

**Series**: Created

**Text**: Genesis 2.4-25

**Sermon Title**: The Woman God Created

Thank you, Pastor. It’s good to see you back we’ve certainly been praying for you. And thank everyone else who has been praying for them and for our staff.

I wanted to take a moment acknowledge the tragedy that happened this week at Butler high school. Pastor John has been in contact with the principle there to see if there is any way that we might be able to help them during this time. But I think our immediate response must be prayer. Prayer for the families involved, and prayers for the students and teachers. Pray for Christian students to be able to give them the hope of the gospel in light of this horrible tragedy. Our prayers and sympathies are with them.

Pray

Today, we’re jumping back into our series in Genesis called “created.” In this series, we have been answering the question, “What are we all here for? Why do I exist? What are we created for?” If we don’t have an answer to this it leads to all sorts of disfunction. We give our lives to our passions, and expect them to carry the weight of our souls, which leads to all sorts of destruction. We need to know our purpose.

Two weeks ago we talked about the creation of Man and Woman. That God created them with a unique purpose. We taught on the purpose of man, that man was to work the garden. He was to cultivate the raw materials of earth in a way that leads to human flourishing. This week we are focusing on what the Bible says about the purpose of Women. I’m really excited to preach about this! But listen, there is no way that I can cover all that it means to be a woman. I will hit the high points of a woman’s purpose and I hope to give us some handles on what scripture teaches. Also, make sure you attend community group this week so that you can dive deeper into this idea.

Here is our outline for this morning **1) God’s purpose for women 2) How sin distorted that purpose 3) How Christ brings women back to God’s perfect design.**

**1) God’s purpose for Women**

Today we will be Genesis 2:18-25, but we will jump to a few different places to help us with our understanding of womanhood.

To start we need to jump back to Genesis 1:27: 27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. -- Genesis 1:27 (CSB)

The implications of this verse are massive. Both men and women are created in God’s image, which means that they have a uniquely greater value than anything else. By saying that men and women are created in his image ultimately means that we represent God to our world, and are therefore, infinitely valuable to God. Because men and women have inherent value, our value is not found in our utility or in our ability to perform. Our value is simply found in who we are. Image bearers.

Nothing else in creation is given this description. So, no your dog is not an image bearer no matter how many sweaters you put on it. And cats, well they are a result of the fall. Haha.

And people being created in God’s image this is why we reject racism, fight to help foster care kids and adoption, and work toward helping people in poverty. All of these are big issues to God, because it affects those whom he created in his image.

This image of God idea is also big deal when it comes to women because most of history has involved men treating women intentionally or unintentionally as if they are an inferior species. In Dorothy Sayers essay, “Are Women Human?” She was frustrated by how society, and especially the church, had overlooked how much men and women have in common as God’s image bearers. She said “It is here that most students of the Woman Question have failed, and the church more lamentably than most, and with less excuse…the first thing that strikes the careless observer is that women are unlike men. They are the “opposite sex”. But the fundamental thing is that women are more like men than anything else in the world! – Dorothy Sayers

Let me be clear with something that sounds obvious: WOMEN ARE HUMAN. Women are created fully in the image of God. Here’s why that’s a big deal. For centuries women have had to live in a world where they are evaluated by their gender not by their humanity. So no matter what activity she’s engaged in, she’s evaluated by how she’s doing that activity…as a woman. Sayers said “Probably no man has ever troubled to imagine how strange his life would appear to himself if he was unrelentingly assessed in terms of his maleness.” Imagine if people wrote books like “the males of the bible” or headlines like “male doctor wins Nobel Peace Prize.” Imagine that had happened all day every day for hundreds of years. Sayers said she would be surprised if any man would retain any kind self-respect.

Christianity says male and female are both image bearers. Yes, it’s true that they are created differently and these differences come with different responsibilities. But those differences are complementary. When these responsibilities are embraced they help one another out. And in the scope of creation their similarities far outweigh their differences. We’ll see that come up more as we walk through this.

