Ben Libby

Sermon

October 10th, 20th Sunday after Pentecost

To the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the One who is, who was, and is to come, to Him be glory forever amen. (Rev 1:8 NKJ)

Our sermon text for this Sunday is taken from Genesis, chapter 2, beginning with verse 18:

**The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is a suitable partner for him.” 19 Out of the soil the LORD God had formed every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called every living creature, that became its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal, but for Adam no helper was found who was a suitable partner for him.**

This is the Word of the LORD!!!

Mercy, Grace, and peace are yours through your God and Father, and through His Son, Jesus Christ, true God and Man, dear fellow Sons and Daughters of the King...

Our sermon text this morning is the tail end of the second chapter of Genesis. In these first 2 chapters of Holy Scripture, it is the account of how God created everything. His creation is a referendum of what God deems to be good. When He saw the light that He created, he declared it to be good. When He saw the dry ground which He called earth was separated from the waters which He called seas, He declared that it too was good. Same with the grass, the trees, the day and night, the sea and bird creatures, the livestock, the beasts, the insects, and finally mankind. It was all declared to be “GOOD”. When God calls something “good”, it is not an opinion.

But here, in Genesis 2:18, we have the first instance of something being “not good”. What was the first thing which was determined not good? **“It is not good for the man to be alone.”** God sets up all of creation. But He doesn’t create for nothing. He created the world for the benefit of man. He shares it. He also knows that it is not enough for man just to have it all. Man also needs to share it as well. What good is it to have it all, and have no one to share it all with?

We need others. It is not good to be alone. This is why marriage was instituted. But it’s a truth that also goes beyond marriage. You don’t have to be married to see that it’s not good to be alone. We benefit from society. Both instincts are inside of us. Sometimes all we want is to be left alone. But, at the end of the day, we don’t really want to be alone. Loneliness is not good. God declares it to be so.

This text is often used in a wedding setting. But it’s also true just in general. It is not good to be alone. Our giver God knows this to be true. That is what creation is all about. But He also gives us an opportunity to experience it for ourselves. God being who He is, never leaves us alone. We can choose to be alone. That is our choice. But it’s not good. He never leaves us all alone. He lets us see this, He provides a Helper who is a suitable partner, and He does more than simply “help”. And so, we pray: MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER. amen!

Genesis chapter 2 is interesting. It is the first ever “flash back”. In Genesis 1, He creates everything. On the Sixth day, He creates mankind, both male and female, in His Holy image. Nothing else is created this way. He orders us to be fruitful and have dominion over everything that moves on the earth. To eat of the herb and fruit that He created. He created earth and life, and mankind is the crowning achievement of all creation, and what creation was created for.

But this second chapter reveals just how He created this life. He brings all created life before the Man that He created specially, Adam, and has him review it all and name it all. **19 Out of the soil the LORD God had formed every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called every living creature, that became its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal, but for Adam no helper was found who was a suitable partner for him.**

God specially created Adam by himself. He has all of creation come before him for inspection. He sees all these creatures and their counterparts. But Adam had no such partner. God had already determined it wasn’t good for man to be alone. But He also wants Adam to know it. Then God creates the last piece of creation: The woman. She is created in a special fashion, just like man is. Man was formed from the dust of the ground, and then God breathed into him the breath of life. Then, once this man has seen all of creation, God caused a deep sleep to come upon him. As he slept, the LORD took one of his ribs, and out of that rib he created Eve, and when Adam awoke the LORD presented her to him. **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." (Gen 2:23 NKJ)**

When you think about the word “side-kick” what do you think about? For me, I think about superheroes. The sidekick is a classic trope for any good hero. You have the main hero, and then you have his tag along who helps out. Every good Batman has his Robin.

But even though the woman is created out of man’s side, she is not just his “sidekick”. The sidekick isn’t as important, it is a minor role. Woman has a much different relationship. Eve wasn’t Adam’s sidekick. She is described by God in our text as **a helper who is a suitable partner.**

Let’s talk about those 2 words. Helper. Is the term “helper” demeaning? No! Not at all. Last week in our Old Testament text, we are told about Joshua, the Son of Nun, who was a helper to Moses. It is the same Hebrew word in Numbers 11. It’s translated as “assistant” or “attendant” there. What happened after Moses died? Joshua takes over for him. Or, what about in the New Testament? Jesus told the disciples what would happen after He ascended, **"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (Joh 16:7 NKJ)** Who is this Helper sent to us? It is the HOLY SPIRIT!!! If the Holy Spirit, God Himself, is described as HELPER, how could that be a demeaning term?

Let’s talk about the word “Partner”. Unfortunately, that term has taken on a certain connotation. Usually, when someone talks about their “Partner” nowadays, it raises the Christian eyebrow. It’s a term that is commonly used in a homosexual context. It’s unfortunate because that is exactly what the Husband and Wife are to each other. They are partners. In a business context, a partner isn’t inequal. They are the same. If you have a law firm, there are usually a couple of different partners. That is, they are at the top together. The firm belongs to all of them. They are equals, partners.

Initially, man had no partner. He had a Creator, God. He had creation, which God gave him dominion over. But he had no one to partner with, no one to share in his duties, no one to support him, no one who he could help and support. He was alone. It was not good. SO, God created a partner, a helper, a woman. But there was an order to it. God wanted man to see what He saw. It was not good to be partnerless, helpless. So, He built him a suitable partner. This was a great thing, and it was a solution to the first thing that was ever declared to be “not good”.

And then what happened? Man found out the difference between good and evil by eating of the fruit of that tree. We fell from grace into sin. God had created man and woman. They were no longer alone. But they listened to the lies of the serpent, and then together they truly became alone. They had separated themselves from their Holy God by sinning. God declares “being alone” to not be good. But this is what sin does to us. It makes us alone from our God.

