

Immanuel Lutheran Mail Ministry



Genesis 2:18-25 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." If there's anything that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, it's the truth of those words. At the beginning of last year's quarantine, initially it seemed like many people were excited by the prospect of being alone. Work from home, stay at home, don't have to interact with other people, 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 go back out, to be with people, to resume their relationships with other human beings. So, I think we've all come to agreement on this, that, **"It is not good that the man should be alone."**

And yet, we might not *always* agree with that statement. Has anyone ever taken part in a group project in school before? How easy it was to think, "You know what, instead of having to rely on all these other people, it would be a whole lot easier if I could just do this by myself." Or, frequently, if I have to run quick to the grocery store, my boys will ask if they can come with me. Well, the thought of having to load the three kids in the car, get them all out and into a cart, grabbing things, touching things—in those times, the thought is: "It is *good* to be alone." You see, we have this tension, we're created for community, and yet there are so many times when we'd much rather just be alone.

Now, if we were to ask Jesus what being alone is like, what might His answer be? He might say that being alone is teaching God's truth and having people literally turning away, 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 going out to betray you. Jesus might say that being alone is having a mob coming after you and your close friends deserting you. Jesus might say that being alone is hanging on a cross with only two others there around you while still more are hurling insults at you. Jesus might even say that being alone is having your Father taking His presence from you, and the only cry that you can have, **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"** (Matthew 27:46) That is what it means to really be alone. Jesus was all alone.

Now, you've never experienced that, so you've never *really* been alone. Jesus underwent what He did so that you could have the promise that you are indeed never 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. And so, 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. “I don’t need a piece of paper to tell me how I feel about someone.” And while the government regulates marriage for us today, marriage is a God-given institution. In fact, if you think about it, the text here today takes place on the sixth day of creation. By this point, just about everything has been created that would be created: light, water, land, the sun, moon, stars, fish, birds, animals, and 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.”** (cf. 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 not being 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 inhabiting them. The land was very good, but without mankind and land animals the earth would be incomplete. And God made man 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 it. 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 simply just creating woman immediately, He leads Adam to understand for himself first 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. 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.”**

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, but I’m all alone?” Here, God shows that wonderful Fatherly care that recognizes what Adam needs long before he does, but then He arranges events that allow Adam to come to that same conclusion for himself. And isn’t that 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 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.

That’s exactly what God does with Adam. Adam realizes that there’s not a helper, not a 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. ²² 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! That was how God intended this companionship to be!

And what a blessing it 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, Therefore, 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 for them to hide from one another! No semblance of guilt, no need to cover anything up, no desire to hide anything from one another! It was the perfect marriage, the perfect form of human companionship.

Of course, we know the rest of the story, don’t we? In just a short time, the man who exclaimed, ***“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,”*** would then be saying, ***“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”*** (Genesis 3:12) That perfect relationship—shattered by sin. And now, we have been given human companions—spouses, children, parents, friends—and we hide, and we blame, and we grow envious, and we often want to be left alone. And we deserve to be left all alone. For, when you cut through the façade of how we present ourselves to our human companions, we find the sickening reality that our number one priority is often we ourselves, and what we want, and the way we think things ought to be. We take a perfect creation like marriage and spit on it with our desire to rule over one another, with our lust, with our dissatisfaction, with our resentment, with our bitterness. **It Is Not Good that Man Should Be Alone, therefore, God provides human companionship,** 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 has never left us alone. Instead, **God divine companionship** for us as well.

You know, there are a lot of illustrations that God uses frequently throughout Scripture to describe His relationship to us. He describes us as the sheep, and He as our ever-watchful shepherd. He describes us as His children, He our loving Father. But another illustration that God comes back to again and again with some frequency 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, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ 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 Christ Jesus, we have been presented before Him as His pure bride, without any faithlessness or sin to stain us. Or consider in the book of Revelation, where the angel speaks to the Apostle John and says, ***“Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb,”*** (speaking about Jesus) and then he shows John the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, inhabited by those who ***“are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*** (Revelation 21:9ff) Having been declared God’s own special people at your baptism, brought into His church, you are now identified as that prized bride of Christ! Or one of my favorite sections of Scripture, from the Prophet Isaiah, ***“As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”*** (Isaiah 62:5) Just as special as that 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! As hard as that is to believe, God Himself declares it to be so, through 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 that. Jesus, the one referred to in Scripture as the Second Adam, He 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 on you for the forgiveness of all of your sins, you are now presented as the truly perfect bride of your Savior! Jesus was the one who left His Father and his mother there on the cross, His Father turned away from Him, His mother there at the foot of the cross as He hands her off to His disciple John, and shortly after, He breathes His last. All so that He could be joined with you.

How often do young people fret and wonder about the future, wondering if they're ever going to find someone who will marry them, wondering if they'll ever find someone who will love them before all others! Fret no more. For each of you, married or unmarried, have found eternal companionship in God your Savior. This is a marriage insoluble, for when Christ made those marriage vows to you, to be your God and you be His people, there would nothing that could change that. Even when we prove ourselves to be a faithless bride, God declares as He did to the Prophet Jeremiah, ***"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."*** (Jeremiah 31:3)

That's God's, "I do." "I do." Just three little letters, just two little words. How easy it is to speak the words, "I do." They're spoken every day in our country. In just 2020 alone, there were 1,267,877 weddings performed. An average of 3,464 times per day last year that those words were spoken: "I do." Easy to say, much harder to live. Spoken in the blink of an eye, and yet, in that moment the whole landscape of life unfolds the challenge of serving one another in love, sharing in delight, sustaining peace and unity. All of this, encapsulated in two little words. "I do."

"I do," means, "I do know trials will come, but together we will apply that healing balm in the tender words of forgiveness spoken to one another." "I do," means, "I do understand that my own fear, both of failure and of the future, will tempt me to hold back or even lash out in anger, but I ask you to walk with me graciously forgiving one another." "I do," means, "I do want your love, and I ask Jesus to help me faithfully give you mine."

There's a lot packed into 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, how quickly those two little words are forgotten as daily disappointment and strife turns 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 do us part." Well, that's the same pledge that God has given each of you. God says to you, ***"I will. . . never leave you nor forsake you."*** (Hebrews 13:5) Because of that, none of us have ever been alone. ***"It is not good that the man should be alone,"*** God said, therefore He's provided all us with human companions, some of us in the form of marriage. But He's provided every one of us, without variance, with the divine companionship together with Himself, a union which even death will not separate. 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.

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