And Genesis 1:27 is a declaration to both men and women that we were created to glorify God. People are supposed to show our world what God is like by how we live. And this gives us our first purpose statement of what a woman is created for: **Women are created to glorify God.** But in order for women to do that, women need to know how they have been created. I want to mention one thing before we dive in. to say that men and women are equal in value does not mean that that is some kind of a feminist idea. Feminism’s aim is to seek to liberate women from any and all need of men. God created men and women to flourish together.

ok let’s jump to Genesis 2:18-25. So, I’ll read it in full, but I will only focus on a couple of verses. So, remember, Context: man is working in the garden. He’s got a job, he’s under God’s authority… And now comes the creation of the woman.

18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” 19 The Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,”

for she was taken from man.

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame. -- Genesis 2:18-25 (CSB)

Alright, let’s focus on verse 18. 18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” Ok, so in Genesis 1:27, we see that both men and women are image bearers who are both charged with the task of bringing God glory to this world. So the task of men and women as separate genders are the same: God’s glory. But In Genesis 2, the context has changed to a marriage context. This is the first picture of marriage in scripture

This is the first time that there was something God made that was “not good.” So, to be clear, sin had not yet entered the world, but there was something that was “not good” in God’s creation. What does that mean? Well, it doesn’t mean that creation was “bad” but that it was incomplete. Man was fully made in the image of God, but the provision of the woman is what makes creation complete and “very good” according the end of Genesis 1. The clear message in this account is that it wasn’t that the woman needed a man. It’s the man who needed a woman. He needed a helper.

So, what does this word helper mean? This is very important for us to understand if we want to understand God’s purpose for womanhood. In Hebrew,(edzer) this word, helper, is most often used in the OT as a reference to God being a helper for man.

* Moses named his son “Eliezer (because he had said, “The God of my father was my **helper** and rescued me from Pharaoh’s sword”). -- Exodus 18:4 (CSB)
* Lord, hear Judah’s cry and bring him to his people. He fights for his cause with his own hands, but may you be a **help** against his foes. -- Deuteronomy 33:7 (CSB)
* 20 We wait for the Lord; he is our **help** and shield. -- Psalms 33:20 (CSB)

So, if God is (edzer), the helper, then this must be a position of honor. It can’t mean that God is now somehow inferior to man. That’s crazy. In the same way, women are not inferior to men. Being a helper is not a demotion. It does not mean that you’re a doormat. The helper communicates a power to intervene and help someone who is weak.

If you ask someone to help you move, what you’re saying is that you are too weak to accomplish the task on your own. You need help. The person who helps you move does not become inferior to you because they help you. No, they are the strong one.

The woman was brought into a situation that was “not good”... And she is the one who takes this situation from not good to “very good.” The helper is not inferior. But, here is what it does mean…It means that she was to help someone who did have the primary responsibility for the task. But don’t miss the next part where it says “corresponding to him.” Some of your versions might say fit. The Hebrew word for this is Kenegdo. This word means “like-opposite.” It wasn’t good he was alone so God made the woman who was like him, but also not like him. This is where we pull the idea of complementarianism from. Man and woman don’t compete with each other, they complement each other. Where he is weak, she is strong and vice versa.

So, if the woman was created to be a helper to the man we are clearly able to see the purpose for the woman. Ultimately, as an image bearer’s women are created to glorify God. And in this passage, we see that The woman was created to help man in the cultivation of creation for the sake of human flourishing. Eve was created to help her husband in this joint mission to cultivate creation for human flourishing. She does this by influencing her husband for good and shaping him and shaping all of creation to flourish. She does this by coming alongside her husband and using her gifts to influence him and the world towards flourishment.

So, a next question would be… What does this look like in action? I think there are two primary places where this plays itself out: The home and church. If you’re a single woman, this means something for you too so don’t check out here. This extremely important for everyone to understand.

