Gen. 2:18-25; Gen. 3:16; What is Woman I. Her Created State II. Her Glorious Calling

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what is woman? What does it mean to be a woman? This seemingly simple question is one that many cannot or refuse to answer. Matt Walsh made a name for himself by asking this very question on various college campuses. What is a woman? Although the media and even supreme court justices cannot answer this question, the Bible is very clear. A woman is female person who was created from Adam’s side. As we continue our series on our identity, we began by looking at humankind as the crown of creation. So if mankind is the crown of creation- woman is then the crown of humanity! It is the introduction of woman that bring the “not good for man to be alone” to the very good! Last time we looked at men- what does it mean to be a man of God. Men are called to be protectors and providers. They are lovingly lead as they bless those under their care. Next time we will consider marriage and what it means to be united in matrimony. This week we focus on woman and her calling. Jesus Christ created woman from man to be a blessed helper. To be clear, being a woman is not something that you can just decide to be. Lia Thomas, Dylan Mulvaney and Caitlyn Jenner notwithstanding- men cannot simply decide one day to be a woman. That is not fair or true- rather it is simply perverse and deceitful. Being a woman is a gift from God and it comes with unique opportunities and blessings.

**I. Her Created State**

In our first point, we will consider the created state of woman. Where did the first woman come from? Well, when we return to Gen. 2 we find that man- later called Adam- was created first. Man was made from the dust of the earth- but man was alone. It was not good for man to remain alone, so God in His grace declares that He is going to make a helper as 2:18 says. Only with the creation of woman can man dwell in community! In many ways- it is woman who brings the blessings of fellowship! So the first think we learn about woman is this- their gender is uniquely created to be a helper. Woman is called to be help meet- meaning that she is unique and specifically designed to empower and enable others. In other words, her very presence helps others achieve higher and greater goals. Woman will enable man to be better- to do and be more! Adam receives a helper so that he can do his work- no longer alone! So the woman helps to carry the load and bear the burden. She was created in response to the need that Adam had- created to follow his lead. To put it succinctly- woman was made to help man carry out his task. Now that does not mean that woman have no unique work- which she does. But the context for the creation of woman was the need and inability of man! Man’s loneliness is alleviated. In other words, the very presence of the female gender is proof that men cannot do everything all alone! The woman’s presence makes it clear that man needs helps! It is also clear that woman was created for a complementary calling. Man and woman were designed to work together- to help one another- to encourage and support one another. Male and female he created them as Gen. 1:27 puts it. Being complementary means that men and woman fit together- their gifts and talents fill in where the other is missing. Woman can do for man what no other creature can do- no other helper was found as 2:20 puts it. So woman is a unique helper within the context of humanity. She supports, encourages and empowers others with her supportive nurturing. She enables others to succeed! After revealing that there is no other creature like her- after showing Adam that no other animal can do this work of helping- the LORD created woman from the side of man. As 2:21 reveals, the LORD took a rib from Adam’s side and created the woman from Adam’s rib. So there is not only a complementary aspect but a dependent aspect here. As we will see, every other male child will be born of a woman. Ever man needs a mom in other words. But with the creation of the first woman, we find that she was made not only for man- she was made from man! She is dependent on man for her very existence! As it has often been said before, the location of Eve’s creation is one of closeness, comfort and protection. Woman was made from a rib of man- a rib from man’s side our passage said. His side is the place of protection- under the arm and close to the heart. Woman does not come from man’s foot- to be trampled upon. Nor does woman come from man’s head- to rule over. No- from man’s side woman will come. One again we see that man is called to love, cherish and protect his bride- caring for her as his own flesh. In fact, Adam will say the very same thing in v. 23- she is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. The woman is as my own body. Notice that the first woman was not made in distinction or separation from Adam. She was not a distinct creation made from different substance. Rather she is one with Adam. In this way, all of humanity is united. Eve is Adam’s first neighbor- one that he can love as himself. Both male and female are made in the image of God- created with one substance. Both are dignified and special. Sexist behavior that belittles either gender is forbidden as we consider this special creation! Woman comes from man- was made from his side- she is his own flesh and blood! And then, at the end of verse 23 we finally come to the naming of this first woman. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man. Notice children, that Eve’s first name was actually “woman”. This is a loving term- she is my woman. Literally in Hebrew it sounds even better- she is “isha” for she was taken out of “ish.” She is “from man”- a woman. Adam not only named all of the creatures- he names his bride- woman. It is made clear here that woman is different- distinct! She is from man in her creation- and she is distinct from man in her calling. So it should be evident- that women are different from men- and that is a good thing! What makes woman different from man is what makes them attractive to men! It is her difference that makes her lovely to her man. This difference is a designed, created difference! She is made to support and nurture- to be the very helper that man needs! The old saying that behind every great man is a great woman has some truth to it! We must never confuse these genders- or blur the line between man and woman. So within the church and the home, men are called to be the leaders and woman those who help. So what does this look like in the home? Well, men set the direction and woman help the family get there! Men set the goal and guidelines while women unfold the specific application. But, as you know, living with someone who is different is not always easy! Specifically, after the fall, this created difference become conflict and competition! One brief application for our young men- if you are looking for someone to date and marry- make sure that you look for someone who will encourage and support you! A helper who will enable you to grow in the faith and in your service.

