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**In the Beginning, There Was Sex**  
**Series: Divine Design: Sex According to the Bible**  
**The Village Church at Shell Point**  
**Evening Service**  
**March 9, 2025**

I. **Purpose of the series**

- A. Impression – the most sexually chaotic period in history
  - 1. Imagine the changes that have taken place in our generation
  - 2. Overwhelming dominance in the west of intact, two parent (usually biological) households
    - a. With a general cultural stigma against divorce
    - b. And with a near universal abhorrence of extra-marital sex
    - c. In which abortion carried its own cultural stigma
  - 3. To our current period
    - a. No fault divorce predominates most state laws
    - b. Media flooded with acceptance and encouragement of extra-marital sexual activity
    - c. Abortion accepted as the law of the land at most points in pregnancy and in most states
    - d. Pornography has proliferated from relatively suppressed forms of print media and adult book stores to pervasive internet sources
  - 4. Along with an avalanche of anti-natural forms of sexual expression
    - a. Homosexuality
    - b. Bisexuality
    - c. Transexuality
    - d. Polyamory
    - e. Culturally accepted to the degree that to question the legitimacy is tantamount to bigotry
- B. Truth be told, it may not be the most chaotic period
  - 1. Greco-Roman world was known to be sexually chaotic
    - a. And it was in that cultural context that the church emerged
- C. But it certainly is an incredibly chaotic period
  - 1. So my sense is that most of us grew up with a very different framework for understanding and evaluating sexuality than the culture of today
    - a. And we struggle as a result
  - 2. Most of us think we know what we believe
    - a. But we are constantly bombarded by different and antagonistic views of what we take for granted
    - b. Often from our own families
- D. So I have two concerns in this series

1. Take the time to review the biblical views of sexuality, especially as it relates to marriage
  - a. (For biblically, sexuality and marriage are inseparable)
  - b. So we can confirm our biblical roots and commitments
  - c. And now be swayed by the changing winds of cultural waves
2. And then also to evaluate the more extreme forms of sexual expression from those biblical standards
  - a. And help us know how to engage with our children and grandchildren as they face the onslaught of the enemy of our souls

## II. **The Genesis Connection**

- A. In 1989 Robert Fulghum wrote a wonderful bestseller
  1. *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*
  2. Among the gems of aphorism:
    - a. Share everything.
    - b. Play fair.
    - c. Don't hit people.
    - d. Put things back where you found them.
    - e. CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.
    - f. Don't take things that aren't yours.
    - g. Say you're SORRY when you HURT somebody.
    - h. Wash your hands before you eat.
    - i. Flush.
    - j. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
    - k. Live a balanced life - learn some and drink some and draw some and paint some and sing and dance and play and work everyday some.
    - l. Take a nap every afternoon.
    - m. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.
    - n. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
    - o. Goldfish and hamster and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
    - p. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK."
- B. Well, the same kind of thing can be said for the book of Genesis
  1. Genesis – the book of beginnings
    - a. Begins with the words, "In the beginning"
  2. You could argue that "everything we needed to know about sex we learned in Genesis"
  3. That's because that's where God's design for marriage and sexuality is established

4. And that's because almost every aberration from God's design and their consequences are illustrated in Genesis
- C. So Genesis will be our starting point for exploring the subject
  1. And we'll use it to then connect with other scriptural references

### III. **Divine Design**

- A. God's design for marriage and sexuality begins right at the beginning
  1. **Genesis 1:26** (ESV) —
    - a. 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ...
    - b. ["man" is "adam" (Heb) – generic word for mankind]
  2. **Genesis 1:27** (ESV) —
    - a. 27 So God created man in his own image,
    - b. in the image of God he created him;
    - c. male and female he created them.
  3. So begins the male-female dichotomy
- B. Maleness and femaleness is established from the very beginning
  1. Two sexes
  2. Our culture confuses the issue in an odd sort of way
    - a. Difference between "sex" and "gender"
    - b. Gender used to simply refer to language and the way in which certain languages had nouns that were either masculine for feminine
    - c. Prominent in French; but also in other languages
  3. Then gender became uses synonymously with sex in everyday language
    - a. One could speak of being a male as one's sex or one's gender
  4. But then language shifted again
    - a. Sex began to refer to one's biological status
    - b. Gender became more fluid; one could change genders
    - c. And if you could change genders, why be limited by only two genders?
    - d. Why not three, or five, or 39?
  5. But the beginning – God's design – is male and female
- C. But (and we'll return to this later), we live in a kinder and gentler age – the age of Jesus
  1. Jesus, who was kinder and gentler
    - a. And who accepts all kinds of people and practices
  2. **Matthew 19:4–6** (ESV) —
    - a. 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
    - b. [here's where Jesus actually quotes from Genesis 1.27 with approval!]
    - c. 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

