

June 23, 2024

“The Foundations”  
Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25

FCF: Who are we as men and women?

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) Human beings were made male and female.  
(magnet) Flourishing comes as we live in accord with that.

**SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

You’d have to be living under a rock not to know that there is a good deal of discussion, debate, and disagreement on the question of gender. As a pastor, I’d like to come at that with this question, “How does Jesus see us as male and female?” That would then tell us about who we are as male and female. And also how we are to relate to one another as male and female.

We’re starting a new series for the summer, “Jesus and the Daughters of Eve.” Over the next several weeks, we’re going to listen in on the interactions between the Son of God and the women of His day and the lessons we can learn. But first, we need to start at the beginning.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25](#)**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION****SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

I was at the PCA General Assembly this month. Among many things, I saw examples of gospel ministry. And I heard expressions of differing opinions - some of them pretty strong. But all of that was bracketed by harmonious song, some 2,000 voices joining together - soprano, alto, and bass; red, yellow, black, and white; young and old; male and female - as one, lifting the roof.

That harmonious singing reminded me of the harmonious pairings that we see in creation. Genesis 1, the six days of creation, introduces several couplets - the sun and the moon, morning and evening, day and night, the sea and the dry land, plants and animals. Then man and woman. Each related to the other but without a uniformity or interchangeability. It is harmony requiring difference and deference, one to another. It’s something that really ought not to be ignored.

“What does this have to do with our new summer series?” Simply this. Jesus is the agent of creation. We read that earlier in Colossians 1. That means every galaxy, every feature of this planet and every creature upon it was made and is known by Him - including humanity, male and female. That is His perspective on this. The harmonious pairing was His idea. Human beings were made male and female. And our flourishing can only come as we live in accord with that.

What would it look like to live in accord with that? It would mean embracing two fundamental things. First, as men and women, we are fully equal. Second, we are truly distinct.

**I. FULLY EQUAL**

First, as men and women, we are fully equal. Think with me. God said it was not good that Adam was alone. He was incomplete. And so Eve was created. What does all that mean?

*A) A Shared Dignity*

Several things, starting with our shared dignity ([READ Genesis 1:26a](#)). So fundamental.

## 1. Likeness

We as human beings are made in God's likeness. Meaning that we are equally like God in many ways. Our likeness to Him means that we are rational, relational, creative, and moral beings.

## 2. Image

We are made in His likeness. And according to His image. So vital. Together and equally, we as men and women are to reflect and represent God and His interests to the rest of creation.

### *Illustration:*

We know that kings of the Ancient Near East believed themselves to be the image of their god. We know that such kings would set up statues of themselves on the borders of their kingdoms. Why? To reflect and represent them to their subjects. Not unlike what we are to be.

### *B) A Mutual Calling*

We have this shared dignity. And then a mutual calling ([READ Genesis 1:27-28](#)).

#### 1. To have dominion

It is a call to dominion. Which means being fruitful, multiplying, filling and subduing the earth.

#### 2. Not to dominate

This is not a call to dominate or destroy but to cultivate and steward on behalf of another. It is a call to study and observe, to discern and harness the resources around us. And do it together.

### *C) A Glad Praise*

So we have this shared dignity and a mutual calling. Which then brings a glad praise.

#### 1. From Adam

First, from Adam. Chapter 2 is an enhanced account of Day 6 in chapter 1. Adam experiences his loneliness in the long labor of naming the animals. God allows him to feel this. And then He brings Eve into the picture. Which causes Adam to burst into song ([READ Genesis 2:23](#)).

#### 2. From God

But that is not the only praise we hear. God himself is pleased as well. Pivoting back to chapter 1, at the completion of that sixth day, He surveys His work, takes it all in ([READ Genesis 1:31](#)).

This is how Jesus sees us - male and female, fully equal. It is deeply good.

### *Application:*

And it is good for us to apply this. As we read an author or listen to the testimony of another gender. As we sit across the table. Yes, their read on things may seem strange to us, perhaps even contrary to our own. But we as men and women are made in God's image with a mutual calling. We truly need each other. And so we truly need to take each other seriously.

That person of the other gender has something to say. And we have something to learn. So we need to ask, "What's your take? How do you see this? What's right about it? What's wrong? How do you think it can be repaired?" We need to ask. And be open and teachable.

We were made male and female. Flourishing only comes as we live in accord with that.

## **II. TRULY DISTINCT**

We are fully equal. That said, we are also truly distinct. And we have to hold to both.

