



Sermon – February 6, 2022
Phillip Bethancourt

Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 2:15 – 25

Genesis 1:27

Colossians 3:23-24

Ephesians 5:31 - 33

As you grabbing your seat, let's pick up our Bibles. We're heading back to Genesis chapter 2 this morning. If you are blessed by Ryan Fonseca leading us today, will you let him know that? Love having Ryan over from San Antonio with us. And if you're a guest for the first time with us, whether you're watching online or gathered in the room, welcome home. We come to the altar, we come to God's word every day, every Sunday, trusting He's going to change our lives by the power of His Holy Spirit. And as we gather today, the Lord is in our midst. And we're going to respond this morning through, not just the message but also through the partaking of the Lord's Supper. So if you haven't yet got your elements for that, during the response song, I want to invite you to make your way to the table and pick those up. And we will enjoy the Lord's Supper as that family meal together after the message is over. I also want you to know, during the response time, if you're ready to take a step towards membership here at Central, next weekend is our next New Member Workshop. So this is the perfect time to start that process to become a part of our faith family.

So think about what's happening here in Genesis 2. Genesis 2 is a bit like the opening ceremonies of the Bible. It's that first experience of God's people in God's place under God's rule. And we saw last week that as we began through the passage of Genesis 2, we saw God's design for the rest and for work. Now what we're going to see as we come to the end of this passage, is the calling that God places on our lives to live, starting with me, in verse 15 of chapter 2. Here's what it says:

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You shall surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die."

Let's pray together.

Father, we're coming to You now praying that You would have Your way among us. Lord, if there are people that are walking apart from Your design for their lives, Lord, would You call them in. Would You bring them back? Would You renew and refresh them? Lord, if there are people that are weary and heavy-laden, we pray that we would find rest in the Gospel. We pray that if there are marriages or families that are fractured and broken and on the, on the precipice of falling apart, Lord, we pray for Your healing power today. That You would set us free to walk in newness of life. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, just a couple weeks ago, we had the chance to host our men's retreat here at Central. And one of the things that we do each year at our men's retreat is take the participants through an exercise that's called, If Someone Really Knew Me. And the process goes like this. We pass out a card to each of these individual men and we challenge them anonymously to write down something in their life that others wouldn't know. That if they really knew them, knew them at their core, not just the mirage or the mask of themselves that they want people to see, but the true reality at the heart of who they are, what would they reveal? What would they make known? And so often we hear these men share on these cards about wounds, about hardships, pain, and difficulty. And as I was going back through those during the last few weeks, I was gripped by how many of them come at the heart of issues related to marriage and family. Now I just want you to hear what some of the men in our church wrote down anonymously on these cards just a few weeks ago here at our men's retreat. Here's some examples. If someone really knew me, they would know that I often lack confidence as a man, as a husband, and as a father. If someone really knew me, they would know that I have anxiety about my future. I struggle to keep God as my focus and I don't often go to Him. I wish my parents could have worked things out. They would know that I would fear not being a great dad. Others talked about their past. If someone really knew me, they would know how much I want my dad's love. Sometimes I feel alone in this world. They would know that I have been too passive leading my family. I struggle making time for God's word and for prayer. They would know that I never felt like I am good enough because my father left me and never tried contacting me. You can hear the pain showing up in the present today. So listen to some of these. If someone really knew me, they would know that my family is not the perfect loving Christian family that we appear to be. Our lack of confession and forgiveness is causing us to grow further apart. If someone really knew me, they would know that I actively have to work at not telling my wife how much I despise her for how she treats me. They would know that I'm a people pleaser. I'm selfish and sometimes resent my kids. I struggle with comparison and fear, not living up to my wife's expectations. If someone really knew me, they would know that I've always believed that God made a mistake with me. Those are not the words of people out there in the culture, in the community. Those are the words of people right here in this church right next to you in the row where you are seated. Can't you feel the pain, the hardship, the difficulty that comes in each one of those cards? Each one is different but there is a common thread, there is a common longing imbedded in each one of them. And it is a longing for faithfulness. A longing for steadfastness. A longing for all things to be made right and made new. And that's exactly what we see at the heart of Genesis chapter 2 this morning. That God is giving us this picture of what faithfulness should look like in the Christian life. And it comes here right before the fall into sin. It reminds me of that line from the old TV character, Andy Bernard, who said one time, "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you actually left them." Adam and Eve are in the good old