Because scripture helps us interpret scripture I think going to another marriage passage will help us. So, let’s look at Ephesians 5 which talks about how a marriage and a home should look like. The reason I’m starting with marriage is because Genesis 2 starts there. Genesis 2:18-25 is a picture of marriage. Since it’s a picture of marriage, I think Ephesians 5, another marriage passage helps us in our understanding of this idea of helper. Here is what Ephesians 5 says: 22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Verse 22 says: Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Ladies, to be a helper means to submit to the leadership God has given your husband. Here is where we see the differentiation of roles. Husbands obey God by committing to be the head of the wife & family and by setting the spiritual tone and direction of the home. And wives obey God through submission by being a helper to her husband. In summary of this passage I’ll quote verse 33, To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband. When this happens marriages and our world flourish and it is a beautiful picture of the gospel.

Again, submission doesn’t mean doormat. It also doesn’t mean that you can’t have opinions on anything. Quite the opposite actually. Families, let me ask you this question… Specifically, husbands and wives… Do you have a family vision? God has brought couples together to bring him glory. Adam and Eve’s vision was to cultivate creation for human flourishing. Like them, every family should have some kind of a vision or an idea of what God has called them to do specifically to help glorify God to help with human flourishing. Husbands are to lead their families in going after that goal. Wives are to submit to, support, and help her husband and to come alongside him in this united vision that you have both been given by God. When a husband and wife have a unified vision for how God has gifted them and what he has called them to, these kinds of families become world shakers! And mothers…. My goodness! Mothers have the opportunity to shepherd little hearts day in and day out. They help sharpen their kids like little arrows, that are ready to be shot out into the darkness of the world, with the mission of helping our world flourish.

Ladies, submission is powerful! There is soooo much power in submission. In marriage, you have the power to influence your entire home for good. God has gifted you with an ability to make things flourish. Think about it this way… Finish this quote for me… “If momma ain’t happy… ain’t nobody happy.” You see! Even the world picks up on this. A wife and a mother has the ability to set the temperature to a home that is safe, comforting, challenging, empowering, and loving for her husband and kids. Women have the power to breathe life into everything they come into contact with. Women have been gifted by God to breathe life into every sphere of influence they come into contact with.

I think one of the questions that are often asked at this point is, “Well, what about women who work? Can women work outside the home?” Yes! Of course. Titus 2 does encourage young wives should be “busy at home” (or literally a home worker), but it does not say that she should ONLY be busy at home. In Proverbs 31, we see a woman who carried household responsibilities while also running a buisiness. There’s also nothing that says a man can’t accept more than a usual share of household responsibilities because his wife wanted to complete her education or pursue a career, though both would want to consider what kind of an impact that might make on the family. It seems like in scripture, there is a lot of room for individual decisions and arrangements in how all of this is carried out. However, what is clear is that God has tasked the man with leading the family, and the wife is to submit to his leadership.

So we’ve talked about the home… So how does this play out in the church? And to answer that question, we need to go back to the word submission. Submission is not primarily a marriage concept that only married women need to observe. Nor is marriage the ultimate goal to achieve. Submission applies to all women everywhere: single, married, old, young… Submission is a Christian concept, designed for all believers. The question is how does it play itself out? I think Ephesians 5:1 helps us here… Ephesians 5:1 says, 1 Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly beloved children 2 and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial fragrant offering to God.

So, Paul starts out Ephesians 5 by telling people to imitate God as beloved children. How? As Christ loved us and gave himself for us. Jesus sacrificed himself for us by submitting to his fathers will. Remember what Jesus said right before he was arrested in the garden of Gathsemane? He said, Father let this cup pass from me, but not my will but your will be done. Jesus submitted to the fathers will. And all Christians are to submit to one another in love by sacrificing for their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul continues this thought in Ephesians 5:15-21 says this: 15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you live ​— ​not as unwise people but as wise ​— ​ 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. All Christians are to glorify God by submitting to one another in love by sacrificing themselves to help and serve others. Much of Ephesians 4, 5, and 6 is focused on how to live as a new Christian. But in 15-21, these believers submit to one another by sacrificing. Let’s walk through that again. We see that because the days are evil… verse 19, when you are filled with the Spirit… you will…speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord… This is an example of people helping one another flourish by encouraging one another. Why, because Christ sacrificed himself. Because of his sacrifice, Christians sacrifice. We also see this in the book of Acts chapter 2 where believers sacrificed and submitted to one another by sacrificing everything for the sake for their brothers and sisters. This church was marked by their sacrifice for the sake of others and the gospel. They served one another by giving of their material possessions and by gathering and having all things in common.

