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THE FIRST “LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT”

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We have a number of folks in here who have been married more than fifty years. I have a question for you today: Do you remember the first time you met your spouse-to-be? Some of you may have sort of grown up together as children, and that may make it difficult to remember the first time you met that special someone. Others of you no doubt recall well those early days or moments, the time when you felt that special burning desire well up inside you. We might look back now and call it “puppy love,” realizing that our love has deepened and strengthened in ways that would have been unimaginable to us at the time, but we remember those feelings. You wanted to spend every moment with that special someone, and find out all about her.

I think I was in first or second grade at the time. There was a girl named Rachel in my class, and one day she wanted me to sit by her at lunch. That was a big, big deal. I thought, “Well, this girl is nice. I kind of like her.” After lunch came recess, and every day almost all of the boys would chase one of our classmates around the playground and really make that boy miserable. For some reason, that day happened to be *my* day. When the boys had finished thrashing me, they called Rachel over. I remember I was on a piece of playground equipment with a very wide slide on one side. Rachel came over and kicked me down the slide--*and love was dead.*

I do believe in love at first sight, though. In fact, we read about the very first episode of it right here in Genesis chapter 2. Before we talk about first love, we should also discuss man’s continuing education on this first day of his existence.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

The sixth day has been a very busy day so far. God formed the land animals first, according to Genesis 1:24-25; then He made man; then he made the garden and put man in it, and gave man instructions regarding the garden and the one fruit he was not to eat. The day is wearing on, but God is not yet finished. His work is incomplete. The work of the sixth day is not yet ready to be declared “good.” In fact, God here remarks that it is “not good” that man should be alone. God, in His wisdom, has known from eternity that man would need a suitable mate; and He has planned to make Adam’s companion in a way that would be meaningful to Adam and would also carry rich symbolism for us.

Verse 18 seems to imply that God revealed to Adam something along these lines: “You are alone, but I do not intend to leave you that way.” But before God brought about the solution, he wanted man to see the issue in more depth. We turn now to verses 19-20:

And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

There has been an allegation that these verses contradict chapter 1, in that in chapter 1 God made the animals, then man; but here in chapter 2, God made man and then the animals. Furthermore, the allegation is that God sort of bumbled along, making animals by trial and error as companions for Adam, and finally giving up on that method. Neither of these allegations are true.

First of all, there is a slight translational issue for us. Some Bibles translate *formed* as *had formed*, which is actually a more appropriate translation. Notwithstanding that, the first part of verse 19 is really something of a throwback anyway. It relates to work that God had already done. Henry Morris puts it this way: “When this point is reached in the narrative, verse 19 merely calls attention to the fact that God was the one who formed the animals and that their bodies had been formed of the ‘ground,’ even as Adam’s body had been formed from the dust of the ground.”¹

We must also keep in mind the perspective of chapter 2: it is written from man’s point of view, showing his relationship to God and to the natural world. The writer is not emphasizing the order of creation, but something else entirely. He is showing that God brought the animals to man for two very important reasons. First, Adam was to have dominion over them, and in ancient times the naming of someone or something showed rulership. Adam had rights and responsibilities to the animals. Recall Genesis 1:28:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The first purpose in showing man the animals, then, was to introduce ruler to subjects; but there is a deeper meaning that is spelled out in verse 18. God was showing man that none of the animals were similar to Adam. He had no kinship with them, nor was companionship with them possible. Even though all were made from the same material, the dust of the ground, man and the animals were completely distinct. Man did not evolve from animals. God was making it expressly clear that man is an entirely different creature.

