

Called Their Name Adam

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Given 30-Dec-17; Sermon #1412A

Typically, as I begin preparations for an article, essay, sermon, sermonette, et cetera, I already have a number of subjects that have been on my mind for a while. I have found that if I seek God's direction, He almost always makes it obvious which one He wants me to go with. It usually becomes apparent when one of the subjects keeps popping up in my day-to-day experiences, sometimes literally and sometimes analogically. But it is the same; at some point the direction becomes clear to me.

I am telling you this because you may consider my introduction to this sermon a bit obtuse. But it was the final piece that pointed me to today's topic. Back at the beginning of December, Nancy and I were watching a 50th retrospective anniversary special of The Carol Burnett Show, the music comedy variety show that ran 11 years beginning in the fall of 1967. This retrospective looked at some of the most memorable moments and performances from those years. There were some live performances, along with vintage footage of many videos of many of the people who had been involved in the show over the 11 years.

It was an enjoyable two hours of laughs and music that was hosted by Carol Burnett. If any of you have ever seen the show, you are likely to remember some of their parodies of old movies like when they did "Gone with the Wind." It was maybe their funniest spoof because it culminated in the classic moment when Carol Burnett's Scarlett O'Hara comes down the stairs to greet Harvey Korman's Rhett Butler, dressed in the green velvet gown that she had cleverly made from the tattered drapes of the Civil War ruins of her ancestral home. However, the rod that the drapes are hung on is still in the drapes and extending across her shoulders. It was hysterical. This is not really the point of the sermon today but I just thought I would go into this neat routine.

Of course, they had included that classic scene from the show. But the moment that triggered this sermon came during one of the live performances

when an 82-year-old Steve Lawrence stepped on the stage and sang part of one of the numbers he had performed on the show almost 50 years ago with his late wife, Eydie Gormé. He sang with a voice as fine as it had ever been. But there was something lacking. That something was Eydie.

Most people from my generation knew exactly who we were talking about when someone would refer to "Steve and Eydie." They were a married couple who had a great deal of individual talent and previous careers apart from each other, but together they were perceived as the quintessential elegance of the pop music they performed. Name dropping showbiz types had let others know that they had been at the place to be, by saying "Steve and Eydie were there." If Steve and Eddie were there, it must have been the place to be.

As I said, apart, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé were still talented individuals, but together they were "Steve and Eydie," two individuals blended together in a way that made them unique.

Please turn with me to Mark, the tenth chapter. We will start here today.

Mark 10:2-9 The Pharisees came and asked Him [asked Jesus Christ], "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him. And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Typically, we have focused our attention from these verses on the marriage covenant as determined by God from the beginning, the binding together of a man and a woman for life, to the exclusion of any other. This bond is so consequential to God's plan and purpose that the Gospels immediately record Jesus Christ's response to the same exact question when He was alone with those given to Him by the Father. He said so in no uncertain terms. We are

going to read this response from The Message Bible translation in contemporary English.

Mark 10:10-12 (MSG) When they were back home, the disciples brought it up again. Jesus gave it to them straight: "A man who divorces his wife so he can marry someone else commits adultery against her. And a woman who divorces her husband so she can marry someone else commits adultery."

God makes sure that we understand the high standard He has set for His people, even though in this life, we may find ourselves in the midst of extenuating circumstances that are beyond our control, or things change. But that is a subject for another sermon, not really the point of this sermon today. There is something else here that made this binding relationship possible in the first place, that was "from the beginning."

So please turn with me back to the beginning and the scripture that John Ritenbaugh pointed to last week as God's SPS [specific purpose statement]. We, of course, will be going to Genesis 1:26. But, I am going to pick it up a bit before that.

Genesis 1:20-25 Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird, according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beasts of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

In God's magnificent creation, He purposefully made all different kinds of animals to abound with life—in the sea, in the air, and on the land. Each

species and subspecies were purposefully made distinct from the others to serve God's purpose, displaying beauty, strength, and power as He determined. But up to this point, none apparently had been given Their ability to thoughtfully and carefully maintain relationships the same way that God does. Then we come to Genesis 1:26 and the specific purpose statement of the Word who became Jesus Christ, and the Father and Son who are always in perfect agreement.

