

Adam and Eve

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, I'd like us to go back to Genesis chapter 2 and verse 19 to 25. And the words that we have in these verses and also in this whole theme are, as we've seen before, they're really weighted, they're carefully expressed, they're expressed in formulaic ways and God is telling us about beginnings and he's telling about his original creation. It might be very far from our understanding and from our experience and part of that is cultural, part of that is because of rebellion and because of sin which we'll look at a little bit this evening and partly it's just because the thinking today is so different on so many different levels. If I were to mention women's role, if I were to mention marriage between a man and a woman, if I were to mention sovereignty of God and all of these things, these are things which are not popular concepts and popular thinking and we need to try and unpack a little bit of what God is saying to us here, trying not to be prejudiced, trying not to be defensive but also trying to be honest to scripture and to what scripture has in front of us here and it's very significant. Again, what I'd like to say is that I think sometimes the Bible and particularly Genesis and the first three chapters raise more questions than they give answers and they don't give us all the answers. There's lots of things we don't know but we are given principles but more importantly we're reminded that we need to look at Genesis through the eyes as well of the cross. We need to have Jesus as the focus of our worship and

Jesus as the focus even of our study of Genesis and of beginnings because it's all hugely significant and related in this which all last week the talk of the Lord God, the name that is given to God in some of these verses, the Lord is the redeeming name of God, it's the personal covenant name of God so that we look at it even within that context of our sinfulness, our separation from God, his answer to that through Jesus Christ and how that affects how we look at Genesis. So that's kind of as a way of introduction. I want to say these things today but I do want to speak about and kind of try and unpack a little bit. It will not be exhaustive by any means but it will hopefully open up a little bit of these verses and this and these evenings I will put into questions as well for the city group not next week but the week after that so we'll have another time to be able to discuss some of these things in the more informal setting of city group. But what I want to start off with is by looking at verse 18 at 20 the way this is pictured because what we have remembered in Genesis 1 is the whole of creation being made and then in Genesis 2 we go back to with a little bit more detail into the creation of Adam and Eve and the uniqueness of that and the fact that we're mankind is made in God's image and all that comes from that men and women together made in God's image. So we come back to that and he God recounts to Moses a little bit of what was happening. We don't have things about time or what always involved and there's lots of answerable questions, lots of imponderable but in the first couple of verses in 18 and 19 and 20 we have a little bit about Adam and Adam being created and some of the work he had to do in that kind of ambassadorial kind of ruler sovereign care over the universe that he gave that he had to name the animals and we recognize that in this little section God's reminding us of something that he hasn't mentioned before. It's very clear in the language it's something that has been alien previously to the creation. What do you remember about the first chapter of Genesis? What comes across a lot in the first chapter of Genesis? There's a lot of things that and God said and God said we saw that before that's repeated many times and then we also said at the end of each verse it said and it was good and it was good and it was good and it was good and it was good and it was good six times at the end of each creative day we have this great declaration by God because he wants us to know and remind us that his original creation was an absolutely good, good, perfect, beautiful, loving creation and then something alien comes into this passage where God himself says it is not good. Something's not good in his creation. It's not good for the man to be alone. The Lord God said it is not good for the man to be alone and that's a very clear

contrast between the earlier descriptions of the creation that he had made and it's a breaking into this incompleting creation in other words that God hadn't yet finished his creation but it wasn't good for Adam at that point to be alone I will make a help or suitable for him and there was an incompleteness man on his own is incomplete humanity is a corporate reality and it is not good for people to be alone as a way of living as a way of life in that unfulfilled lonely separate environment you see Adam up to this point had been we're to invest 19 he'd been he'd been beginning to fulfill the role he had he was given this role this kind of biological scientific whatever you call it role of naming and being among the animals creating structure and order within them and they were being brought to him and he'd named them and all the lies thought the birds are their beast to the field can't understand how that was done it's very different from what we can envisage and know but there's this sovereign role that he's given and as he's doing that work it's a solitary work I don't know what happened or what was involved but it seemed to be a solitary work and I see met with and interacted with the animal kingdom and the wider world of the it only exposed as loneliness and his or his alone alone I should I say wasn't lonely in the sense of he had a relationship with God this incredible relationship with with God but there was no one suitable to share life with him no one shared his kind of earthiness his humanity God was God the animals with animals the world was the world and here was mankind created in God's image but not able to enjoy the fullness of that image because they had no one to enjoy it with God said it's not good I will make a help or suitable for and that's much