Single women, the calling you have is the same calling given to all believers. You have the same calling that single men have, that married women have. You submit to God by laying down your life, by sacrificing your life, to bring glory to God. There is no better place to do that than in the church. Single women, you have the ability to drastically impact every sphere of influence you’re connected to. Whether that be work, the friendships you’re in, your community groups, and with the church at large. The world needs single women use the gifts that God has given you to serve the church to help seek and bring about human flourishing. Let me give you some examples of how some of our single women are bringing about human flourishing right now… We have ladies helping to lead community groups, this year one of our women was just sent out of our church to go serve in Kenya, right now we’ve been training up women to become deacons. Something we say all the time is that the Church is God’s plan A to reach the world for Christ. If this is true, single women must play a huge part in what that looks like. Ladies, listen. Mercy Church wants women to flourish. Especially, single women. We have some things that we’re rolling out next year to specifically pour into and develop the women of our church. We’d be foolish not to. This is also why we also need female staff members. We aren’t where we want to be yet, but its important for the church to utilize the gifts of women in the church. Aside from the office of Elder or pastor, a woman can lead in any capacity. Bottom line, Ladies, God has designed you to drastically impact our church and our world for the gospel. We can’t do it without you!

**2. How sin distorted God’s design**

Okay, so far we’ve talked about the fact that women are image bearers tasked to bring glory to God by bringing about human flourishing. Wives are to come alongside their husbands by being helpers and submitting to his leadership in the home, and how single women play a big part in bringing about human flourishing in our churches and in our world by submitting to one another and laying down their life for others.

So the question is, how does sin distort God’s design for women? And ladies as I was looking at how sin has distorted God’s design for you, I recognized the weightiness of the spiritual battle that you face. Ladies, following Jesus according to how you have been designed it is a glorious calling that leads to extraordinary results. But, women of mercy church you are under attack and the results of sin in a woman’s life is so destructive. Ladies please listen in because as one of your pastors, I want to warn you of what is headed your way. So please, open your hearts.

I think that there are 5 major ways that sin distorts God’s design for women. So I’m going to walk through these one by one and explain them to you. And after I explain each one I want to show the hope you have in Christ and how he can restore everything back to your original design. All of these can apply for men as well, but since this we are speaking to women this week I will solely focus on you. All of these will be in our community group guides this week so don’t miss community group. All of this, I’m getting from Eve’s interaction with Satan in the garden.

**1. Doubt– listening to Satan’s lies instead of standing firm in God’s truth.**

In Genesis 3 we see the story of how Adam and Eve sinned against God. When they did that it sent everything into a downward spirit. The worst of it all was that it caused sin to enter the world and it ruined their relationship with God and with each other. Even though God had given a command to Eve, she failed to accurately proclaim it to the enemy. In the same way, women are tempted to elevate their emotions above the Scriptures and distort the Scriptures to fit their desires. Eve saw that the food was delightful to the eye desirable to make one wise so she ate it. Even though she knew what God’s words to her were.

God gave Eve everything they would have ever needed but said don’t eat of this tree, because if you do you will die. Adam taught her about this. Eve’s sin, was that she was tempted by Satan’s lies and she started to doubt God’s goodness. Instead of standing firm on God’s word to her, she doubted him. Ladies, please don’t fall into the trap of doubting God’s word and disobeying him simply to fit your desires. Doubting God’s goodness and disobeying what you know to be true is an assault against God.