days before sin enters into the world and fractures everything. And the picture of faithfulness that God gives to them has everything to do with the way that we live today. And you're going to see that this call to faithfulness in Genesis 2 gives to us this morning, plays out in at least two arenas. So if you'll look with me back at verse 15, you'll see first the call to pursue faithfulness in our daily lives. So remember what's happening here in Genesis 2. God zooms in on the 6th day. He talks about His creation of the world. He speaks about placing the man and the woman in the garden. And just before He brings Eve into the picture, He gives Adam instructions on what it looks like to live faithfully in his own life. So notice how that shows up in verse 15. You see how He calls Adam to pursue faithfulness in our work in light of God's calling. It says there that God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to keep it. So He puts him there for a purpose. And what's that purpose? You see it there in verse 15. To work and to keep. To cultivate and to keep. To guide and to guard. There are these twin pictures that are going on to take dominion over the creation. And those words, to work and to keep, show up later on in Scripture in the book of Numbers when Moses is speaking about the role of the priest. He uses those same terms to talk about the role of the priest in the temple. That they are to guard and to keep it. To work and to keep it. So the idea here is, here is Adam as the priest right there in the most holy place of God's temple, the Garden of Eden, working to cultivate and keep the ground. He calls him to a sense of faithfulness in that work. And I want you to notice the timing here. This call to faithfulness in work is not something that God gives after the fall of sin. It's not something where he says, "You know, now that things are going to be hard, now that there's sweat on your brow, now that there are thorns and thistles that will rise against you. Now you need to be faithful." Instead, this call to faithfulness is a part of God's good design for humanity in this world. It has everything to do with the way that you and I work those 9 to 5 jobs and love our families and invest in the next generation.

And what should that look like for us today? Well, see these words on the screen. Colossians 3, verses 23 and 24. Paul reminds us of what that should look like when he says:

²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

In other words, we remain faithful in our work when we remember who we are working for and why we are working. And so that means, no matter what situation that you face, God is calling you to faithfulness in your work. Even when the deal falls through, you are called to faithfulness. Even when the deadline changes, you are called to faithfulness. Even when the supply chain breaks down, you are called to faithfulness. Even when the test is more difficult than you expected, you are called to faithfulness. Even when your children are more resistant than you would desire, you are called to faithfulness. Even when the boss doesn't appreciate your work, you are called to faithfulness. In the same way that God calls Adam to work and to keep, He is doing the same thing for you and to me. Giving us this pattern of pursuing faithfulness in the work that God has given us. But notice the way the verses go on. Because it's not just about our work, it's also about our walk. The text here tells us to pursue our walk faithfully in light of God's commands. It's what we see in verse 16. Notice what this first command of the Bible is. You may surely eat of every tree of the garden. That's the first command. And notice, it is not a command about limits, but a command about liberty. God is giving him everything in the garden. It's like 24 hour pass to an all you can eat type of Golden

Corral situation in the Garden of Eden. If you see it, you can have it. You can enjoy it. It's right there in the text. There is a freedom that comes. And again, notice when this first command shows up. God doesn't start building rules for humanity once we enter into sin. Instead, those commands are part of His good design. They give us a sense of how we are to live in the world. And for Adam and Eve, there is a gift here. He gives them a freedom to enjoy the fruit of His creation. But with the liberty also comes limits. And you'll see that back in verse 17 when it says there:

¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,

So one tree in all the creation off limits, restricted. And so what we find here is in the commands of God in the way that we walk with God according to His commands, there are both freedom and fences. There is both liberty and limits in order to embrace God's design for our life. And there's a warning that's there too. Do you see it at the end of verse 17? It tells us that in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. There's this warning here that disobedience will lead to death, to our demise, our destruction. There is a command and a consequence given side by side. Why? To stir us up to pursue faithfulness in our walk with God. One of the things I love about raising four boys is you can often be surprised by the quality of questions they ask about God. I remember one of our boys that came home a few weeks ago and he said, "Dad, I was learning about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and it made me think about why did God create a tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What was that all about?" And it was at a moment where I wasn't really in that mode. We were about to have dinner or something like that. And I just want you parents to know, it's OK to do what I did and say, "Hey, let me get back to you on that. I need to study that some more." I don't know is an acceptable parenting answer at times. And I said, "Here's the good news. I'll be studying that passage in just a couple of weeks and when I get there, I'll be ready to give you the answer." So son, here it comes, and hopefully it helps everybody else. Why did God create the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, one thing we need to remember is the fact that everything that God created is good. This tree is not evil. It is not bad. But why did God create it? Remember what God has done for us. In the making of Adam and Eve, in the making of humanity, He has created men and women in His image with a responsibility, with a freedom to live according to His design and a responsibility to follow His way. And in the creation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, what's happening here is that God allows a test in the garden. So that mankind can demonstrate our commitment to Him. I love the way that one scholar put it. Here's the way that he described the answer to this question. God intended that through this tree humans would come to know good and evil either from above as masters of temptation or from below as slaves to sin. At the heart of this tree is the question, who gets to decide what's good and evil? And as Adam and Eve have that juice form the fruit dripping from their mouth, they turn away from God. They learn the knowledge of good and evil as slaves to sin and as a result of that, it ruptures the entire creation. That's why this text here is calling us to a faithfulness in our work and in our walk because we are seeking to honor God with our personal lives.