- d. 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
    - 3. So, if you’re a Christian – which means you believe that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate, God in the flesh – you must adopt Jesus’ view of the human constitution
      - a. Which involves a male-female distinction
  - D. Not only that, but Jesus uses that as a male-female prerequisite for sexual engagement
    - 1. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”
    - 2. [Not “shall leave his sperm-producing human and his inseminated person and hold fast...”
      - a. No! Father and mother!
  - E. And the next thing we see is God’s design for this male-female coupling
    - 1. **Genesis 1:28** (ESV) —
      - a. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,
      - b. and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
    - 2. Arguably, the overall theme of Genesis 1 is the issue of dominion
      - a. How God has given dominion of his created world to humans
      - b. And the central feature of the dominion mandate requires procreation
    - 3. Male and female are necessary for the procreation mandate
  - F. So, right in the first chapter you have the male and female constituents for humanity
    - 1. The male-female prerequisite for sexual relations
    - 2. And the procreative purpose for male-female sexual relations
  - G. That doesn’t mean that every male and female married couple will be able to bear children
    - 1. We’ll address that issue later when we deal with barrenness
    - 2. But it does mean that God’s design for male-female sexuality is the means by which other humans are created to fill the earth
    - 3. And to fulfill the dominion mandate

#### IV. **Divine Complementarity**

- A. But that’s not all
- B. Aloneness is not good
  - 1. Two creation accounts in Genesis
    - a. Chapter 1-2.3
  - 2. Another account in Chapter 2
- C. **Genesis 2:4** (ESV) —
  - 1. 4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,
  - 2. in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

- D. The God goes about creating all kinds of things on the planet
  - 1. He created the man from the dust
  - 2. He planted a garden in Eden
    - a. Trees with food
    - b. Put the man in the garden to tend it
- E. **Genesis 2:18** (ESV) —
  - 1. 18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
- F. He then brought all the beasts around for Adam to name them – which he did
  - 1. Naming is an important part of the dominion mandate
    - a. If you can name things, you can observe, manage, and control them
    - b. And you can communicate with others
  - 2. **Genesis 2:20** (ESV) —
    - a. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.
    - b. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.
- G. So, what to do?
  - 1. **Genesis 2:21–22** (ESV) —
    - a. 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.
    - b. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
  - 2. **Rib = sela (Heb) – side**
    - a. Architectural term
    - b. Rib underplays the significance of this creative moment
    - c. This is a significant portion of Adam that was taken
  - 3. We men talk about our “better half”
    - a. Of course, that’s correct
    - b. Behind every good man there is a good woman (and a surprised mother-in-law!)
    - c. But that’s closer to the truth in the creative narrative
  - 4. Matthew Henry: Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be 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.
- H. But look at the reaction
  - 1. **Genesis 2:23** (ESV) —
    - a. 23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
    - b. she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”
  - 2. “At last!”
    - a. What a wondrous expression by Adam
    - b. Love at first sight!
    - c. Of all the aspects of the creation, she’s the only one suited for me!
  - 3. John Milton:

- a. Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
  - b. That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
  - c. Mean, or in her summed up in her contained
  - d. And in her looks, which from that time infused
  - e. Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
  - f. And into all things from her air inspired
  - g. The spirit of love and amorous delight...
  - h. Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
  - i. In every gesture dignity and love. (Paradise Lost)
4. **Genesis 2:24** (ESV) —
- a. 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
5. Once again – Jesus quotes this in Matthew 19
- a. Affirming the male-female prerequisite for marriage and sexual relationship
- I. Interesting that the Genesis account includes the part about man leaving his father and mother
- 1. For neither Adam nor Eve had a father or mother!
  - 2. But of course, the Pentateuch is attributed to Moses
    - a. And was meant for all the people of God to understand origins and their attendant responsibilities
  - 3. But the point is that with each marriage a new family is created
    - a. And the primary loyalty and responsibility is the husband-wife relationship
    - b. Relationship with parents are secondary
  - 4. That doesn't mean the parents of married couples are to be ignored
    - a. No! The law requires us to honor our fathers and mothers
  - 5. But that loyalty and responsibility is primarily to the husband and wife
    - a. There are difficulties in marriages in which that leaving doesn't happen
    - b. Or when parents continue to demand obligations that detract from the husband-wife relationship
- J. **Helper fit for him**
- 1. Back to the description of God's design of the woman
  - 2. "I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2.18)
    - a. Fit for him = corresponding to him
  - 3. Wonderful description of the nature of the relationship of man and woman
    - a. O. Palmer Robertson: The perfect balance of a proper relationship between husband and wife may be seen in the fact that the woman is to be a "helper" to the man, while also "corresponding to" him. She is to be his "helper," but equal to him in personhood.
  - 4. **1 Corinthians 11:9** (ESV) —
    - a. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.
  - 5. **1 Corinthians 11:11–12** (ESV) —

