

**God made them Male and Female**  
**Genesis 1:26-2:25**  
**September 10th 2023**  
**Preacher: Pasto Roy Summers**

Every living organism, from mice to mankind, is at mortal threat from organisms such as bacteria, viruses and parasites. To keep us healthy, God has given us a wonderful immune system, plus medicines such as penicillin.

Churches, which are spiritually alive, are also under threat, not from pathogens, but from heresy and error. Are you and I aware of that? We must always be on guard! To keep the church healthy, God has given us the antibiotic of Truth, the Scriptures, the Sword of the Spirit, as our weapon against the enemy's attacks.

Over the centuries, Satan, the schemer, has attacked the church with different errors at various times:

In the first few centuries of the church Satan attacked *Christology*—Who is Jesus Christ? Is Jesus God? Or is he just a man? In the middle ages Satan attacked *Soteriology*—How are we saved? By our good works or by faith in Jesus Christ? And in our day, especially in the last 20 years, Satan has launched a full-scale attack on *Anthropology*.

Anthropology is about who human beings are. Are we just an animal or are we higher than the animals? What is a male, what is a female, what is marriage? And so on. What the Bible says about human beings: is under savage attack today.

And so this morning we begin a series of sermons entitled “The Big Issues” where we plan, God helping us, to examine some of these attacks on the church.

Now, not all of “The Big Issues” we’ll be considering are controversial - some of them are “big” simply because they impact so many of us, so often: Career, Money, Parenting and Social Media, for example. But the first two sermons deal directly with the attacks the church is now facing from the world.

Many churches have drifted from a biblical view of mankind in recent years. Whole denominations have abandoned the truth. There are two main reasons for this drift:

One reason is persecution—some churches can see the writing on the wall: if their church remains faithful to the Bible on these issues it will be opposed by the world which now teaches something very different, and they don't want to be persecuted, so they've exchanged the truth for a lie.

But the main reason churches have moved from the truth is they have departed from God's Word: the Bible, has been read less, believed less, obeyed less, honoured less and preached less.

Marriage breakdown is rarely caused by a few big bust ups, it normally fails as the result of a thousand small "paper cuts" - you know those small annoying cuts on your fingers that you sometimes get when you are handling paper? Marriages more often break down over long spans of time as a result of many small unforgiven offences piling up one upon the other. And in the same way, churches have not drifted from the truth suddenly, catastrophically, but gradually, over years; with decades neglecting the authority of the Scriptures which are inspired by God and the church's authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. And as the influence of God's Word has drained out of those churches the thinking of the world has flooded in. A very recent poll among Church of England vicars seems to show this trend: *"The first survey of Church of England clerics conducted in almost a decade, has found a strong desire among rank-and-file priests for significant changes in church doctrine on issues such as sex, sexuality, marriage and the role of women (that is anthropology) to bring it into greater line with public opinion."*

If we don't take our anthropology, our view of mankind from Scripture we will inevitably take it from the world! - even though the world itself is hopelessly confused about these things itself! As the Bible has been neglected, all the jumbled up thinking of the world has swept into the church like a flood. It is a great tragedy.

How should followers of Jesus handle truths thought controversial by the world?

We should be balanced. Let us never be known as a single-issue church or a single-issue Christian! It would be easy to become so passionate about one of these matters that we neglect other vital Gospel truths. We should explain what we believe carefully. But I don't believe we should never apologize for what we believe because what the Bible teaches about mankind is the truth and lines up with science, human experience and common sense. Can you imagine a scientist apologising for gravity? "I am so sorry

to inform you, but if you jump off the Empire State building a force called gravity will kill you—sorry—didn't mean to offend you!" Explain, truth, but never apologise for it. However we must always be gracious in our explanations, never argumentative. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with *gentleness and respect*" (1 Peter 3:15) There is no place in Christian behaviour for being obnoxious or unpleasant; Jesus was never like that.

So this morning God made us Male and Female. This is a teaching sermon, so we'll all need to put on our thinking caps. Even ten years ago, I would never have dreamt we'd need to preach a sermon about male and female; which shows how fast things have drifted.

So what does the Bible teach about Men and Women? Four words:

### (1) God made Men and Women Equal

God created male and female equal:

"So God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (1:27-28) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

There is no suggestion anywhere in Scripture that women are inferior to me. Both are made in the image of God, both given rule over the earth, both equal in salvation.

And do you know that wherever the Gospel has spread across the world, the dignity and value of women has risen? As the Reformation spread across Europe in the 1500s, I quote from an unbelieving author Joseph Henrich, it "*drove the spread of female literacy, first in Europe and later across the globe... the higher percentage of Protestants in a country or town, the larger the percentage of girls who enrolled in schools relative to boys...*" (Weird, page 14)

Men and women are equal. So let every Christian man treat every woman as the

wonderful creature they are; made in God's divine image and saved by his amazing grace. Let misogyny, the hatred of women be unknown in the church of Jesus Christ. Consider how Jesus treated women and do likewise. And sisters; know that in the church of Jesus Christ you are esteemed and valued. I hope and pray that you know that and feel that.

## **(2) God made Men and Women Different**

But secondly, the Scriptures make it plain that men and women are different, that's why God calls one "male" and the other "female."

