

In April of 2011 Kate Middleton and Prince William were married in a lavish ceremony and reception fit for a king and queen. The glitter of the couple and the positions they occupy attracted the attention of everyone in Britain as well as millions around the world. The bride wore a satin dress with a veil held in place by a tiara borrowed from the Queen. She carried a bouquet of myrtle, lily of the valley, sweet William, and hyacinth. No expense was spared to throw what many called the wedding of the year.

Most weddings don't have as much glitz and glamour. Most don't have 1900 guests or hundreds of millions watching around the world. Don't let that diminish the two people getting married in the first lesson. They're certainly two very important people. For all the talk of marriage today any of you not married might think this is your chance to drift off and tune out. Whether you're married or not, if you know people who are married or divorced, if you plan on getting married or if you plan to stay single it doesn't matter. God has some news to share with all of us today...

**God invites you to a wedding
To see your need
To see your gift**

If you're the one who does the washing at home you would know when a new washing machine was needed. Your spouse might not take your word for it. They'll just figure you're in it to get a fancy new one. So you let them do wash once and suddenly they say, "How come the washing machine isn't working? Maybe we need a new one." Finally they see what you've known all along. God created his masterpiece in five days. Everything was very good. On the sixth day a perfect human being stood in his presence. But before God could call out his typical refrain, "it was good" he said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." The man was perfect; God just wasn't done filling the man's needs.

Adam's first official duty was the privilege of naming the animals. His will was perfectly in line with God's. So Adam named every animal exactly as God would have them named. But Adam began to notice something. Each of them had a partner, a complement that shared similar characteristics. Somewhere there must be one for Adam, but "For Adam no suitable helper was found." No one shared his feelings, his thoughts, or his moments of faith. There was no one to enjoy God's presence with. Adam figured out his need, something God knew all along.

Many people throughout the years since Adam have shared the same need for a partner and complement. But some have wondered, "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" It seems that more and more couples live together before marriage. Calling it a great way to save money or a great way to get to know each other before committing, these couples figure they can make their own way when it comes to God's program for marriage. But when the going gets tough, without commitment, one can easily get going. No commitment means no responsibilities and no strings attached to stay. These people have changed the rules and are sinning against God.

God knows that living apart from someone you really love is hard. He knows your needs better than you do. And God isn't in the business of making life harder. God is the business of saving people, blessing them, and making promises to them. God saw your need and promised that in his son Jesus we find the strength to plant our feet firmly in the bonds of marriage before enjoying the blessings of marriage. God saw your need for love and companionship and blessed you in the commitment of marriage.

Did you ever hit a speed bump in a parking lot and think your car was going to fall apart? Totally missing those bumps can do serious damage. It's no different with the bumps of marriage. Everyone looks at marriage either from outside or inside one and thinks either it's just going to be wonderful with no problems or it will have so many challenges we'll never survive. So we want less commitment and more conditions. Too many people take those vows lightly thinking they can modify them as needed. "I promise to be faithful as long as we both shall love each other." That's like making a promise with your fingers crossed.

When Christ promised to forgive sins it was a commitment he fully intended to keep. He wasn't saying he would return to take us to heaven so long as we loved him enough, didn't make him mad, or irritate him. He knew what we needed, singles and married alike. He knew we would have bumps but he promised that by a relationship with him we would get through to heaven. Jesus is the third strand of a marriage drawing couples closer. He is the almighty friend for singles guaranteeing a life that ends in glory. Christ provides us the answer to our greatest need. In love he forgives us our spiritual speed bumps, our sins.

Adam found his helper once God led him to see his need. God defined for Adam who that helper would be. God made the woman to be a gift for man, and man a gift for woman. In the garden of Eden God instituted a building block for society. Adam and Eve represented all of us in that first marriage. You can see your need there. You can also see the gift God intended for you too.

When Adam opened his eyes he could hardly contain his joy at this beautiful gift. One more creature needed naming and Adam gave her a name God rejoiced in, "she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." Adam was thankful because he realized she was a gift of God created just for him. Now picture how God waits for you to find your spouse. That person is God's gift specially wrapped for you, your complement in so many ways. Where you might be rough, your spouse might be gentle. Where you hide emotions your spouse might gush with emotions. Like two gears just fitting perfectly together your spouse and you make perfect complements. Just the way God designed the gift to be.

But even the best gears start grinding. We're all still sinful with faults. Does your spouse put the milk jug into the fridge empty? Do they stay out too late with old buddies on family night? Do they forget to pick up the dry cleaning? Do they stay at work far too late without even calling? What about the little annoyances that become big arguments? Money, raising the children, interaction with the in-laws all challenge the marriage. It isn't easy to love them at that moment. It might seem easier to just walk away or split up. "God wants us to be happy" we figure and if my spouse doesn't then I can leave.

Marriage takes work. It takes something more than love to hold two people together who are fighting almost all the time. It takes something more than feelings or emotions to make a marriage. God through Adam said it this way, **"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh."** That's marriage. No chances for saying, "Sorry, I just don't love you anymore." God's intention for marriage leaves no room for "irreconcilable differences." No easy divorce. You heard Paul say in the second lesson, **"Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her...wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord."** Marriage is a unit modeled after Jesus and the church. Jesus loved the church even though it didn't deserve it. Jesus died for the church. Jesus shows us self-sacrificing love and commitment which is the foundation for any marriage.

Where can we get that kind of love for our marriages and for ourselves? Jesus is the only source. He had that kind of love for all of us. He died and rose again to show us how much he loved us. Now we're the bride of Christ, whether you're single or married. We're spotless standing in the white robes of righteousness just like a bride walking down the aisle in white on her wedding day. We're perfect because of Christ. We're faithful waiting for Christ Jesus to return. Singles, married, you stand holy before God today with your sins forgiven. That's God's gift to you.

Genesis chapter two doesn't read like a marriage ceremony. No descriptions of flowers or the color of the bridesmaids' dresses. We might forget it's even a marriage. But it was the perfect marriage. There God provided the template for marriage that is still in place. One man and one woman whom God saw had a need for a complement to share their life with. One man and one woman each a gift from God to the other. Be united with your spouse today and all of us, married or single, are united with Christ every day.