I want to say more about it's much broader than simply the creation of a man and a woman together in a marital marriage relationship it's speaking beyond that to the corporate nature of our human beingness the nature of us as people the absolute solitude was never the intention for mankind never the intention for humankind that we are people made to be in community and I'm not speaking here just about marriage speaking far broader than that that this is not about singleness and marriage per se although it is part of that it's this whole recognition that as people we were made for companionship for social fellowship for interaction with one another for family for friendship yes and for marriage also and we recognize that and the church plays an important part in that recreation of that in Christ and it's hugely significant and hugely important that we recognize even though it's broken and tainted and confused and divided because of sin and because of what sin did and it's only as we see what God originally made intended for us that we begin to see the utter devastation and the deep-seated dysfunction and brokenness that sin has brought into the world that we recognize that this is how God created us for society Adam and Eve is the creation of society it's the creation of humanity together it's the creation of family and of neighborhood and community and all that goes with that spoken in very prototypical terms here it's just it's the genesis of it it's the very it's not as full fruition we see that growing and developing but this is prototype society prototype humanity and it's humanity that is it's not good that mankind is alone that you that individuals are alone that is the recognition that God is expressing to us here now we know that sin has impacted that massively and hugely but we also I think we recognize that that fundamental reality now for some of us it might be easier for some of us it might be more difficult for some of us we sense loneliness for some of us we crave a loneliness sometimes sometimes that's necessary sometimes that's good but as as God intended as we recognize that we're created for society now why do we see that or where do we see the opposite of that even in broken society in which we live what we see in prison don't we we see that punishment is separating people out and solitary confinement is the expression of that it's most no don't send me to the don't send me to the pit or don't send me to the black room don't send me into solitary confinement don't close the door and close the window on humanity and enter social intercourse with people but that is that's the ultimate isn't it's the ultimate it's the ultimate punishment unwilling solitary confinement because that's not what we're made for we create is society and fellowship and friendship and family and we know it's broken and we know it's painful and we know sometimes it doesn't quite work out that way but [11:50] that is what we see that it is not good for mankind to be alone that we weren't created to be alone the sin has impacted that hugely so today in applying that I reject the false piety of people who say as Christians what all I need is Christ I don't need a church and all the pain and the suffering of being part of a church where everyone's such a pain in the neck I don't accept that it's a get-out it's a way it's a it's a false piety that says all you need is Christ at that level yes for making us right with God all we need is Jesus Christ and his finished work of course we know that but don't take that to another extreme and use it to allow yourself not to be exposed to the pain and suffering and joy and fellowship and friendship and highs and lows of being part of God's people and be part

of community of course it's inconvenient and of course it's painful sometimes but it's also how God intend us to be and it's a begin to be a reflection of grace at work and of heaven anticipated so I reject and the Bible rejects the false piety that says all I need is Christ and going up a hillside to worship him and that's what I get my fullness and my completeness because it's a cop out you're not dealing with your sinful nature if you're saying all you need is Christ because he's asked us to express our dependence on Christ through our interaction with one another and through our worship with one another and through our commitment to one another and they're giving to one another and receiving from one another part of this godly society we're the body of Christ we're not a finger to the Christ on our own somewhere we're the body of Christ together he's the head and we reflect his headship by our submission to one another and by our submission to Christ through loving and serving one another so I reject that false piety the Bible does also but also as Christians then the church has a great role to counteract a loneliness and loneliness is a big huge part of life today huge part of people's lives today increasingly so as we individualize our lives as we can do our shopping from the in front of the computer and as we can do our social life from in front of the computer and as we can do almost nearly everything in front of the computer it seems like we have lots of friends it seems like we're in great social intercourse but we're on our own we can be in a dark room on our own we can do all these things on our own we can work from home we can do all these things from home on our own and the result is that there can be a huge amount of loneliness in people's lives a huge amount of non-facial verbal contact with people you know when we struggle when we do things when we do things badly what's the worst thing in the world to do deal with it by email don't do it don't deal with these issues and difficulties and struggles and problems by email go and speak to someone be face to face be in an interaction see their face see their ups see their downs see their disappointment see their their smiles see their approval and disapproval but see it sense it and feel it and be part of that community don't deal with the computer screen all the time we need to be people who are counteracting the loneliness starting wrong with the computer and on all that goes with it but we need to see in the light of grace