Another argument leveled against this passage is that Adam could not possibly have named all the animals in such a short span of time. After all, there are millions of species, right? Actually, we must keep in mind that things then were not the same as now. Today we see many variations, or sub-species, of the original kinds that God created. There are who-knows-how-many varieties of dogs, including the wild dogs; but in the beginning, God made the original dog kind. The same holds true for variations of all the species we find today. The ability to sub-divide for adaptation was programmed into the original kinds. Interestingly enough, each subdivision represents a loss of original genetic programming, not an increase; so the fact that we find so many species today is an evidence that the Bible is true. Evolutionary Darwinism is often touted as the reason that animal species adapt to different environments, but that is actually not evolution. It is a loss of information, not a gain. Furthermore, it shows incredible design of an all-knowing Designer capable of putting into place programming that allows species to adapt to new environments. But the point from this passage is that there were not nearly as many kinds then as there are now. Of the kinds that God made, only certain of those were brought to Adam to be named. Some categories from Genesis chapter 1 were left out of this naming process on the first day--the creeping things, the beasts of the earth, and the fish of the sea. The animals that were named were apparently the ones that lived in proximity to man: the cattle (which is probably all domestic animals), the birds, and the beasts of the field--that is, animals that would have lived near man’s home and work areas. I suspect the beasts of the earth from Genesis 1 would include other animals that generally do not live near man. Dr. Morris estimates that Adam could have named three

1 Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 96-97.

thousand animals in about five hours, which seems to be a reasonable number and a reasonable portion of the day.²

Creation cannot be called “very good” or even “good” while man is alone. Man needs a companion. The KJV uses the words “help meet” which is an old way of saying *suitable* or *appropriate*. Man needed a suitable companion before creation could be completed.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

This is a unique act of creation. God must have had some distinct purpose for creating Eve from Adam’s side rather than from the dust of the ground, as he did for all the animals and for man. The New Testament gives us some clues about this, and I intend to address them more fully next week, but it won’t hurt to mention them now. Adam, however, would have had no idea why God would work in this remarkable way. It seems that God did explain to Adam what He was about to do, or perhaps He explained after the fact what He had done, because the author of this passage knows what happened.

Adam was sensible of the fact that he needed a companion, a “help meet” for him; but he could not have imagined a way to get such a companion. God undertakes the task entirely to do for Adam what he could not do for himself. Adam’s part was simply to trust God, to sleep, which perhaps might have seemed a reason to doubt God. After all, Adam had come into consciousness just a few hours before; must he now surrender his consciousness? Yes, for God knew best. Adam had no part in the making of Eve except to leave the whole process to God.

Think about this: God put Adam to sleep, took a part from Adam’s side, and created a bride for Adam. What parallel do we see of this in the New Testament? Christ died; He was wounded in His side, after He was found to be dead; and from that death, and that wound, God fashioned Christ a bride, the Church. Does that sound a little far-fetched? It is not. The Bible calls Jesus “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” in Rev. 13:8. As I said, we’ll flesh this out more fully next week.

Even without the New Testament understanding, there is a rich symbolism here regarding the final, completing part of God’s entire creation, woman. To paraphrase the old commentator Matthew Henry, if man be the head of creation, then woman is the crown. It is also highly significant that God took the flesh from Adam’s side for the formation of the woman. I absolutely love what Matthew Henry has to say here:

The woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not made out of his head to rule over him; nor out of his feet to trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.³

I am going to stop here for just a moment and lay something to rest. I have heard within the last two years a preacher say that men have one fewer ribs than women. (Actually he said “one less rib,” but I digress.) This is the sort of thing that makes Christians look foolish. We tell children this sort of rubbish, then they go to school and find out that it’s not true. It destroys our credibility. Why would *all men* have one fewer ribs just because *one man* had some flesh removed? That’s ridiculous. Children do not inherit bodily scars or wounds from their parents! So this is an example of an argument we should

² Ibid., p. 97.

³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Vol. 1 (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1706, n.d.), p. 20.

never, ever use to “support” our belief in an historical creation.