But I want you to notice now the way that the text goes on. Look down with me beginning in verse 18 and we'll see a second big idea emerge here. That God calls us to pursue faithfulness in our families. So notice how it begins there starting in verse 18.

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.” ¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the field. But for Adam there was not helper fit for him.

Now I want you to think about your family life right now. It’s a school year, it’s that academic time period. And if you were to look at your family life, the one you’re in right this moment, and if you were to give it a grade, what would you give your family on how you’re doing? Think about that for a minute. Where would it fall from an F to an A? Where would you place a grade for your family life at home right now? And then a follow-up question to think about as we move through this is: what would it take to make that an a? What would have to change? What would have to be different? How might you need to be more faithful to God’s design to live it out? And I want to challenge you through this week with your family or with your roommates or in a phone call back home that you talk about your answer. How would you grade yourself now? What would it take to make it an a? Because what we find here in Genesis 2 is that Moses is giving us the recipe for families who are faithful. And the challenge is, we come to this text and it almost can lose its force on us. It feels so familiar. You’ve heard it at just about every wedding you’ve ever been to. You’ve heard it preached a number of times. You know what’s going to take place and as a result of that, it can lose its force. But let’s not miss what God is doing here. Because what we find throughout this text is that it is painting a picture for what faithful families should look like. And you’re going to see that unfold in several different ways starting back in verse 18. We’re going to see the need for faithful families. So look at what it says. Where do we see that need? Right there in verse 18.

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.”

And as we’re working our way through Genesis 1 and 2, this text should stop us in our tracks. Why? Because as God creates, at each step we hear that it is good, it is good, it is good, it is good, it is very good. And now we get here to 2:18 and what do we see instead? What does it say? It is not good. To be clear, the text is not suggesting that there is something not good about God’s creation. Instead, what’s wrong, what’s not good is Adam’s experience of that creation. And why? Because there is a need that is not being met. There is something that is missing. And what is it? Look back at verse 18. A helper fit for him. So what does God do? God doesn’t just immediately meet that need. What we find in verses 19 and 20 is God shows Adam his need so that he can discover it for himself. He brings every animal from around there and Adam gives them a name. God has given him the authority to name those animals. You don’t have the ability to name something unless you have the authority to do so. You can image if a first time guest came walking in here this morning. Maybe that’s you. And afterwards you want to meet the pastor and just get to know me a little bit. And you walk up to me and say, “Hey there. Great to meet you. I’m so glad to visit the church. My name is Bill. It’s a pleasure to meet you.” And I look at you and I say to you, “Your name might have been Bill, but now your name is Jedediah. And that’s what you’re going to go by from here on out if you stay in this church.” My guess is if that’s my reaction to you, this is the last time you’re ever walking in the doors of Central, right? You’re thinking, “Who does this guy think he is?” Because I don’t have

the authority to give you a name. And what we find here with Adam is it demonstrates he has this authority over the created kingdom to give it a name. He gives name after name after name to animal after animal after animal. What we find at the end of verse 20 is this,

[But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.](#)

