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Genesis 1:26-26; 2:18-25 – *Created for Community*

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Genesis 1:26-26; 2:18-25

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

[...]

¹⁸ The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Word of the Lord. (**Thanks be to God**)

When I was growing up, a punk-rock band called Green Day was popular. In 2004 they came out with a song called “Boulevard of Broken Dreams.” I looked this week on YouTube and it has around 560 million views...

So it’s a popular song.

Sometimes what I like to do is read the comments on videos.

On this video, one particular comment earned over 5,000 “likes”:

“Loved this song as a kid. Didn’t realize it was foreshadowing my future.”

Here are the lyrics:

*I walk this empty street
On the Boulevard of Broken Dreams
Where the city sleeps
And I'm the only one, and I walk alone*

*I walk alone, I walk alone
I walk alone*

*My shadow's the only one that walks beside me
My shallow heart's the only thing that's beating
Sometimes I wish someone out there will find me
Till then I walk alone*

“Loved this song as a kid,” the comment reads...

“Didn’t realize it was foreshadowing my future.”

Songs like this are great because it’s like reading the psalms...

The song puts to words what we feel...

It expresses what’s going on deep within us.

“My shadow’s the only one that walks beside me...”

“Sometimes I wish someone out there will find me...”

“Till then I walk alone...I walk alone.”

Many of us relate all too well to these words.

Ask your teenager—

Or your kid who’s in their early 20s—

Studies have shown that this range of 18–24-year-olds are the loneliest group.

Ask them if they can relate to feeling lonely or alone.

It's not just them though—

They may be more prone to it—

But we all feel it.

Sad, unhappy, depressed, or an unidentifiable 'feeling off.'

Of course this has been heightened over the last year and a half—

Social distancing, quarantine, shelter in place at home—

But we could be surrounded by people all day and still feel it...

Still feel *alone*...

Like we're traveling through life by ourselves.

God looks at this and says, "not good."

"It is not good for the man to be alone." (Gen 2:18)

If you're familiar with Genesis 1—

The majestic account of creation—

These words, "not good," will jar you a little.

Because 6 times before this...

God creates and calls it either "good" or "very good":

"God saw that the light was *good*."

"And God saw that it was *good* after gathering the seas."

"And God saw that it was *good* after creating the plants, sea creatures, birds and livestock."

"God saw all that he made and it was *very good*."

Then we come to 2:18:

"...*not good*..."

"It is not good for the man to be alone."

Before the fall—

Before the first act of disobedience—

God sees the man in his solitude...

And says, “This is no good.”

Now, was the man alone?

No, he was surrounded by a parade of animals:

Wild animals, birds, and livestock.

But none of these were suitable to end the man’s aloneness.

The man was also in unbroken fellowship with God...

The Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Wasn’t *this* enough to solve his isolation?

I guess not, because God himself points out the problem.

Adam doesn’t say, “Hey God, I’m lonely.”

God looks at the man and says, “It’s not good that he’s alone.”

Even though the man is surrounded by animals—

Even though he is in perfect relationship with God—

He is still alone....

Missing an important piece of his existence:

Community.

Fellowship with like creatures.

Connecting with each other.

The human person—

You and I—

We are not complete in ourselves.

We are created for community.

And we see this, and we know this...

Because we are created in God’s image. (Gen 1:26-27)

So, who is this God in whose image we’re created?

In Christian doctrine we say that God is Trinity:

One God in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Before the creation of the world—

Before the existence of anyone or anything else—

God existed as Trinity...

Father, Son and Holy Spirit living in perfect community—

Equal in their divinity;

Equal in their immeasurability;

Equal in their essence and eternal being—

Yet three distinct persons.

And in their eternal existence...

They create together;

They enjoy, and delight in each other;

They love each other in ways that aren't self-centered;

They defer one another. (Tim Keller)

You see all of this in the way Jesus talks about the Father and the Spirit in the Gospel of John:

The Spirit glorifies the Son;

The Son glorifies the Father;

And the Father glorifies the Son. (John 16—17)

In his essence, God is community.

And this is what he intends for us...

God creates us in his image.

God creates us for human community...

So when he sees us journeying life alone...

He says, "not good."

In his grace—

In his desire to share the enjoyment of community...

And in his desire to share his love—

God creates another human being...

A creature like the man...

Someone who corresponds to him.