Back to our material. Adam goes to sleep, and when he wakes up, he awakens to a glorious sight: the first woman, a companion suitable for him. Here it is: *the first love at first sight!* He also awakens to a glorious event: the world’s first wedding. God is her Father; and he brings her to the man. From time immemorial, fathers have given their daughters’ hand in marriage. It might even bring a tear to your eye to reflect on those moments in your own own life when you’ve heard those words, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” Make no mistake: this is the first wedding. The next few verses solidify our understanding of this as a wedding as well. In fact, the last verse calls the woman “his wife.” “It is significant that ethnologists and anthropologists find evidence that monogamous, permanent marriage has everywhere and in all ages been considered as the ideal and preferred form of family life.”⁴

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.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The woman was formed physically from the man’s flesh and bone; but she was able to communicate with him and be a companion to him because she also had a spirit like the man’s, created uniquely by God. Remember, Genesis 1:27 tells us, “Male and female, *created* He them.” The word *created* means to make from nothing. God *formed* the woman’s physical body but *created* her spirit. He created the man and the woman to be compatible and to work together as one. That is the idea of one flesh: they are one unit, a married unit, working together.

What we have here is the foundation of marriage. God instituted two things during the age of innocence, the time of pristine creation, which were part of what He declared to be “very good” at the conclusion of all His work: the work/rest cycle and the institution of marriage. Both are from this time of perfection.

If you want an example of God’s ideal for marriage, look right here. Marriage is between one man and one woman, joined together for life, and working for the same goals. Anything other than that is outside of God’s purpose for marriage. I want to emphasize that this is not hate speech in any form; this is simply an appraisal of what God instituted. The polygamy we find later in Scripture is never once condoned by God. In fact, it is always shown to be problematic. The Bible does specifically condemn all other sort of perversions of this marital institution.

Polygamy, concubinage, polyandry [more than one husband], easy divorce, adultery, promiscuity, and other distortions of the marriage covenant have permeated many cultures; but, as the Lord Jesus said: “From the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).⁵

This passage is the foundation of marriage. It is the authority Jesus used in His teachings on marriage:

He obviously regarded [this passage] as historical, not allegorical. Furthermore, He quoted in the same context from both of the first two chapters of Genesis. “Have ye not read,” He said, “that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female [quoting Genesis 1:27], And said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” [quoting Genesis 2:23, 24].... This is no light matter.⁶

4 Morris, p. 102.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 103.

This is huge! Jesus endorsed both traditional marriage and the historical account of creation. In fact, Jesus specifically referred to all of the areas of the Old Testament that skeptics doubt and dispute the most, but that's beside the point. Jesus endorsed marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman for life. That is God's ideal; we stray from it at our own peril. The sad thing is that the church in America is foundering in this area of marriage, and the divorce rate among Christians is as high now as it is among non-Christians. I think this is largely an unstoppable trend until God's people get it into their heads that these first chapters of Genesis are crucial to what we believe. Throw out the creation story, and you throw out marriage and a whole lot more.

Let's finish this chapter with a look at the last verse:

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

In the state of perfection, the man and the woman needed no clothes. Why do we need clothes now? There are a lot of people who think we don't, or so it would seem. And the clothes that many people wear now might not even really be considered clothing at all, if the purpose of clothing is to cover nakedness. Not only that, but Hollywood and television are constantly bombarding us with images of nudity and near-nudity. Pornography is a booming business. The answer to why we need clothing now is rooted in the reason that they did not need clothes then, and it is very simple: *sin distorts nudity*. That's the bottom line. There was no sin in this perfect world, but today we are all affected by sin and sinfulness. We are easily enticed by our eyes. It is of the utmost importance that we understand this fact, though, that sin distorts nudity. It is a shame that our young people, and even our older generations, have succumbed to the ideals of this world system. I have no interest in seeing an old man on the beach wearing a Speedo, or a woman at the grocery store letting her stomach hang over her waistband. I guess they think they're going to entice somebody. The world wants to entice and be enticed; our sinful flesh craves that. But it is a distortion, a perversion, of what God intended.

Next week we are going to go back into some issues relating to the beginnings of love, communication, and marriage, and the teachings of the whole Bible on these subjects. For today, let's remember that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman, who are distinct from the rest of creation but are companions for each other in a *life-long* relationship. Your marriage is sacred before God. Even though it may feel at times to be something less than a "match made in heaven," the idea of marriage was instituted by God for the good of mankind.