**II. Her Glorious Calling**

So we move on in our second point to consider the glorious calling that woman has received. After the fall into sin, both the man and the woman’s work would become hard and cruel. As Gen. 3:16 unfolds. Remember that Adam’s labor in the field would now be painful and sweat filled. So it is for the woman, her labor would also be painful! I will multiply your pain in childbearing. Woman will only be able to bring forth children with much pain! Added to this, the strain and stress of raising these children will be greatly increased! To say this another way, the task of bearing and raising children becomes a lot harder! Pain, sorrow and tears will be seen in the birth and upbringing of little ones. Being a mom is going to be hard! But not only does the mother/ child relationship suffer- the husband/ wife relationship also suffers after the fall. As 3:18 continues, the wife’s desires will be against the husband. Instead of willingly submitting, the wife will be tempted to rebel! She will have to struggle against the desire to lord over her husband- to resist his leadership! She is going to want to rule- she will buck at headship. In other words, there is going to be conflict in the home and marriage! Instead of supporting her family and husband, the wife will be sinfully tempted to put her own interests first! Instead of going with her husband as a helper, she will stand opposed to her husband. This again is a consequence of the fall- selfishness. All of this is to say, woman was created to be in a complementary relationship but now she will be in conflict.

After all this, Adam gives his wife another new name. Before this point, woman was simply called woman. But after the fall and promise of punishment and death, Adam graciously renames his wife in 3:20. She shall now be called Eve- for she is the mother of all the living. Now this applies first of all to the bringing forth of children. Eve literally is the mother of all mankind except for Adam. The future of humanity will come from her womb. But more generally, Eve will be the mother of living. She will not only give birth- but she will be the mother of the home and the family! She will have the unique ability to bring life and prosperity to the home! We find an example of this in Prov. 31- where the godly wife brings blessings to the home in various ways. The godly woman of Prov. 31 is very industrious- she uses her skill both inside and outside of the home. She secures food and clothing for her family- makes wise investments- and is dressed with strength. Her children and husband call her blessed! So being a godly woman does not mean that your gifts and interests are suppressed- rather you use your gifts for the blessing of your family. It is this kind of woman who is acknowledged and praised- worthy of trust and more precious than jewels.

Creation gives us various examples of what it means to be a good mother. Like a mother hen with her chicks- where the hen hides the chicks under her wing for safety and protection. Wives and mothers are designed by God to be safe harbors and places of refuge. Our Lord even uses the love of a mother to illustrate His love. Isaiah 66:13 puts it like this- as one whom his mother comforts, you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. So mothers are know for being comforters- but it is our God who is the God of all comfort who comforts us in our distress as II Cor. 1 puts it. So the comforting and soothing that mothers bring is but a pale picture of the comfort that our God brings. Added to that, the very act of naming and marrying carries over into redemption as well. In Rev. 2:17 we find that those who are joined to Christ will receive a new name- and in Eph. 5 the church is called the bride of Christ! It is evident that even as we look at the creation of the woman- one who is named, loved and married- we find a picture of something that Jesus does for us His church. We are the bride of Christ- and as we saw 2 weeks ago- Jesus protects and provides for us as well. Yes- our marriages will be strained. Yes, men and women have conflict today. Yes- we suffer the consequences of the fall in our labor and in our work. But Jesus has overcome these and He is bringing us to a place that is much better and great!

As we close, identifying the differences in the Bible between men and women is not hard to do. Women are presented as more delicate- needing to be dealt with tenderly. Women are helpers- called to support, encourage and comfort! Where men tend to be driven by work, employment and goals; women tend to be driven by relationships and empathy. These differences bring balance; they are from God and they are good! The drive to care for others is a uniquely, God given blessing! God made men and women complementary- different but matching. Their gifts harmonize for the good of others. Jesus Christ created woman from man to be a blessed helper. So may the woman of the church take their place as nurturers who support others.