We know that the differences between men and women go down to the level of almost every one of the trillions of cells in our bodies; male and female chromosomes are different. Men and women have different bodies, women can bear children (Genesis 3)—what an amazing and wonderful gift which men do not possess. Men are physically stronger than women. (The apostle Peter calls upon husbands to treat their wives as the "weaker partner" (1 Peter 3:7).) It is well known that untrained college boys regularly run faster in the 100m than the best elite female athletes in the world. This superior strength doesn't make men better than women; in the same way that having a baby doesn't make women any better than men; it just makes them different.

God has made men and women different! Men and women think differently, feel differently, act differently, and so on: all this we know from Scripture and experience.

Let's rejoice in our God-created differences! How poorer the world would be if it was like Barbie land where men aren't all that necessary; and how poorer the world would be without women. Men—work out what it means to be a man from the life of Jesus and sisters - work out what it means to be a woman from the example of the godly women in Scripture.

## **(3) God made Men and Women to relate to one another in a certain order**

There is a divine order between men and women, men are called to lead in the home and lead in the church. This is the doctrine the world misunderstands—and often hates. We see hints of this order in Genesis 1, "male" is mentioned before "female." But this truth comes to the fore front in Genesis 2 and 3:

Adam was created first, God gave his Word—the command about the trees in the

garden - to Adam, not to Eve. Eve was created for Adam, to answer his lack of companionship, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Eve was created out of Adam. Adam named Eve

God placed the blame on Adam rather than Eve for the Fall, "sin entered the world through *one man*" says Paul in Romans 5:12 because Adam should have taken the lead, protected his wife and said to the serpent, "talk to me, not her." Adam is punished "...because *you listened to your wife* and ate from the tree..." Genesis 3:17.

So although men and women are equal in God's eyes there is an order between them. Not an hierarchy (where one is higher than the other), but an order. We see this order in marriage: "*Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of wife as Christ is the head of the church.*" (Ephesians 5:22,23)

And we see this order in church life: "*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man*" (1 Timothy 2:12) [But why Paul?] "*For Adam was formed first, then Eve.*" (That little detail, Adam created first, Eve second, was not accidental, but didactic - designed to teach order).

There is a divine order between men and women which must be reflected in Christian marriage and in church life. Not a hierarchy, but an order. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul explains where the order comes from, "*The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (that is God the Father).*"

The ordered relationship between the man and the woman is similar to the ordered relationship between God the Son and God the Father.

God the Father and God the Son are equal in dignity, power, honour, glory and divinity, but there is an order between the two divine Persons: The Father sends the Son, the Son does not send the Father (though they are equal!). The Son obeys the Father, the Father never obeys the Son (though they are equal!) "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." (John 5:19) "These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the father who sent me." (John 14:24) There is no hierarchy between God the Father and God the Son! God the Father is not above God the Son, but there is an order between them.

And in the same way, there is no hierarchy between men and women, men are not higher than women, but there is a divine order! We can't expect to find this order in the world, but we should see it in every Christian marriage and in every Christian Church.

If you have been at MPC for a few months you will have noticed a number of things. You will notice that men and women both serve harmoniously in many wonderful roles in the church. But you will also notice, that our elders—an elder is a church leader—are all men. Our pastor and trainee pastors are all men. The people who preach to our mixed male and female congregations on a Sunday morning are all men.

Why do men lead our church? Because women are inferior to men? No, it's because Scripture insists that the church exhibits God's created order in this world.

Have you wondered why men always lead morning worship here at MPC? Women take part, but men always lead the service? Do you know why? Not because men can do a better job—for all I know women may lead a service better than men! I don't know!! It's because there is an order between men and women that must be seen and maintained in the church.

### **God has made men and women to compliment one another, to help one another**

God has made men and women differently, with different abilities, so that those gifts can compliment one another "I will make a helper *suitable* for him." 2:18

But as soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed God they fell out with each other, and the battle between the sexes began! Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, and ever since men and women have been warring with each other instead of helping one another: men often using their superior physical power to hurt women and women, often, using their sexual power to manipulate men. Men fighting women, women fighting men.

But that's not how God designed men and women to relate, he designed them differently so that they can help one another, where one has a weakness the other has a much-needed strength. We have to work things out.

## Conclusion—Gospel

As I close this morning, let me say this. The fall of mankind has messed us all up. What do you see as you look around this room? A museum of haloed saints? No! MPC is a hospital for sinners.

We're messed up spiritually—alienated from the God who made and loved us. We are messed up philosophically—not able to find or to accept the truth. We are twisted relationally—not being able to relate to one another as we should. We are messed up psychologically—not longer balanced in mind. We're messed up physiologically and biologically, our bodies are dying. We are messed up sexually—we discover impure as well as pure impulses within us

We are all messed up by the fall in one way, another, and so it could be that a woman over here struggles with her femininity, or a man over there struggles with his masculinity. That should not surprise us at all.

But the solution to this distress is not to change our bodies with pills or surgery, the solution is to be found in the Gospel, which offers, forgiveness for all our wrongdoing, through the death of Jesus Christ, the truth about ourselves, which sets us free, the power of the Holy Spirit to live a new life, the unchanging love of God no matter what we have done or will do, and above all else, the hope and promise of a glorious new body in heaven, a body free from all the twistedness of this present one.

The Gospel is the hope of mankind.