So Adam discovers the need that God already knew that he had. Don't you see that show up in your life all the time as well? That God knows the needs in your life, even before you recognize them. He fosters this need in his life. And the need that he is putting in front of Adam and to all of us is the need for faithful families. And what Adam recognized back then, that need for faithful families, we need to recognize and embrace today. Because think about it. We are living in a culture where marriage and the family is collapsing, aren't we? We see it all around us. We see the wreckage. We see the carnage. We see the effects. And how does that show up? What happens is people see this need, but what's happening is they're seeking to fulfill it and to find solutions for it in their own way. So for some, what that means is they meet the need for family by simply living together. They experience all the benefits of marriage without the commitment or the responsibilities. And ladies, if he's doing that with you, he's not worth it. Or maybe for others, what they're doing to fill this need in their life is by looking at marriage and saying, love it love. It doesn't matter who you marry, what gender they are, what faith tradition they are. All it is is about you being happy. They seek to meet that need that way. Or we see this epidemic of "no fault" divorce in our culture. And I don't want you to hear me say that all divorce is wrong. Of course, from Scripture we know that there are exceptions. And some of the most godly people are walking faithfully with God are carrying a broken heart from a prior divorce. But in our culture, so often we can embrace this pattern of seeing marriage not as a covenant to be kept but a contract out of convenience. That you can end it just as quickly as your Netflix account. That you can move on to the next one and you chase love in your own way and you seek to meet this need in your own design. And what happens as a result of that is the collapse of the family we're seeing all around us. Why does that happen? Why do we see so much pain in our families, in our culture? It's because satan hates marriage. The enemy hates the family. And the reason for that is because every marriage, every child, every baby that's crying over there in the preschool is a reminder to him that his time is short. That one day there will come a seed of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent bringing deliverance to the captives. And he rages against it. He fights against it because he knows the threat that it is. You see, God shows Adam the need for faithful families in order to set the stage for what's coming next. Look back with me now, verse 21, you're also going to see in this text the nature of faithful families. So here's how it says it:

[²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept He took one of his ribs and closed it up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then 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."](#)

So notice what's happening here. We see the nature of faithful families. And you'll see how that unfolds there beginning in verse 21. It's the very first surgery ever recorded in world history. There's even anesthesia involved. God causes the man to sleep. He opens up his side. He takes out the rib. He closes it up. He uses that rib to form him. And you'll notice at each

step in the text, verses 21 and 22, God's in the middle of all of it. He's the one that is right in the middle of giving the gift of the woman to the man. He's in the middle of giving the gift of marriage to the man and the woman. And he should be at the center of our families as well. That's what the nature of marriage is all about. And look at how He does it. He gives Adam a bride from his side. Opens up that flesh. He pulls out a rib. He closes it back up. And that's one of the many ways that this first Adam gives us a glimpse in anticipation of what God is going to do one day through Jesus, the second Adam. So think about it. When Jesus goes to the cross, He is not surrounded by the trees of the Garden of Eden; He is hung on a tree. He is not experiencing deep sleep. Instead, deep agony. But in the same way that God brings out a bride from the side of this first Adam. That same thing happens at Calvary. Because what God does is through the death of Jesus on that cross as He is pierced in the side for our transgressions, blood and water flow, mingling down, God is bringing forth a bride from His side. A church. A people. A community. In other words, the nature of this marriage we see here in Genesis 2 is pointing ahead to the coming of Christ in the way that God would give him a bride through the union that comes through our faith in Jesus. Notice who this union, this marriage, is between there in Genesis 2. Look back with me at verse 22. There are two different sexes, man and woman, involved. It says:

The rib that the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man.

So he speaks about man and woman. Now look a chapter back with me, Genesis 1:27. We looked at it a couple weeks ago. You'll see this same reality, speaking about two different genders. Here's what Genesis 1:27 says:

²⁷So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

So man and woman, male and female. God gives these two sexes, these two genders right here in the goodness of creation. We see this conversation about gender identity taking place all over our culture today, don't we? Whether that's a Jeopardy champion who just nearly set a record as the first transgender participant with the longest winning streak. Or maybe it's the, the person who is the first non-binary figure skater for the United States in the Olympics. Or right now, there's some controversy in collegiate athletics because someone who was born a man competed in male swimming at the collegiate level, has changed genders and is now setting records at the female level. We see all this talk about who we are in terms of our gender in terms of how God has made us. And maybe that's not just something out in the distance in the culture for you. Maybe you wrestle with that in your own heart today. Maybe you have someone close to you who struggles with clarity on how God made their body and why it feels like sometimes what they think in their mind and what they see in their body don't always match up. Well we shouldn't be surprised by that. The effect of the curse of sin hits everything. It disrupts everything about us including our own understanding of ourselves. But what we find here in the text is it could not be more clear that from the beginning, from God's good design, before the corruption of creation happens through our sin, God gives us two sexes; male and female. And God's design determines how we see ourselves. That's why we come alongside those who are wrestling with this, with love and compassion, but also with truth and with grace. And as it relates to marriage itself, he is giving us this window of male and female coming together as one

right here with Adam. And what should that relationship look like? Well, we see a glimpse into it all throughout chapter 2, but especially here in verse 23 if you'll notice what it says.

