



## Eden Unwrapped – Genesis 2:4-25

"There are three things that are too amazing for me,  
 four that I do not understand:  
 the way of an eagle in the sky,  
 the way of a snake on a rock,  
 the way of a ship on the high seas,  
 and the way of a man with a maiden. **Proverbs 30:18-19**

Today we are focusing on the relationship between the man and the woman in the Garden.

### In Genesis 1-2 we saw the man was made for the service of God

**In Genesis 1** God has given the 'creation mandate'. Man is created in the image and likeness of God so he can rule over creation. Man is created male and female and so is able to procreate. We are not created sexless beings. Our sex ie whether we are man or woman is fundamental to who we are. Man is to 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it'. Be fruitful and multiply so there is enough humans to exercise responsible rule. We have children for the service of God. The Bible assumes married couples will have children.

#### 1. Woman is made to cooperate with the man in the service of God

**In Genesis 1 all is good.** Then Genesis 2:18 comes. Something is not good. This is something that is only fixed by the creation of a woman. Here we see that:-

#### **Woman is made to cooperate with the man in the service of God.**

If in 1:28 we had procreation as a cold calculated focused activity here we have a celebration of the passion of the desire and delight of sex.

This isn't just about loneliness. There are other answers to that issue. Marriage is just one of the possible remedies to loneliness.

The natural step when we hear Adam needs a *helper* is that it has to do with the task he has been given to do. Just in case you are a woman and feeling not so comfortable about being called a helper. This maybe because helper has connotations of a 'goffer'. Nearly every other time the Bible uses the same word it is describing God. God provides what is lacking in the one who needs help. So if to be a help is to be inferior then God is inferior to us. But in fact it doesn't teach this. It says that in some ways the women is stronger than the man and so is able to offer support. He needs someone to assist him as he can't do it alone.

Notice is says a *suitable* helper. There is one needed that is like him but is different. God brought all the animals before man. No suitable helper was found. He needs one who will compliment him. One who cannot be identical but something the same. Like 2 jigsaw pieces that cannot be identical to fit together. They have to match.

The way the women is made affirms this. She is made from the side of the man.

Matthew Henry says:-

*"Not made out of his head to rule over him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and hear his heart to be loved."*

#### 2. Marriage is for the service of God.

This is God's intention for our relationships. He wants us to focus on him and serve him.

The delight expressed by Adam in 2:23 is delight with a shared purpose, the hope of intimacy with a common goal and companionship in a task beyond the boundaries of the couple themselves. The purpose of the matching of the man and woman is not their mutual delight. It is that the woman will be helper the man needs to that together they will serve and watch.

This is all affected by the events of Genesis 3 known as the Fall. Adam and Eve reject God and so take themselves out from under God's rule. They are then banished from the Garden. The only way back is for man now to come back into relationship with God through Christ. Everything has been made subject to him. So to properly serve God we submit to Jesus. All things will be brought under him. Service now for all people and for marriage is to bring everything under the King Jesus. Everyone now needs rescuing. So Christian parents are to raise their children to give all their lives to serve Christ. Married couples should be committed to see their marriage promote the good news of rescue that can be found in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

'Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus' is one of the most popular relationships books of recent years. The subtitle sums up the world's approach to relationships – '**A practical guide to improving communication and getting what you want in relationships.**' Actually it sums up the world's approach to all of life.

The service of God is the main purpose of marriage. This does not exclude the three traditional purposes of marriage you hear at weddings. They are under the umbrella of the service of God.

**And for...**

**... procreation**

1:28 1<sup>st</sup> command of the Bible is to have sex. 'Be fruitful and increase in number. This is in the context of humanity being given the responsibility of dominion over the world. To take care of creation. To rule over it. To be stewards over it. Procreation makes that possible.

**...relational good**

Marriage does provide companionship . Which brings comfort, emotional support because of affirmation and acceptance the experience of unconditional love. There is no denying this.

**...the public good**

Marriage is the right relationship for the proper expression of the sexual desires. It is the right context in which to raise children.

If that is the why of marriage let's now look at the what of marriage.

### **3. Marriage is for life**

In 2:24 we have the Bible's definition of marriage. Marriage is exclusive. It means leaving mother and father. This means a decisive break. The main unit was the family. From the wedding day on it is the man and woman. The new husband and wife. Families don't always allow this. Or the husband and wife don't by always going back physically or emotionally. But the relationship with the parents is never meant to be the same again.