So ladies here is how Christ brings that back into perfect design… **Instead of doubt, be Guarded in Truth.**  Jesus shows us that unlike Eve, when Jesus encountered Satan’s lies in the wilderness, he stood firm and responded with God’s truth (Matthew 4). Like Jesus, ladies you need to fight doubt with God’s Word. Refuse to let circumstances dictate how you follow Christ. Trust God’s Word over how you feel. Your life in Christ depends on this.

**2. Covetousness- comparing what God has not given you with what God has given others.**

Even though God provided abundantly for Eve, she focused on what God had not given her. In the same way, women are tempted to compare what they don’t have with what they believe others do have.

**Instead of covetousness live in grateful contentment**. Even through Jesus “took the form of a servant,” he never coveted the riches of the world, instead he emptied himself for other’s sake (Phil 2:5-11). Ladies, the comparison game has to stop. It’s killing you. Ladies, as we studied in Romans 8 last week. God is not holding out on you. He’s your dad who loves you and wants your best. I’m sure you’ve heard us say this before but, comparison is the thief of Joy. When you compare yourself with other people, you are telling God that his plan for you isn’t good enough. If God died for you then, why would he not also spare no expense in growing you into who you were called to be.

Pinterest and Instagram isn’t real. I met a girl a couple years ago that was quite literally enslaved to the opinions of others and constantly peeking into other’s lives and then basing how God was feeling about her by how good others people’s lives looked. Think about that. Someone else’s “seemingly awesome” life caused her deep distress. God isn’t holding out on you.

3. **Rebelliousness – distrusting the words of authority and pushing against the structures of authority.** Even though God’s authority came with his blessings, his protection, and his loving presense, Eve doubted his words and broke the limits he placed on her. In the same way, women are tempted to distrust and push back against authority.

**Instead of living in rebellion submit to God’s authority.** Jesus trusted the words of his Father and humbly submitted to them. He submitted to the will of God, even when the will of God led him to the cross. Ladies, I think this comes to a down to one question… Do you actually trust God? Do you actually trust him? Do you trust him enough to trust that those whom he has put in your life to submit to is actually for your good. Whether that is your husband, your mentor, or the elders of Mercy Church… Do you trust that God has put these people in your life for your flourishment… *need something else here.*

**4. Manipulation – using your influential power for your own gain rather than others’ good.** God sent Eve into the garden to be a blessing to Adam and to the world, to turn “not good” into “very good.” But Eve used her influential power in order to get what she desired. In the same way, women are tempted to use their God given gifts in order to manipulate instead of influence.

**Instead of manipulation use your Godly influence.** Jesus brought powerful and permanent change into the world by not exalting himself in power, but by humbly obeying the Father’s will and laying down his power (2 Corinthians 13:4). Ladies, as a helpers you have the opportunity to breathe life into this world. You have the power to take things that are not good, disfunctional, and broken helping to bring them back to life. Ladies, one of the clearest ways I’ve seen this work itself out is in the words you use. There are fewer things greater in our life than women who speak words of encouragement in a time of need. And unfortunately, when you use your words for evil there are fewer things that are more destructive.

**5. Shame – hiding from the Lord instead of drawing near in confession and forgiveness.** Eve’s response to sin is the same as Adam’s: She hides from the Lord and covers herself. Women are tempted to run away from God in sinful shame instead of drawing near to be covered by Christ’s blood. The same distrust that causes women to sin, is the same sin that causes them to run.

**Instead of shame you need to run to God.** Ladies, Jesus took on your sin and shame and defeated it, opening a way for you to draw near to God in full assurance and faith, knowing that your sin will be forgiven (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Ladies, like we did with the Men, I’d like for you to stand. I want to speak these some words of affirmation over you.

1. You were created to glorify God and to help creation flourish.
2. Sin distorted your purpose, but Christ died to redeem you.
3. In Christ, you can: 1) Be guarded in Truth 2) Live in grateful contentment 3) Submit to God’s authority 4) Use your Godly influence 5) Run to God.

Pray –

Communion -