

Wednesdays at West Side West Side Church

**Culture:
Its Creation, Fall and Redemption
*A Case Study on Gender***

Session # 2 – January 29, 2020

Wayne A. Pelly

West Side Church
Empower International Ministries

A Case Study on Gender

The Class Schedule:

January – Part 1: Creation & Fall

- # 1 – Creation (Genesis 1-2)
- # 2 – The Fall (Genesis 3)

February:

- Terry and Nancy complete their series
- *Ash Wednesday service (February 26)*

March – Part 2: The New Testament

- # 3 – Jesus (the Gospels)
- # 4 & 5 – Paul (the Acts & Epistles)

Review Session 1 - Creation

- Both male and female created in God's image (Gen. 1)
- All blessings & mandates of Gen. 1 are given to both men and women
- The woman is described by God as the man's "ezer kenegdo" – a face-to-face partner (Gen. 2)
- The claim for man's authority over woman does not stand up to scrutiny (Gen. 2)
 - Woman as helper – description of ability to meet man's need
 - Adam names the woman – insight not authority
 - Adam was created first – emphasis is on his need – and her capacity to meet that need

It's Jesus Who Points us to Creation

- Matt. 19:3-8 – “. . . From the beginning it was not so”
 - The question of divorce – Moses in Deut. 24:1
- Jesus’ diagnosis – “hard hearts”
- God’s ideal/intent is “one flesh”
 - Culture contradicted God’s ideal
 - The Law could not achieve it in a fallen world
 - “For what the Law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh” (Rom. 8:3)
 - The Law can only regulate hard hearts – not heal them
- God’s ideal is found in creation – not culture

Men and Women at the Beginning

- Creation of Humanity – Male and Female
- Presented in Terms of Marriage
- Provides an Important Starting Point for Understanding Gender in a broader way:
 - Creation: God's creation ideal/intent
 - The Fall: What went wrong

Temptation and Fall

- The temptation and its participants
- The “Fall” and its impact on relationships
- Text - Genesis 3:1-20
- A change in their relationship with God
 - . . . And with each other

Genesis 3: The Temptation

Genesis 3:6-7

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Genesis 3: The Temptation

- Who is present when the serpent tempts Eve? (Genesis 3:6)
 - “She gave some to her husband, *who was with her*”
- Who is responsible for giving in to the temptation?
 - Eve is directly tempted by Satan
 - Adam is a silent observer and then active participant
- A challenge to the continual blaming of women
 - Women and men are equally responsible for the entry of sin into the world
 - Significant implications in Africa

Genesis 3: God's Judgment

Genesis 3:14, 17

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. . . ."

¹⁷ And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and ate from the tree of which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life"

Genesis 3: God's Judgment

- Who or what is cursed?
- Traditional mis-interpretation:
 - Or mis-translation (vs. 16): “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. . . .”
 - How did God do this?
- