

Genesis 2:18-25

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Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is 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 his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

"It is not good that the man should be alone." A few years ago, just about everyone in our nation got to see the truth of those words. I remember at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when much of our country was entering into quarantine, it seemed like many people were excited by the prospect of quarantine. Work from home, stay at home, don't have to interact with anyone, don't have to get out of your pajamas—yeah, that all sounded pretty good. But it didn't take very long at all for people to start wanting to get back out, to be with people, to resume their relationships. If we learned anything from that whole ordeal, it's the truth that ***"it is not good that the man should be alone."***

And yet, we might not *always* agree with that statement. If any of you have ever taken part in a group project in school, you might know that sometimes it's just easier to work alone. Rather than trying to coordinate schedules and get people to do certain aspects of a project, sometimes you'd rather just do it all yourself. Or, when Jess has to run out to go to the store, usually she'll ask if she can leave the boys here with me. And I get it! Loading four kids into the car, doing seatbelts, walking through a busy parking lot, all the grabbing, the touching—yes, in those moments, the thought is: "It is *good* to be alone." So we have this tension—we're created for community, but *sometimes* we want to be alone.

Now, if we were to ask Jesus what being alone is like, what do you suppose His answer might be? He might say that being alone is teaching God's Word and having people literally walking away, saying, ***"This is a hard saying, who can understand it?"*** (John 6:60) Jesus might say that being alone is sitting at the table with your twelve close companions knowing that one of them is about to leave to betray you. Jesus might say that being alone is having a mob coming after you while your close friends desert you. Jesus might say that being alone is hanging on a cross with only two criminals as company while still more are hurling insults at you. Jesus might even say that being alone is your Father taking His presence from you, the only cry on your lips, ***"My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"*** (Matthew 27:46) That's what it means to be all alone. Jesus was all alone.

Now, you've never experienced that, so you've never *really* been alone. And Jesus underwent what He did so that you could have the promise that you will indeed *never* be alone. There is never a time when you are not in community with God Himself, as Jesus said, ***"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*** (Matthew 28:20) God did not want us to be alone. So, He did something about it. The theme we'll be considering today is:

“It Is Not Good that Man Should Be Alone”

I. Therefore, God provides human companionship

II. Therefore, God provides divine companionship

There are those that dismiss marriage as being a social construct and nothing more. They’ll say, “I don’t need a piece of paper to tell me how I feel about someone.” And while government regulates marriage for us today, marriage is a God-given institution. In fact, our text today takes place on the sixth day of creation. By this point, just about everything that would be created *had* been created: light; water; land; the sun, moon, and stars; fish; birds; animals, and finally the man, Adam. But there was one thing left to create, and that was marriage—human companionship.

It's interesting to note that after each day of Creation, we can read God’s self-evaluation: **“And God saw that it was good.”** (Genesis 1:4ff) And that makes *this* section stand out. After seeing everything that He had created, a perfect creation, and declaring it to be good, now God suddenly changes His tune. Here He says, **“It is not good that the man should be alone.”** How could something be “not good” in a creation that was perfect? Nothing bad had entered the picture at all, and yet here God says there’s one thing that stands out as being “not good” at all.

Well, in this context, “Not good” means “not yet complete.” Everything that God had created in Genesis chapter 1 was in need of something else to complete it and enable it to function. The skies were very good, but they were incomplete without the birds of the air and the stars of the heavens. The seas were very good, but they were incomplete without the fish and sea creatures. The land was very good, but without mankind and land animals, the earth would be incomplete. And God made Adam very good, in His own image He created him, and yet without *companionship*, man was incomplete. So, God created a woman, a life-partner with whom this man could share creation.

But notice how God goes about doing this. He says, **“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”** But He doesn’t do it immediately. You see, from Adam’s perspective, everything is very good. Nothing exists yet that is bad, so he has no point of comparison to understand that not everything is good and complete. So, rather than God just creating a woman immediately, He first leads *Adam* to understand for himself what it means that he is alone. Picking up at verse 19: **“Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.”**

You can almost picture him, can’t you? “There’s Mr. and Mrs. Walrus, there’s Mr. and Mrs. Lion, there’s Mr. and Mrs. Crocodile—why am I all alone?” Here, God shows that wonderful Fatherly care that recognizes what Adam needs long before Adam does, and He arranges events that allow Adam to come to that same conclusion for himself. And isn’t that the same Fatherly care shown to each of us? God knows everything we need, even before our asking, but He works things in our lives so that we can learn for ourselves what it is that we really need. Sometimes the lessons might be painful, but He sends them to us so that we can really see the value of and appreciate the gifts that He gives.

And that's exactly what God does with Adam. Adam realizes that there's no helper, no companion for him in this perfect world. ***"So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."*** The final piece of creation—marriage! Human companionship! There, in the beginning, God instituted that wonderful union that He has blessed so many of us with, ***"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*** One man, one woman, wedded for life!