God in Christ didn't save us at a distance I'm looking for the word he didn't save us remotely you know we can do so many things remotely today can't we and it seems like fellowship and friendship but didn't read Demas he did he came and Philippians 2 reminds us that he emptied himself he poured himself into this role of servant leadership and servants savior in order to redeem us he interacted with his disciples he he accepted their their ongoing failure and he he made time he got up tremendously early before anyone else so he could be in fellowship with the father and then being fellowship with all these people who didn't understand them and who didn't see what he'd come to do and rejected him and who judged him and the church is this hugely important role because it's not good for man to be alone to to deal with that and to be a community but you know sometimes people they'll talk about

St. Columbus and they'll say they'll say various things in judgment on St. Columbus I think sometimes and they'll say things like oh it's great things are good church I really love your fellowship and the hospitality I love how you do hospitality and things like that and there's sometimes there's a kind of there's an undercurrent of saying well that's quite nice but it's not really that important it's nice that you do it it's a nice additional thing but it's not really that important there's other more important things preachers are not great and the worship not a great or whatever else we do is not a great but I like the way you do hospitality and people sometimes that's the only reason why people come because they get a free meal every so often you know and I say absolutely and completely and totally crucial that we engage in that ministry of hospitality because it's a reflection of the Trinity and it's a reflection of heaven and it's a reflection of community and that we're not just a bunch of gathered individual Christians who find or complete this only in Christ and come together just because well that's convention if this is all we're giving is God this one hour in a day and we live our lives just on our own the rest of the time we're completely misunderstood grace and the gospel and the community of the gospel and the cost of the gospel to our lives hospitality is not an added extra I wouldn't pour heart and soul into it if it was an added extra it's crucial to our understanding of the gospel and of grace and of the fact that we aren't to be alone and that's how we're to reflect the life of Christ in the church we're a family of people together and it's a family of people single young old widowed married with family together and moving beyond just the nuclear picture of family together and it's that recognition that we're a family of God together as a people now I speak here to married couples and I speak sometimes to families and I could myself

sometimes as families and as married couples or when especially when we get married and there's a lot of people get married here a lot of young people go through university and meet the love of their life and get married and that's so on and sometimes the tendency can be to just become tremendously insular you know once you get married then you just focus on in yourself and then even more so once you get family then you've got no time for anything else and that is something to be avoided and the temptation is need to be something we deal with because we recognize that we are a family together beyond the nuclear family of marriage and beyond the nuclear family of marriage with kids we recognize that we are a family together beyond that and we need not to to move into self-sufficiency when we move into a different state of living maritally or otherwise yes there's changes of course there's changes and of course there's different perspectives and emphasis but we need to be aware that we don't simply then oh well I'm all right now I'm married and love your family that's great and ignore the realities of a wider family that we have responsibility for in

Christ what a great thing it is to be able to open our marriages and our families and our children to the whole church wonderful privilege that is God's pattern for us Adams aloneness it was the one thing that God said was not good about the creation that makes it hugely significant because we said the language here is very weighted it's very carefully chosen there's not a word wasted so we find in and then move on to the creation of Eve Adam is not good to be alone and so God creates for him Eve and I want to say two things about this I want to say firstly that they are created equal that's very important for all the misogynists in church humanity is created equal man and woman created equal in God's image we saw that in chapter one so God created man his own image in the image of God he created the male and female he created them they are created in God's image absolutely and completely equal but I'm going to go on to say they are also created different and that's what I want to finish with today they're created equal and they're created different so there's this great unity in the human race that Eve is God tells us is taken from man taken from sacrificially taken from his side and he's created so that there's the sameness of substance okay man comes from the dust so man and woman come as it's implied from the dust together they're the same stuff we're made the same stuff to put it theologically made the same stuff that's what God has made us made us together man and woman together and we come from this one this one family the humanity comes from this fan and biblically and theologically that's important as we wreck when we come to recognize Adam breaking trust with God and breaking his important representative role for humanity in how he falls away from God versus unity of the human race both reflecting God's image there's this whole idea as we've seen from God say it's not good that man is alone there's this whole picture and this whole image of neither being complete without the other that men and women together make up humanity man and woman together make up marriage at that level but at a wider level there's a complementarity between humanity and still a distinction but there is that great sense in which we need each other I'll go on to say a little bit more about that in the roles that we play and there may be significance it may be a little bit of spiritualizing but it may be that there is biblical significance in the fact that woman is taken out of the side out of the rib as it were of humanity out of mankind out of man of Adam not taken from his head to roll over him not taken from his feet to be subjugated to him but to be beside to be protected to protect and to be near his heart there's all these kind of images that we can potentially at least take out of this literary picture of the humanity of the creation of humanity but this born this basic equality is hugely significant and as I say that we look at it with slightly colored and skewed lenses because of sin and because of the distortion that sin has brought in to our lives and because of the way that it's been abused and mistreated by men and by women particularly sorry by men particularly and sorry and how that has happened throughout time there is and what I want to say is that there's a quote fundamental basic equality which is different from uniformity okay that's an important thing for us to understand especially in our church and in our tradition which has focused a lot on uniformity we've focused on uniformity of worship for example that everyone should do not to worship the same and we've possibly moved away from the beauty of what we have in diversity in Christ while retaining significant and important and fundamental principles that we never moved from we have moved our uniformity further down the line to second and third and fourth principles of secondary importance but uniformity being the same is not the same as equality we can be equal as I'll go on to say without being the same and I think that's significant there is no place and we need to fight against this because we're sinners there's no place for unbiblical discrimination for any domination or idea of domination particularly from men which has been the case over centuries stereotyping of roles in