*Illustration:*

I was reminded of this recently by a magazine columnist. She wrote ([READ WORLD](#)):

Thirtieth President Calvin Coolidge reportedly sat near a woman at a dinner party who said, "I bet someone I could get more than two words out of you." "You lose," he replied. Or...Mrs. Coolidge, unable to attend church one Sunday, asked her husband upon his return what the sermon was about. "Sin," he said. When she sought amplification, he offered: "He was against it."

Pretty funny, but you get the idea. These divinely designed differences are felt in many ways.

*A) Words Clearly Spoken*

And we see that reflected in the words clearly spoken in the Genesis account.

1. The command given to Adam

Consider the command given to Adam ([READ Genesis 2:15-17](#)). To Adam is given the charge to work and keep, to tend and guard. Permission regarding all other trees of the garden is granted but a prohibition with one is set forth - with some cosmic scaled consequences tied to it.

2. The covenant made with Adam

This is the covenant made with Adam. He stood in our stead, as our representative. We would stand or fall with his choice. And it's worth noting that in Genesis 3, when God confronts Adam about this, even though Eve was the first to take of the fruit, it is Adam who is held accountable.

*B) A Calling from God*

So we see a gendered distinction in those words to Adam. And in a calling given to Eve.

1. Not weakness

Twice in chapter 2, it is said that no "helper" was to be found for Adam. Eve would be that for him. She was the *ezer* - not an inferior sidekick. For God himself would be the *ezer* of Israel.

2. But fittedness

This was not a designation of weakness but fittedness. Eve would be one that matched and corresponded to Adam. She would supply strength where he was lacking. You have to be strong to help. She would complement him. Which is to say, she was the same but different from him.

*C) The Flow of Events*

Again, we see not only a fundamental equality but a gendered distinction from the start.

1. Adam as the first born

And this also comes out in the flow of events. Adam was the firstborn. This is significant. In the Ancient Near East, primogeniture meant rule and authority for the firstborn of the family line.

2. The naming of Eve

That's what you see here. Then you have the naming of Eve. This charge is given to Adam. In the Bible, naming another always comes with authority. God names Adam. Adam names the animals. And then he names Eve. Not to say Adam was better or more significant than Eve in God's plan. But it was his role, his charge. It is how things were made to be from the very start.

And, again, it is through this lens that Jesus sees us. Male and female as distinct.

*Application:*

What then do we make of this? What do we do with it? Let me start with a word to men. We dare not take the posture of a gang leader in a third world country, looking to seize a chance afforded by a power vacuum. In our insecurities, in our desire to assume control and sway, we must not take this role and weaponize it. To lead is to love. And to love is to sacrifice. It is to put the needs of those you are leading above your own. And we will be held accountable by the One who gave us that role and charge. The Lord God sees all and will be mocked by none.

“But,” many will say, “this sort of thing has been weaponized and used like a club by some.” That’s grievous and true. As have an untold number of other biblical teachings. Think of it like a drug meant to bring healing that can, in the wrong hands, be abused. That doesn’t mean we throw out the drug. Consider the wise axiom, “Abuse does not negate proper use.”

I know there is a high level of discomfort for all of us here, for men and women. Jesus is, after all, an equal opportunity offender. Which is worth considering as we go into this political season. Jesus will never be at home in either the Democrat or Republican parties. All that is to say that, if you are rejecting these words of Genesis because it makes you uncomfortable, if your God never contradicts your beliefs or preferences, you then have a god of your own making.

We are made male and female. Flourishing only comes as we live in accord with that.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

NASA launched the Voyager 1 space probe in 1977 with the intent to study Jupiter and Saturn. In 2012, it became the first spacecraft to enter interstellar space and has continued sending signals even then. But last November, those signals became mysteriously incoherent. Something was clearly amiss but what was it, how would it be resolved, and who would have the answers? They wouldn’t be found on Wikipedia, Alexa, or Siri. The answers would come from the very people who helped to create and maintain the spacecraft all these years, a select team of aging engineers still committed to their mission and to solving each problem set before them.

Who else could tell you how a thing is meant to work and go about the task of repairing it but the architect and creator of the thing itself? Who else would be better suited? Jesus has a profound awareness of our gendered equality and distinctiveness. Not just because He walked this earth but because He made it. And us. He is not beholden to traditions but holds forth the design specifications. He knows how things were. He knows how things will be. Male and female - that is how He saw every person He met. It’s how He sees us. It’s how we should see ourselves. And it’s how we should engage with one another. Fully equal and truly distinct.

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