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

By the end of the sixth day of creation, God saw everything He had made was *very* good. Hold on to that "very good" statement as we continue, because it is one of the clues we have been given to help us understand the additional information God determined that we needed, as recorded in Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:1-3, of course, is God's signature on His creation and a vital key to man's thoughtful relationship with Them, and it is followed by the additional insight into some of the important details of the sixth day of creation, that God determined were necessary to share with us right from the beginning.

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and

sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

And down in verse 7. This is going back to the details of the sixth day.

Genesis 2:7-9 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Please keep in mind that all that is recorded following verse 3 happened on the sixth day of creation, and God is filling in some important details for us regarding the work that He has done, a very carefully planned endeavor by a master Architect and Builder. Understanding this part of God's careful planning, as sovereign over His creation, is vitally important, especially to us as we struggle with our own carnal nature in a world which we are not to be part of, but in which we must live, in a humble attitude of submission and obedience, being prepared by God for Christ's return.

I hope we all see God has given us another awesome piece to help us continue moving forward and growing to more deeply appreciate our relationship with God and the Word. As we continue, it is important to know that what we read in Genesis 2:18-23 was *no afterthought*, but a precious reality that needs to be front and center in our minds as we continue to have God's law written in our hearts.

I think it will be enormously helpful to us if we can adjust our perspective just a little bit regarding just what Jesus Christ was pointing to in His "from the beginning" statement, in the first part of his answer to the Pharisees back

there in Mark 10:6. Was He simply pointing to the lifetime union of husband and wife? Or was He point to something else that made it possible for a husband-and-wife relationship in the first place? Remember the statement made in Mark 10:

Mark 10:7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'

It is predicated by what Christ expounded in verse 6:

Mark 10:6 "God 'made them male and female. . .'"

We will get back to this in a minute, but first we will continue looking into the Genesis 2 account as written, verses 18-20.

Genesis 2:18-20 And the Lord God said [remember, this is no afterthought], "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird in the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all the cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

God very purposefully brought all the living creatures He had made to the man for careful examination of them, so he could see there was not one that was perfectly suited to him. The New Revised Standard Version gets down to the heart of the matter in verse 20; the translation reads:

Genesis 2:20 (NRSV) The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal in the field, but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

As the Architect and Master Builder, God knew exactly what was the next step in the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. But They, the Father and the Son, wanted to make sure the man clearly understood the incredible blessing he was about to receive.

Genesis 2:21-25 (NRSV) So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs, 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; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed."

Please turn with me now to Genesis 5, to verse 1. I am going to be reading from the *King James Version* because I think it makes the point that we may miss because of the wording of the other translations, including the New King James.

Genesis 5:1-2 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him. Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

Brethren, I hope you caught that. God called *their* name Adam. This is important to us because it helps us to understand what Jesus Christ was pointing those who heard Him to in Mark 10: the very beginning and what made the foundation for the perfect marriage relationship possible. He was pointing them to the fact that man and woman have been created in the same productive partnership in the Adam family, as the Word and the Father are in the God Family.

Before sin entered the picture, they were made to be in the same type of productive and joyful partnership that was pleasing to both the man and the woman, in the image and likeness of God.

“They called their name Adam.” What a way to start! What an incredible blessing, a relationship just like God's, a relationship without contention or pain, one where both men and women would continue growing in the heart of a perfect partnership, in the image and likeness of God—if they stayed the course.

But all that changed when the man failed to follow his responsibility to the woman, and carry on doing what he was supposed to do. Sin entered the picture and suddenly the whole world was under a curse. And it is within this world that we must work.

Adam, though in the image of God, was physical. And the moment sin entered the picture, they started making decisions apart from God that showed themselves immediately in what they saw. In that sin was when they saw a difference between them. There is a physical shame of difference. The harmony of two distinct beings became so perverted by sin that God said to them, "Who told you that you were naked?"

