that they are not forgotten, that they are including in others' thoughts and prayers.

What happened to this perfect order of God's creation? Why is this blessing not universal? How is it that this harmony is so often disrupted? Why is it that so many marriages are less than perfect?

Sin entered into the world; sin corrupted God's creation. Sin corrupts God's institution of marriage to this very day. And so we see that man has rebelled against the Word and will of God also in this. All manner of sexual sin and perversion have swept through the world. Not only are there sins evident in every marriage because we are all sinful, but the basic structure of God's order has been undermined, disrupted, even declared invalid because it does not conform to the sinful will of man. So we have divorce, and premarital and extramarital sexual relations. Sexual assaults and pornography take that which God designed to be a beautiful expression of unity of man and woman within marriage, and makes it dirty, objectifying both men and women, for the fulfillment of fleshly lusts. Such objectifying of human beings is celebrated in our society with popular books and movies and the applause of audiences on TV talk shows when it is announced that popular celebrities are involved in a sinful relationship. At the same time the "me too" movement decries the evil. It's like nobody gets the connection between rejecting God's good order and the proliferation of evil. In the process so many people including children are hurt, deeply wounded. So many families damaged, and often torn apart, and God's institution of marriage besmirched by the filth of this world.

Where does one turn for deliverance? Where can one find the answer to this evil and corruption? It is found only in the

sanctifying power of the gospel of Christ Jesus! Knowing the gospel's power to make clean, having that power of the gospel engage our hearts and lives by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, we are brought out from the sin of this world. Even when the filth of this world has penetrated our hearts, polluted our minds and defiled our lives, the gospel's cleansing power is greater. Isaiah proclaims that gospel truth saying: *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."* (Isaiah 1:18) The words of the prophet remain as true today as the day Isaiah wrote them, as true as the day Jesus poured out His blood for us. This purifying gospel is so great, so powerful that we are given this assurance by the Apostle John concerning the gospel of Christs, *"And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.* (1 John 3:19-21)

This is the Spirit of Christ that is such an important blessing in every Christian marriage. It opens to us the cleansing power of Jesus to sanctify our marriages, and our family relationships. It separates us from the corrupting influences of this world that seek to assault us from all forms of media. It also brings that power of forgiveness into our hearts. We are empowered by the Spirit to forgive one another, to act charitably to one another, to be patient and enduring within our families, and to be blessed with marital and family companionship as God intended from the very beginning.

So it is that God presents us with a wondrous blessing in His institution of marriage in which the framework for the Christian family is established. When the Lord is head of the house, and His gospel of love and forgiveness rules our hearts, then not only do we find peace of conscience for ourselves, but the power of the Holy Spirit to live in harmony with love and forgiveness for our spouse and children.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.