²³Then the man said, "This as last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

You see the way that he starts talking about her? That phrase at last. It's probably more like at last. Finally, animal after animal after animal, name after name after name, and she's here. You can sense the excitement. The thrill that's there. And what we find here as he speaks about this woman and as God establishes this relationship, He is giving us a picture of the way He has always intended the nature of marriage to function. And what we find here in Genesis 2:23 and throughout the entire Bible, especially in Genesis 2, is this picture that marriages reflect God's design, God's nature, for our one flesh union best when we see male leadership and female support. So think about how that plays out here in Genesis 2. Several different things show up. Think about just the order of creation. The man is made before the woman. Or think second about the order of accountability. That it is Adam in Genesis 2:15 who's the one given the commands in the garden. And when they fall into sin, even though Eve was the first one to eat of the fruit, Adam is the one first held accountable by God. Or think here about the role that the woman is designed to play. When you look back in 2:18 and it speaks about her being a helper fit for him. That word helper is this picture all throughout the Bible of someone who supports leadership, who serves them, who sets them up to succeed and to thrive. Or even here right in verse 23 in the naming of the woman. Now when it tells us there, she shall be called woman, just as Adam had authority over the creatures that he names, it shows there is a leadership over this woman as they step into marriage in the giving of this name. And that's not something to be ashamed of. Male leadership, female support, is not something to be embarrassed by or resisted. It is part of God's gift to us. It is a part of the picture that it is laying out here. But if we're going to embrace this rightly, we need to seek two key realities. One is that even though the man and the woman are equal in value, they are distinct in roles. The woman is not submitting to the man as if she is some inferior submitting to a superior. Instead, we see in the pattern of even Jesus Himself with God the Father. 1 Corinthians reminds us of the way that Jesus submits to the Father. And that's not inferior to superior; it is equal to equal. And that same reality is true in the home as well. But then beyond that, these distinct roles, you'll notice here, again are established before the corruption of creation. This is not just God trying to make do with the best He can in a broken world. He's not seeking to put a band aid or a structure to fix marriage after the fall. Instead, this is part of His gift to us. It is part of His design. It's not something to be minimized or dismissed. It's not something that's just old fashioned or traditional or stuffy or out of step with the culture. I'd rather our marriages be out of step with the culture than out of step with God. So what should this look like? What does it mean to embody a marriage where the husband is called to lead and the wife is called to support? I've got a friend that when he talks about this, says, oftentimes what people can hear when this is said, is it basically translates into a husband who needs some food and yells into the kitchen, "Woman, get me my chips!" Or maybe for the Christian men in the room it's, "Thou belovedest wife, please get me my chips and let's pray." But that's not the picture that this text is painting. It's something much more glorious than this. It's calling men to a servant leadership that leads, it provides, it protects for the sake of the family. The primary disposition is not selfishness, but sacrifice. And it calls the woman to support, to submit, to nurture, and to love, and to care. And her primary disposition is not one of skepticism, but support. When we see this pattern playing out here, what it doesn't

mean is that women are inferior to men. It doesn't mean that you men have a spiritual trump card on your wife the next time y'all have a disagreement. It doesn't mean, women, that you should follow him whenever following him would cause you to sin against God. It doesn't mean, women, that you can't work outside the home. We see the Proverbs 31 woman modeling that for us and embracing work outside the home and leading. You see all of these patterns here. But what it does mean at its heart is that your marriage will reflect God's design best when you have a health, functioning of this structure. And I want you to see why that's the case. Notice on the screens. Let's read from Ephesians chapter 5. This other familiar passage about marriage. Look at what it says here in verse 31. Why does God create the family with this nature? Well, what you'll find here is that Paul shows us as he quotes Genesis 2 what the answer to that question is. Here's what it says.

³¹Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

In other words, what Paul is showing us emerging out of Genesis 2 is that God has given marriage as a picture of the Gospel. That your marriage is a window through which people can see the relationship between Christ and the church. He quotes Genesis 2 and then directly applies it to Jesus and the church as he calls men to sacrificial love, as he calls women to that nurturing support. He is saying we get the chance to show off Jesus through our marriage. That's what the nature of marriage is all about here. But as work to a close, I just want you to notice one final thing in the text starting down in verse 24. You'll also see the way that Genesis 2 talks about the nurture of faithful families. Here's how it says it:

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and the wife were both naked and not ashamed.