This has implications for everyone else as well. It is about 1 man and 1 woman. Forsaking all others. The expression '**one flesh**' suggests a deep unity. Not just in now living in the one place or emotionally, spiritually or mentally. Although those things are part of it.

Listen to what one commentator says:-

*It is the personal union of man and woman at all levels of their lives, which is expressed in and deepened through the sexual relationship.*

Sex is not just for reproduction it is part of the bond between husband and wife. It unites them physically but also more than that.

It is part of the glues that helps stick the relationship together.

In the film **Vanilla Sky** the characters played by Cameron Diaz and Tom Cruise are together for a brief period before he begins to distance himself from her. She tries to hold on to him, saying, '**When you have sex with someone your body makes promises even if you don't.**'

Sex is not a bodily transaction without significance. It is saying with your body what you think in your mind. You should not let your body say something if you are not prepared to say with your whole life.

Sex is a powerful thing. This is why it say on Song of Songs 2:7 do not awaken love before its time.

This is why it is so hard when people who are having sex outside of marriage to end the relationship. It is why even after your relationship has ended that it hasn't ended. This is why sex is only for the marriage relationship. Outside of it is damaging.

We see in Genesis 2:25 Adam and Eve are in perfect relationship.

Their complete nakedness reflects how their relationship was one of total openness and vulnerability with one another. They had nothing to hide.

No mistrust, no abuse, no taking advantage, no secrets.

Marriage is not just a human contract. God is a party in this contract. He joins the man and woman together and wants them to stay together.

This is not the culture or thinking of our world.

According to a Times magazine article of 1995 a jeweller in the USA has begun offering wedding rings for hire. Rent is paid weekly; if the couple survive the first year of marriage they are sent a message of congratulations and the rings become theirs to keep.

One advertisement captions sums it up 'Statistically people change their marriage partner before they change their Miele washing machine.'

You might say what about divorce?

The Bible does talk about divorce but we that if for another time. Speak to me afterwards.

Genesis and Jesus says that divorce is highly unnatural and marriage is to be for life. This is very much out of tune with our cultures view today. Our culture says instead of working at the marriage relationship it is better to break up. Or live together even to trial marriage. But you can't trial marriage as marriage is a lifelong commitment. The statistics actually reflect that those who trial marriage are more likely to break up.

Jesus words are strong. There is no reason to give up.

If you have failed in this area remember what the Gospel is about. It is about people who are sinners. People who have failed coming to Jesus and asking for forgiveness. Repenting and moving on. God accepts us as we are. As the songs says:- "My sin, not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more."

#### **4. Marriage is patterned on the marriage of Christ and his church**

Ephesians 5 in quoting Genesis 2:24 says in verse 32 *"This is a profound mystery but I am talking about Christ and the church."*

Human marriage is modelled on the fundamental relationship of Christ and his people. It is patterned on this relationship.

The heart of marriage model is **faithfulness**.

God has made a promise and he will keep it.

God is faithful to his promise to save and keep his people. So marriage is about faithfulness. Except there are 2 promises. The man to the woman and the woman to the man. It is not saying 'I do' and the wedding day but 'I will.' I will be faithful to the promise I make this day.

The Bible ends with a Marriage.

#### **So for those...**

##### **...Who are not married.**

But would like to be marry it is important to keep thinking through what is marriage and so who would make a good wife or husband. It is someone who will help you serve God better? In terms of Ephesians for the men finding a woman you can lay down your life for. And for the woman someone you can respect and submit to because of their godliness.

You may find being single hard. I read where a bloke said that they were single by choice. The women's choice. Singleness and marriage are good so remain faithful to God.

##### **...Who are married.**

Keep working at your at your marriage even when you have hard times. Keep serving God by making Christ known the focus of your marriage. Husbands are to lead their wives in their service of God. So are you doing this? Wives are to support their husbands in this. Making it easy to read the Bible and pray together.

If at the moment you are now feeling like a big sledgehammer has come down on your heart because of your failure in any of these areas remember the message of the Gospel. The good news of Jesus expressed by Jerry Bridges.

*"Everyday of our Christian experience should be a day of relation to God on the basis of His grace alone. Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."*