And with the creation of the woman...

We see the first human community...

And it is *very good*.

There is a lot to say about community—

A lot to say about connecting with each other—

But let's look at 3 barriers to community.

First, we don't think that we need community.

We live in a society where it's almost commendable to "go alone."

Think of figures like the Lone Ranger and John Wayne;

Think of our super heroes—

Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Black Panther;

My class song when I graduated from high school:

"Here I Go Again" on my own...

It was cool to be facing the world alone.

Some of us think of ourselves as 'lone wolves'...

And we think it's good...

We don't think we need anyone else...

But that's not true.

Going at life alone goes against the very grain of our being created...

We were made for community.

Maybe that feeling of sadness or depression you've been feeling...

Is really a symptom of loneliness.

So what do we do?

Acknowledge/call out loneliness for what it is:

"I'm lonely."

“I need community.”

“I cannot do it alone.”

It’s okay—

It’s good to call it out—

It’s how God created us...

To need each other.

Second barrier to community.

Maybe you recognize your need for community...

But people stand in your way:

“I don’t like people”;

“These people aren’t like me”;

“Or, they can’t help me anyways.”

What does our passage say about the person/people God creates us to be with?

God says, “I will make a helper suitable for him.”

And God creates the woman.

We usually think about this in the marriage context...

But this also applies to our non-romantic need for one another across the board.

“A suitable helper.”

This word “helper” speaks of strength.

Its most frequent use is describing Yahweh’s relationship to Israel...

Where God is Israel’s helper because God is the stronger one. (Victor Hamilton)

Some people want to read this verse and this passage and say:

“See, the woman is inferior to the man.”

Well, you could actually argue that the woman is stronger than the man...

That she is spoken of as a “helper” in the way that the Lord is helper.

The first human is all alone...

So the Lord creates someone corresponding....

Someone like the man.

These 2 humans—

And the rest of us—

Find strength, fellowship, love, encouragement, and completeness *in community*...

And *only* in community.

People are created to help us and us them...

To journey through life together.

And if your hang up is one of pride—

Thinking that these other people around you are too different—

We're one in the same.

All of us find our existence outside of ourselves.

God formed man from the dirt of the ground;

God formed the woman from the side of the man.

Not one of us is responsible for our own creation.

We have all been made by God:

All of us have been made in God's image;

All of us have been created with equal value, worth and potential;

All of us have the gifts to serve and honor our fellow humans;

All of us have limits and therefore we all need other people.

The third barrier to community is the feeling that we don't belong.

We know we're lonely...

And we don't have a problem with people...

But we get the sense that we don't belong.

Since we're talking about intentionally connecting with each other...

We're going to look at the Christian community.

Now, there are many communities and groups that you could belong to:

Neighborhood associations;

Mothers of toddlers group;

Club volleyball;

In a sense, you may not feel like you belong to these groups...

You don't live in the right geographic region;

Your kids aren't the right age;

Or you're not good enough at the sport.

The Christian community is not based on performance or geography.

When God calls you his child...

You belong.

When the Spirit warms your affections to Christ—

When you profess your allegiance to Jesus Christ...

And you believe that Jesus is the Son of God sent to save you and the world from sin—

You are immediately a part of a new community.

You become a part of the body of Christ.

You are adopted into God's family...

With God as your loving Father...

And every other Christian as your brothers and sisters.

We do not do anything to form this community...

It is a divine reality given to us through our relationship with Christ.

And, as members of this community, it is our privilege to journey together:

It is our privilege to call up a brother or sister to check in;

It is our privilege to receive a message from someone wanting to meet because they're lonely;

It is our privilege to meet together to sharpen and strengthen our brothers and sisters.

So, what can you do to build/exercise community right now?

We were planning on having church Small Groups underway...

But we cannot meet with the current restrictions.

So, what *can* we do?

Call a brother or sister who has been on your mind...

Pick up the phone to check in.

Your call will help them as much as it will benefit you.

Invite someone for a walk while the weather is nice.

Come join us on Thursday morning as we reflect together on Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Volunteer with something at the church...

This is a great way to connect with other believers.

GEMS, Cadets, A/V, music, Marriage Mentoring, Wee Worship,
Community Corner...

Opportunities are there!

It is not good for any of us to be alone.

God creates us for community.

God creates us for each other.

Amen.