Brethren, as I said, we are living in a world that is under a curse. In that very good condition, in the physical image of God, Adam should have found perfect peace and contentment in a truly productive partnership of the man and the woman, in the same way as the Word and the Father.

If Adam would have just said to Eve, "No, that's not what we're going to do," she would have gladly said, "That's fine!" because they had been given a mindset to do that. But the minute that sin entered the picture and carnal nature began moving to the front, one of the curses God placed on Adam was that, as their enmity toward God grew, so too did the enmity of the woman toward the man, in what should have been an otherwise totally harmonious relationship.

Genesis 3:16 (NET) To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your labor pains, with pain you will give birth to children. You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you.”

Brethren, from the beginning, this was not the case. God created Adam, both physical, in Their image and likeness to be just like Them, as perfect partners working together in harmony and peace within their own responsibilities.

But now, because we live in a world under this curse and we find ourselves subject to the pulls of our own carnal nature, this curse has a direct effect on each and every one of us.

However, through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit working in us, we can be striving to overcome this deadly impediment to our relationship because we know it is there and because we are having our hearts softened. A heart of stone is being changed to a heart of flesh, if we will submit ourselves to the law of God, and to one another, within our responsibility.

The weight of this curse is always going to be pushing in on us and trying to break up our relationships. But through Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to personally overcome this divisiveness if we continue to work on our own responsibilities while knowing that from the beginning God made men and women to be in a perfect partnership and mutual submission under His law.

Brethren, this is possible within the Body of Christ. But are we really, really working towards it? And do we believe it? Let us look into what is going on right now. Turn over with me to Romans.

Romans 8:10-17 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit [which] dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [According to the ways of this society at this time] For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

There is a lot of suffering involved in trying to create the right relationships in this kind of world, in trying to let God create the right relationships.

Romans 8:18-25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Brethren, that perseverance is in learning to live God's way of life, under His law, with our brethren, in a relationship that is precious. Consider, that God pronounces the curses, and specifically the one we are addressing this afternoon as the enmity between men and women, in the hope of revealing of the sons of God.

Relationships of men and women today are part of the enslaving bondage of the whole creation, the degradation of men and women for each other is obviously growing, but the whole creation is groaning in pain that comes from this curse and is waiting for the time when those who are God's will be part of the deliverance, back to what it was meant to be: like Them, from the beginning.

Unfortunately, too many of us who have been given the privilege of having been called into the Body of Christ and back into the proper relationships, as they were from the beginning, are being caught up in the futility and hopelessness of a divisive world, rather than working with Jesus Christ now in faith to live up to our God-given responsibilities as men and women, raising godly seed, as John just said in the commentary. Our responsibility is to be working at these things.

We are living in times that require humble submission to God's Word with a great deal of wisdom so that we stay the course, and not be led away with the error of the wicked, but rather grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as the apostle Peter wrote, concluding his second epistle. We have been given an incredible gift because in a world under the curse of violent war between men and women, we have the opportunity to work in our lives and our marriages to diligently fulfill our God-given responsibility with an eye towards the perfect partnership of the Family of God that was part of the initial creation of Adam: men and women in partnership, pleased to live within our God-given responsibilities.

You know, what Austin [del Castillo] said reminded me that in one of the finest ministers I have seen, the one in particular that Austin was talking about, there was a partnership in the ministry that drove those men and women together, husband and wife, to minister to people, because they were uniquely of the same mind, because they were striving to live under the Word of God.

Brethren, is the mind of Christ truly in us? And are we using it as we are told we must be in Philippians 2? Or are we merely giving up, and giving in to the carnal mind of division that is tearing apart the society around us?

Through Jesus Christ, we have an incredible opportunity to live up to our potential to be in God's image and likeness, individuals with distinctly different talents and responsibilities that can only truly find their fulfillment when blended together in full partnership of mutual love and respect under the perfect law of God. From the beginning, God called them Adam in the image and the likeness of Themselves.

As a minister once said, "When we learn to live the law of God, motivated by the love of God, it produces the life of God." As They are.