Have you ever heard someone tell you, maybe even yell at you, “Just leave me alone!!!”? Usually when that happens, there is sin involved. Someone hurts someone else, and they want to be alone. Or our children might shout this in rebellious anger. Sometimes, we as parents know that this is a good form of punishment. “Go to your room and think about what you have done!” Loneliness can be a form of refuge, or it can be punishment to know what I have done is now the reason I am by myself.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to hide from God. They thought there would be solace in this. There was only shame and guilt. God came to them, and the blame game started, which we continue to perpetuate throughout time. But God promised a solution after the fall. **And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel. (Gen 3:15 NKJ)**

God promised us Salvation. We would not be left alone. He promised that the Seed of the Woman would crush the serpent’s head. The offspring of the woman would do battle with the offspring of Satan. That Seed of the woman would be bruised, He would experience wounding. But where He would merely be bruised, He would inflict the greater blow. We, by faith know this to be talking about Jesus dying on the cross. He was bruised because of our sins. But He would destroy sin, death, and the devil by dying and rising again.

It was not good for man to be alone. God declared this before we even fell into sin, but after sin it became even more apparent. We are born dead in our trespasses and sins. There is nothing we could ever do about our fatal flaw. But our God does not leave us all alone. Left all alone, to our own devices, sin begets more sin. But God intercedes. He steps in. Not only does He step in and intercede, He became flesh and blood. Jesus is this Seed of the woman. He was both true Man and true God. Through Jesus, we are not left alone.

But He was. God says here that it’s not good to be alone. This was something that our Savior Jesus experienced firsthand. He had companions, but when the rubber hit the road, they abandoned Him. In His most desperate hour, He faced it alone. He cried out on the cross, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” For us to not be alone, He had to be.

When God first declared, **“It is not good for the man to be alone.”**,He was talking about marriage. But it’s also true about our state spiritually. That is why our relationship as the church to our Savior Christ is often pictured as a marriage. **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27 NKJ)** Christ is the husband who is fit for us. He isn’t fit for us because we deserve Him, rather He is fit for us because He loves us unconditionally, and He is the perfection we could never be.

**The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is a suitable partner for him.”**

God makes woman for man. There are many doctrines from these passages that the world would question. It is God who institutes marriage. In every culture, there is always marriage. It is something that is built into us. But then we come along and want to change what marriage is and who is able to be married to whom. God meant marriage to be between 1 man and 1 woman. Saying that this is an absolute truth will get the world mad at you. But it’s a natural fact.

Also, God created woman differently from man. This will also anger people. But it’s so true. Men and women are different. We have different bodies and different chemicals in our bodies. We are meant to be partners. That doesn’t mean that everyone is meant to be married. Paul thought it was better to serve the LORD when not married. But if we are to be married, it is to be 1 man and 1 woman. When there is someone missing from that marriage equation, something will be lacking. Help will be missed.

But there is no such thing as a perfect marriage. If you are married, then you know. The problem that was so formative in that first marriage is still the case today. We are all sinful. When a man and woman decide that they will be married, they are agreeing to live their lives together “in sickness and health, until death us do part”. What this means is that the longer you spend married to someone, the more you will sin against your spouse. Yes, you love them. But the more time spent with anyone, the more you will sin against them.

So what keeps a marriage together? Jesus talked about this in our Gospel reading. The Pharisees asked about divorce. But what often gets lost is the fact that they were talking about divorce for any reason. They interrupted that a man could issue a certificate of divorce for any reason. The Bible tells what an appropriate reason for divorce is and what isn’t. You don’t divorce your wife because she said something unkind. You don’t divorce your husband because he said he would fix the screen door and didn’t. That’s just a Tuesday. Sexual immorality and malicious desertion are different matters.

What keeps marriage together? Is it determined and committed people? Is it a respectful wife and a loving husband? Those people don’t exist. Not by themselves. They require help. They require a HELPER! Solomon wrote: **Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 12** **Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecc 4:9, 12 NKJ)**

There is such a thing as a perfect marriage. It is founded upon the perfect love of Christ! There is no perfect marriage just between 2 people, because those 2 people are sinners. But, when that marriage has the perfect cord of the love of Christ as the foundation, it is perfect. Sure, we screw up and fail daily. But, when you have the perfect, sacrificial love of Jesus as the core of your relationship, that is the marriage that can get through anything.

No matter who you are, single or married, divorced or remarried, you have a perfect marriage. You are the glorious bride of Christ. We go after other lovers, idols of this world. But He redeems us by His holy blood. We can choose to be alone. We can choose to live this life devoid of Christ. That is a lonely existence that end in eternally loneliness in hell. But it is not good for man to be alone, and Jesus died to make sure that we do not have to!!!

Man was created not to be alone. We experience this not just in our earthly marriages, but our spiritual ones. That is what our fellowship here is. We gather together every Sunday to see what God has done for us by His Son and to offer Him our thanks and praise. We see for ourselves, just like Adam did on that sixth day, that we need someone. And God gives us His companionship and salvation. We are not alone, hiding and shaking in our sins. No! We are brought together as His holy bride bought by His holy blood.

We often want to be left alone. But we cannot make it on our own. We never could. It is not good for man to be alone. God gives us His Son, and we are made partners of His Kingdom and partakers of His flesh and blood. We are no longer destined to die alone. No, we will live together with Him here on this earth, and on that new earth when we once more regain His Holy Image. All praise and thanks be to Jesus Christ, our heavenly groom, who will never leave us alone, but will take us to our heavenly home with Him forever! AMEN!!!