an unhelpful way prejudice or as I mentioned earlier misogyny and I'm always focusing more on the men side of things because I'm a man I leave the woman to be aware of the dangers that they also face in rejecting the teaching of scripture so in the provision of Eve we are told that God creates these two in his own image incomplete without each other equally created before God but they're also created different they have a different fundamental name man and woman and they have a different role in life by nature women is different from a man now again we're coming into kind of fragile sensitive territory in the society and in thinking which we live and we need to think about that and be sensitive to it and be aware of it but we recognize and I hope we recognize that the the difference between men and women is not simply anatomical it's more than that it's not simply that we look different there is a physical difference there's a physiological difference there's a psychological difference there that we are different people we are different the way we're made up it's not just merely a physical difference between the two and we're not unisex at one at that level there is equality but there is also difference and that is how we were created that is part of the glory of humanity is there's not this kind of uniform mass of humanity but we're all unique yes and as sexes we're also unique different by nature by by our physical reality and even by the way we [28:18] think anyone who's married knows that any woman who's married to a man knows that any man who's married to a woman any woman who works with a man knows that any man who works with a woman knows that our sisters and brothers we know that we know we're different we know we think differently we've got different emphasis we have different attitudes we have different ways of thinking because that's how God made us with great complement adi but with a balance to one another both of which reflect God there's different aspects of God the great God reflected in humanity and men and women together which is why society is so important but there's also a difference in role and here I'm really moving into extremely difficult and dangerous territory we're told here that he was Adam was given a helper suitable for him and and that that language of helper is also very significant now for most people today that would be taken as a demeaning role as a man's gonna enjoy in George and he's naming the animals and the women's just there to kind of make the dinner and help them but that's not that's not the picture that we're given here and that's not what the word means it's not in any sense a negative or a negatively supporting role it's not a demeaning role in any sense whatsoever in fact it's used most often you know what it's used most often in the Bible it's used most often of God helping us that's what it's used most often that we need God that we need his help we need his strength we need his guidance we need his protection and that's the word that's used here of the woman who was given for the man that the man needed her there's a sense of the of joint need for one another and that she makes up what he lacks in a wide and in a humanity point of view insist to assist to encourage to help to be there to make up for his weakness to make up for his incompleteness in many ways it's not a weak term it's that whole recognition that equality doesn't mean uniformity doesn't mean the same thing it does imply leadership it does imply that role and it implies it here but it's taught clearly throughout the rest of scripture in marriage the leadership of the husband and also in the church the leadership of men in the church now that's a contentious and a difficult issue I recognize that but that is the pattern I can't say anything for society and work because the Bible doesn't really say much about that but but within a Christian content and I want to finish and bring bring it round to this to conclude with because we can only see in these areas marriage and of the church when we come under because of sin and because of redemption when we come under Christ and recognize Christ and see his picture and his willingness to restore what has been lost so this great sense in which God has appointed people with different roles of leadership of support of strength of delegated wisdom of knowledge and of partnership and of teamwork together and we recognize that and what I want to say about this is that leadership to speak to the men here men who are in church leadership or in marriage headed home at that level the leadership model we have is Jesus Christ okay just servant leader a servant leader who

