

## **“Bow in awe!” Genesis 2:7, 18-24.**

**“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.**

**Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now 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. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 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. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then 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.” Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

For our meditation today we have this ancient text from Genesis 2 that we heard during the Rite of Holy Matrimony. How do you hear this?

**“The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground... It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper, fit for him... A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”**

Sure, you have heard this before. How do you hear it?

What is the attitude of your heart when you hear these words? What do you think about those early chapters of Genesis? The ignorant world of course sneers and scoffs at these ancient texts. “So naïve! So primitive! What is wrong with you, Christians?!”

And many even among Christians have similar attitudes too. Suspicious skepticism. “Yes... those early chapters of Genesis... So, so not scientific.” What about you, what do you think, what is your attitude?

When someone thinks that this message is naïve, primitive and not good enough for us, enlightened people, they can't be further from the truth. These few early chapters of the Bible contain so much of God's wisdom that our lives are too short to properly exercise in it and to fully be able to appreciate it. True.

It is us who are naïve in our ignorance and arrogance. Let's do at least something about it, let's see what these few verses reveal to us about ourselves and about this wonderful institution - marriage. At least let's scratch the surface of this treasure trove of God's infinite wisdom.

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**“The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”** The creation of the first human being. Witnessed and recorded not by eyes of any creature, but by the Creator Himself. That was the moment when the entire human race was created.

All the human beings who have ever lived and will live, all the human beings who will spend eternity with their Creator and Redeemer. Look at how that act of creation is depicted! There is such intimacy. The Lord God, forming the man with His bare hands, then taking him in His arms to His chest and breathing the breath of life in him.

So much love, so much affection, so much hope! That is what God’s attitude towards His human creatures is. That is how involved and present He is when a new human being is formed in the mother's womb. Please, consider what this means for you, that you are so significant to your Creator, that He cares for you with such intimacy.

**“It is not good that the man should be alone...”**. This is such a well-known and often used and misused saying. But what does that mean? Does it mean that being alone is somewhat morally dubious? Not good...

This little sentence refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> Great Commission entrusted to humanity. **“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth!”** We can’t fulfill this great calling by being alone. And that is not about a few minutes of physical pleasure either.

It is about the magnificent task of raising new generations. It is about allowing the Triune God to create new human beings, using the most sophisticated bio-social system ever invented, the marital union of loving husband and wife.

We just fail to recognize how far reaching the impact of this is. Yes, we see children and grandchildren, and maybe great-grandchildren. But the impact of taking on this Great Commission reaches far beyond what we could ever witness with our eyes.

Or even grasp with our minds. Those who do not despise their Creator and Redeemer one day will rejoice seeing all those future generations, all those multitudes that came through then, if they are raised in true faith trusting God as their Father in Heaven.

**“I will make him a helper fit for him.”** Ha! What is that about?! Helper! Creating a helper?! The inner feminist in us scoffs. I guess we all have it in us. “Is that about children, kitchen and Church, as the old saying goes? Helper! So naïve!”

But... God Himself is called our “our Helper” in both the Old and New Testaments. This has nothing to do with status or power, or whatever else so many today tend to focus on. First, “fit for him” implies equality and complementarity. “Helper” is someone who brings to the table something that was missing.

Now finally there are both pieces together. Only both together, man and woman, husband and wife, are fit for the incredible mission entrusted to them, the creation of new human beings, new eternal beings. Only when both are together man can

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discover who he truly is created to be – as husband, father, grandfather. Only when both are together can a woman discover what she is created to be – as wife, mother, grandmother, and how much she can shape the next generations with her wisdom.

What can be more important?! Our life spans are too short to be able to properly learn, practice and appreciate these wonderful divine realities. And then we get to the Divine Formula of what the institution of marriage is about.

The first words of any human being recorded for posterity are this exclamation with incredible joy: **“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.” Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**”

Here is it, God’s wisdom right before us. The only institution designed and given to us by the Creator. The one institution that is the foundation for every other human institution that there are. We didn’t invent it. We don’t establish it.