- a. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman;
    - b. 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.
  - 6. The woman is equal as an image bearer of God
    - a. And as co-image bearers, are engaged together in the dominion mandate
    - b. Calvin: [God could have covered the earth with a multitude of human beings without a great deal of trouble. But instead he willed that all mankind] proceed from one fountain, in order that our desire for mutual concord might be the greater, and that each might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh.
- K. All of this occurs before the fall!
  - 1. So God's intention is that marriage between one man and one woman be the key relationship in the good world He has created
  - 2. The fall changed many things, but the predominant relationship is established
  - 3. That doesn't preclude singleness
    - a. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 7 that under the present circumstances, it is good that some not be married
    - b. We'll address more about that later
  - 4. But that doesn't preclude that nature and centrality of the marriage relationship in establishing human dominion over the creation

V. **The Arranged Marriage**

- A. Interesting – and at odds with the world's current conception about how marriages happen – that the first marriage was an arranged marriage!
- B. **Adam and Eve**
  - 1. Adam and Eve had no input into their marriage partners!
    - a. Well, not Adam entirely – he was presented with a whole host of other creatures, and found none of them suitable!
    - b. But when God created Eve, his world had changed
- C. With respect to Adam and Eve's arranged marriage, a couple of observations
  - 1. The matchmaker was God!
    - a. God was the perfect matchmaker
    - b. Who knows the end from the beginning
    - c. Who knows the hearts of every being
    - d. Who never made a bad decision
  - 2. And not only that, when He created Adam and Eve, they were created without original sin!
    - a. They had never sinned
    - b. They weren't sinners by nature (the essence of original sin)
    - c. But they did have the capacity to change, and were susceptible to temptation (one of the great mysteries of Genesis)
  - 3. And even though the matchmaker was perfect

- a. And even though the couple were without sin
  - b. They couple still managed to mess it all up!
- D. But interestingly, as foreign as it is to us, in the ancient world arranged marriages were the majority report
- E. **Isaac and Rebekah**
  - 1. Neither Isaac nor Rebekah had any input into who they would marry
  - 2. Abraham sent his servant to his relatives to find a bride for Isaac (**Genesis 24.3-4**)
  - 3. When the servant identifies Rebekah as the prospective bride, he addresses, not Rebekah, but her parents
    - a. **Genesis 24:51** (ESV) — 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken.”
  - 4. They did give Rebekah some say in the timing
    - a. **Genesis 24:55–58** (ESV) — 55 Her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go.” 56 But he said to them, “Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.” 57 They said, “Let us call the young woman and ask her.” 58 And they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will go.”
  - 5. So off she goes to marry a man she has never even laid eyes on!
  - 6. Isaac has even less input in his marriage
    - a. The servant shows up with the bride, and that’s it!
  - 7. **Genesis 24:63–67** (ESV) —
    - a. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.
    - b. 64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel
    - c. 65 and said to the servant, “Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself.
    - d. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.
    - e. 67 Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.
- F. What was the result of this arranged marriage?
  - 1. It actually appears to have been one of the most successful marriages in scripture!
  - 2. He was comforted after the death of his mother (**Genesis 24.67**)
  - 3. He took no other wives
    - a. In contrast to Abraham who had several wives and concubines
    - b. In contrast to his sons Jacob and Esau, both of whom had multiple marriages



4. He seems to have had complete contentment in his one bride
    - a. Even during Rebekah's barrenness, Isaac did not try to solve the problem with another woman (cf Abraham!)
  5. Why the success? The providence of God
  6. **Genesis 24:12–14** (ESV) —
    - a. 12 And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham.
    - b. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.
    - c. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."
  7. **Genesis 24:45** (ESV) —
    - a. 45 "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'"
  8. Even Laban and Bethuel recognized the hand of God
  9. **Genesis 24:50** (ESV) —
    - a. 50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good.
- G. **Jacob**
1. Also in an arranged marriage
    - a. Not so successful!
  2. He escapes his brother Esau and goes to find a wife from his relatives as directed by Rebekah
  3. He gets there; immediately falls in love with Rachel
    - a. Serves Laban for 7 years to have her
    - b. Only to have her substituted by the older, "weak-eyed" Leah
  4. What to do?
    - a. Serves another 7 years to have Rachel
  5. Not sure of what customs would have dealt adequately with Laban's deception
    - a. Especially after he had consummated the marriage with Leah
  6. But what goes around, comes around
    - a. Remember – Jacob was the deceiver!
    - b. Now he was deceived
  7. Our obligation is to love our wives as Christ loved the church
    - a. Keep in mind, that we were never lovable before Christ loved us!
    - b. Best thing Jacob could have done is to love Leah
  8. Outcome – complicated
    - a. Leah was unloved
    - b. Leah's womb was opened as a consolation

- H. What if you marry the wrong person?
  - 1. Biblical answer – love that person
  - 2. Jay Adam's story
    - a. Husband: My marriage is in trouble
    - b. Adams: Then love your wife
    - c. Husband: But I don't really love my wife
    - d. Adams: You're called to love your neighbor
    - e. Husband: It's worse than that. I really can't stand her anymore
    - f. Adams: The Bible says to love your enemies
- I. Now, in God's providential grace, He uses Jacob's marriages (and his concubines) to create a nation