washes the disciples feet I just want to leave it that and remember that that's so hugely significant and I want to remind the women similarly under Christ that Christ's head of the man and of humanity but God is the head of Christ and there's no there is no hint of subordination there in a negative way there's no inequality between God the Father Son and Holy Spirit even though God is the Father God is the head of the Son what we see is the Son willingly pouring himself out into humanity in order to be the redeemer and that's the model for the women also in marriage and in the church to be the one who recognizes equality as God was equal God the Father's equal God

the Son but also a recognition of God's model and God's pattern of leadership within the church and within marriage as being one that we pour ourselves into willingly because we recognize that's God's model and it becomes a partnership there's no place for dictatorial leadership there's no place for the oppression of human of men or which is so often been used isn't it and some so often the

Bible's been used as an excuse for that we must look through the prism of the cross and see the submission that Christ offered in order to redeem us and as leaders to see the submission of servant leadership and as as partners to see the submission to God's pattern within that and recognize that and so there's this picture of humanity this picture of God's pattern within the church within a Christian marriage and can I say that's why Christian marriage is so significant it's why it's important that Christians marry Christians not only because it's taught and commanded but because it makes sense doesn't it how hard is it in a marital relationship where one has Christ's Lord and the other doesn't how difficult is that how difficult must be every day when that's the case unless our priorities are completely different from Christ's how difficult is that he asks us to do that because he knows it's right and because we're taking his role and we're taking his pattern into our lives we're taking

Christ into our lives and it's where his Lordship comes in see if he's not our Lord then if we just come to church on a Sunday and leave again then it doesn't matter who we marry or what we do because he's not Lord of our lives he's Lord of possibly an hour and a Sunday morning but are we willing men and women together to submit to leaders and congregation together all of us together that's a great but it's a great battle of my life great fight I fight every day I'm submitted to Christ are you submit to Christ am I that's a great battle if it's every single moment of every day and do my will I'm do whatever else wants me to do or am I do what Christ wants so we have that role and that difference and we do also have the the core and fundamental teaching on marriage here for this reason a man will leave his father must be knighted away from the two will become one flesh Jesus reiterates that Matthew 19 and Paul does in Ephesians chapter 5 it's the first marriage it's the basic fundamental structure foundation of society it's not the only it's not the only expression of society but it is the fundamental and basic one both a physical union and a loving commitment marriage God's way between one man one woman controversial today but the legitimacy of sexual activity the legitimacy of joy and pleasure of commitment and a family to one another comes through this pattern that God is given that's all upside down of course it is absolutely but we recognize that that is God's pattern and we can only ever appreciate that when we see God nailed to a cross for our sins if that doesn't matter to you and none of this will either if his pattern of living and his moral structure for life is abhorrent then so I would imagine is Christ on the cross he is our only hope he's our only the only glasses through which we can see the truth have you been this have you been I am speaking for a from ignorance you have never been to see a 3d film I think there's a waste of money it's expensive enough going to cinema these days but going to 3d and wearing these ridiculous glass plastic specs it's something I'm not willing to do but I can imagine if you go into a 3d film and you don't wear the glasses because you're big stubborn like I am then you would have a pretty rotten experience of the film and everyone else alongside you were moving back and seeing things and then you'd be kind of sitting there and it'll be fuzzy and blurred and stupid that's exactly the truth about grace unless we are wearing the spectacles of grace scripture seems stupid because we need to see it through Jesus and through what he has done and through is it excruciatingly committed love that would set us free from the sin that separates us maybe you don't think yourself maybe particular as a sinner but can you see God's model and can you see God's purpose and can you see God's love you can't see these things it's because we need grace we need to submit to Jesus Christ and say to him I can't be in relationship with you again which I was created to be in unless I come through Jesus and through the fact that he died on the cross for my sins in order to make that way open and then we can look at things with the eyes of love that's why I think apologetics is so difficult to be effective I think it's important that we need to defend our faith we need to have an intelligent defense of our faith but it was difficult to it will never be the case we can argue people into the kingdom why because unless they see grace and the loveliness of Jesus they will never come through reason only and through mere intellectual argument we need to be the place where we will fall in our knees and say Lord Jesus Christ you made me and you made me out of dust and I'm not God and I'm not sovereign and I'm not my own king you are and you came to die set me free and to restore and redeem and buy back what was originally at the beginning so I hope maybe that helps a little bit I mean let's pray together Lord God

we ask and pray that you'd help us and guide us and bless us as we close our worship today for Jesus's sake amen