We enter it... if the Lord is gracious to us. We enter it! That is what Matt and Taeler did today. They entered this magnificent institution of marriage. It is, in a sense, built into us, we long for it and what it can give to us if properly received and wisely enjoyed.

If properly received and enjoyed. Even if today’s society has done so much to erase God’s wisdom from our collective memory, the wise instructions from times immemorial keep speaking to us. Are we willing to listen and be blessed?

Here are three elements that make marriage a marriage. **Leaving. Cleaving. And becoming one flesh.** Let’s just briefly reflect on what those are about. **First, leaving.** When we are born, our family is the most important relationship we have.

Until the time comes and we enter marriage. At that moment your marriage becomes the most important relationship in your life. Your spouse is your priority # 1. You will still love and cherish all the other relationships, of course, but none of them should be allowed to come even close in their importance to your marriage.

**Second, cleaving.** This is about what will keep two married people together, what will be the glue that makes their marriage last till death do part them. What is it? What is your guess? Too often we guess – love. Meaning, our feelings, our emotions. Really?!

Are we even in control of them? No, of course, not! To hope that emotions will keep something going is to build your house on sand. We need a much stronger foundation. Promise. Commitment. Act of will. “Yes, I love you today, but I promise, that whatever happens I will keep loving you, I will remain faithful, I will care for you, and with God’s help will do everything in my power to make your life the most amazing it could be!”

**Third, becoming one flesh.** This is about truth, openness, honesty, intimacy, about sharing everything. Where there is no more “me and mine” and “you and yours”, it is only “us and ours”. Whatever can’t be shared is then in fact more important than our

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marriage. That doesn't work. One flesh! It means sexual intimacy, wonderful pleasures of the body, and with that, the Lord willing, the fulfillment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Great Commission **"be fruitful and multiply"**. The good Lord willing, two become one flesh, a new human being who comes from two parents. Little miracles, little sources of joy and objects of love. And as time goes by, reasons for headaches and sleepless nights as well. True.

But then there is something else. Something so beyond us. On our own we can mess up the best gifts, including marriage, and you know it. But the Lord God Himself blesses this institution. He promises to bless those who enter it and who are looking for His blessings and help. He promises to be present with them and to care for them. He teaches us what a wonderful thing this institution is.

He teaches us to love not just with words in this ancient text, but with His example. Jesus models what marriage is supposed to be in His relationships with His Bride, the Church, even laying down His life for her. He teaches and enables us to forgive as He keeps forgiving us. He Himself shelters and embraces us. So good!

The world may sneer about God's revelation. Or about the institution of marriage. Naïve, primitive, obsolete... While drowning in painful misery of unfulfilled longings, of hearts broken by betrayal and unfaithfulness, of souls scared from being hurt by the closest to us, in misery of broken families and marriages.

When hope for happiness is shattered again. And again. The world sneers in bitterness, groaning for true love. In the depths of their hearts desperately longing for the very things they so foolishly dismiss as robbing them of their freedom. So, so sad.

On our own we are so naïve, so ignorant, so arrogant. But the Lord Jesus Christ is gracious and patient, He keeps speaking to us. He does it right now. Trying to reach you, hoping to bless you and to build you up in true wisdom and understanding.

It is so uplifting to see these young people, Matthew and Taeler, embracing this amazing gift – marriage. More than that, starting in the best place possible - with all their sins forgiven, kneeling together at the altar of their gracious God, being nourished with the very life-giving body and blood of our Lord Jesus that protects us from all evil.

So wonderful! We should bow in awe before the Lord of all creation, who has not only given us this amazing gift – marriage - but who keeps speaking to us in His kindness, and always calling us closer to Himself. So that you can hear His voice: "I forgive you! For everything you have done wrong, including in our relationships. I forgive you!"

We should bow before this God in awe for His abundant grace and pray that He would daily renew our hearts and minds, that He would embrace and hug us so strongly that all our hurts and pain, all our guilt and shame would leave us, and we could live with Him and with one another in joyful blessedness and peace.

May it come true for all of you. Amen.