What this text is reminding us of is it's not enough for our marriages and for our families just to have the right nature. They thrive best with the right nurture. And that nurture shows up in several ways. You'll see that we nurture faithful families through intentionality. That's what verse 24 is showing us when it calls us to leave and to cleave in the becoming of one flesh. And we might miss the significance of what this expectation is. I mean, remember back in that biblical time period. There was no dating apps for you to find the perfect match. There was no modern dating system where you could get to know them over a period of time. It was often an arranged marriage. There was no social safety net. No savings accounts. No inheritance like you and I might see today. And so when you leave one family and you cleave to someone you may hardly know, there is a risk going on. You are stepping out on faith. And for you to make that work, there must be intentionality, trust, a sense of purpose that's there. And that might feel totally different from us. Because back then it feels like you are walking into an unknown future with an unknown person. But let me tell you. Even today that's how most marriages are, aren't they? You thought you know your spouse before you said, "I do." And then you got back from the honeymoon and realized, "I've got a lot to learn." You married an unknown person. You thought you knew where your future was going but you found out God had different plans and you are walking into an unknown future. And the same way that Genesis 2 is calling Adam and Eve to a faithfulness in leaving and cleaving, it is calling us to that same faithfulness through an

intentionality. It doesn't go on autopilot, it doesn't go on cruise control, but seeks to honor God with the way that we pursue one another for the entire lifetime of our marriages. And that shows up, not just in intentionality but as verse 25 shows us, in intimacy. That's why it says there at the end of verse 24, they shall become one flesh and the man and his wife were naked and not ashamed. So there's not only this sense of intimacy between the two as they become one flesh with this sense of purity that as they give themselves to one another that the marriage bed is only intended to be experienced within the bounds of marriage. And why is it significant that we see that there? Because we know at the end of chapter 2, it's setting the stage for chapter 3 and the rebellion of Adam and Eve. And the next time we hear about nakedness in the Bible, it's not like this at all. Instead of being naked and unashamed, now after sin, Adam and Eve are naked and ashamed. That that sin, that guilt, that weight comes crushing down upon them and they are seeking to be set free from it. Find a deliverance. Hiding themselves behind fig leaves. And every one of us knows what the weight of crushing guilt _____ God has made a way for us to be set free. That the shame we experience can be replaced by salvation. That the guilt that we often find in our lives can be overcome and pushed out of our lives through the gift of the cross. Which is why it's so fitting that we come to a text like this on a day we celebrate the Lord's Supper. It's right here in Genesis 2 we see this picture of marriage. This picture of the two becoming one. This union that's taking place between man and woman. And as we've already seen, it is given to us as a picture or a glimpse or a foretaste of the relationship between Christ and the church. And at the Lord's Supper we don't just hear that Gospel proclaimed, we taste and see that it is good. So every month we come to the tables for the purpose of this family meal. And I invite you after the response song plays to partake of this meal. If you know Jesus, if you're walking with Him in faithfulness as a baptized believer, this is a meal for you. But as we prepare our hearts to do that, I want you to hear these words from Scripture and examine your hearts as we pray and as we prepare to respond. Here's what 1 Corinthians 11:27 says.

²⁷Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Father, would You examine our hearts even now. Would You reveal the pockets of secret sin, the layers of guilt and shame that have calcified on our hardened hearts? Lord, and will You make dry bones live. Would You set captives free? Would You raise us to walk in newness of life? Would You equip us to pursue the kind of faithfulness we see given to us here as a picture in Genesis 2? And as we prepare to take of the Lord's Supper, I pray that You will use that to drive us to the cross. We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen.

In just a moment we'll stand and sing. We'll partake of these elements. Come make your way and grab them. But I want to remind you, if you're ready to step into membership, we'll have ministers here before our New Member Workshop next week who can start that process. You want to know more what it looks like to follow Jesus or for someone to pray with you today, you come now as we stand and respond to God's word through song.

Praise God for all that He's done for us. And that's why we partake of the Lord's Supper. If you'll take of the bread, I want you to hear these words that Jesus is recounted as saying from Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23. He says:

²³For I received from the Lord what I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

This is the body of Christ broken for you.

Then Paul tells us about how Jesus took the cup and he has this to say in 1 Corinthians 11:25. He says:

²⁵In the same way He took the cup, after supper, saying, “The cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

This is the blood of Christ poured out for you.

Let’s pray together.

Father, would you seal these realities on our hearts. That Your broken body, Your shed blood is enough for us. You set us free to walk with You all the days of our life. I pray that You would help us to do that faithfully. We ask these things in Christ’s name. Amen.