And what a blessing that companionship was. You can almost hear Adam's exultation: ***"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man."*** This was the *perfect* marriage. ***"It Was Not Good that Man Should Be Alone,"*** so God provided **human companionship**. Two people, a man and a woman, perfectly designed and created to complement and help and support one another. ***"And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."*** There was nothing to hide! No semblance of guilt, not need to cover anything up, no desire to hide *anything* from one another! It was the perfect marriage, perfect companionship.

And of course, we know the rest of the story. In just a short while, the man who exclaimed, ***"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,"*** would then be saying, ***"She gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate."*** (Genesis 3:12) That perfect relationship was shattered by sin. And we too have been given human companions—spouses, children, parents, friends—and we hide, and we blame, and we grow jealous, and we often want to be left alone. And we *deserve* to be left all alone. Because when you cut through the façade of how we present ourselves to one another, we find the sickening reality that deep down our number one priority is ourselves, and what *we* want, and how *we* think things ought to be. We take a perfect creation like marriage and spit on it with our desire to be in charge, with our lust, with our dissatisfaction, with our resentment, with our bitterness. ***"It Is Not Good that Man Should Be Alone,"*** so God provides **human companionship**—and yet when you see what we've done with it, who among us could claim that we do not deserve to be left all alone?

Nevertheless, God does not leave us alone. And He has never left us alone. Instead, **God provides divine companionship** as well. You know, there are a lot of illustrations that God uses throughout Scripture to describe His relationship with us. He describes us as sheep, and He as our ever-watchful Shepherd. He describes us as children, with He as our loving Father. But another illustration that God comes back to again and again is marriage. We can infer how highly God regards the institution of marriage not only because He established it during a perfect creation, but also because He constantly speaks about us in marital terms.

Like in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where He writes, ***"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."*** (Ephesians 5:25-27) Because of Jesus, we have been presented before God as His pure bride, without any faithlessness or sin to stain us. Or one of my favorite sections of Scripture comes from the Prophet Isaiah: ***"As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."*** (Isaiah 62:5) That special moment when the groom first sees his bride coming down the aisle to meet *him* at the altar—that's

just a small taste of the joy that God has when He considers you as *His* bride! That might be hard to believe, but God declares it to be true because of Jesus Christ your Savior!

And it really is all due to Him. If God were to choose us as His bride on the basis of our own beauty or our own level of faithfulness, we would have been left at the altar. But Jesus changed all that. Jesus, the one referred to in Scripture as the Second Adam, fell asleep in death upon the cross. His side was opened, and pouring out of it was that from which His bride would be formed. Not a rib, but His own precious blood. Poured out for you for the forgiveness of all of your sins, so that now you are presented as the truly perfect bride of your Savior! Jesus was the one who left His Father and his mother—as His Father turned away from Him and as Jesus handed his mother off to His disciple John—and shortly after, He breathes His last. And He did all this *so that He could be joined to you.*

I remember when I was in high school, I used to fret so much wondering if I'd ever find someone who would marry me, wondering if there was anyone out there who would love me. Maybe you've had similar worries. Well, fret no more. For each of you, married or unmarried or widowed, each of you have found eternal companionship in God your Savior. This is an insoluble marriage, for when Christ made those marriage vows to you, to be your God and you to be His people, there would be nothing that could change that. Even when we prove ourselves to be a faithless bride, God declares still, ***"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you."*** (Jeremiah 31:3) That's God's marital vow to you; that's God's "I do." And when God says, "I do," it means a whole lot more than when we say it to each other.

Last year, there were some 2.24 million marriages in our country. That means that over 6,000 times a day last year, those words were spoken: "I do." Very easy words to say! Much harder words to live. When Christians say, "I do," we mean that, "I do know trials will come, but together we will apply that healing balm in the tender words of forgiveness." "I do" means "I do understand that my own fear will tempt me to hold back or even lash out in anger, but I ask you to walk with me in gracious forgiveness." "I do" means "I do want your love, and I ask Jesus to help me faithfully give you mine."

Yes, there's a lot packed in those two little words, "I do." How frequently the bride and groom are convinced at the altar that theirs will be the perfect marriage as they say their "I do's." And yet, those two little words are quickly forgotten as daily disappointment and disagreement turn our "I do's" into, "I *did*, but I don't anymore." Well, if you're married, perhaps your vows didn't include, "I do," but rather, "I *will*." That's a nice subtle change which intends to get the point across that no matter what happens—sickness or health—"I *will* continue to love you and keep you till death parts us."

Well, that's the same pledge that God has given each of you. God says to you, ***"I will...I will never leave you nor forsake you."*** (Hebrews 13:5) And because of that, none of us have ever been alone. ***"It Is Not Good that Man Should Be Alone,"*** therefore God has provided all of us with human companions, some of us in the form of marriage. But He has provided every one of us, without variance, with divine companionship together with Himself, a union which even death will not separate. So, thanks be to God for determining that we *will never* be alone. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amen.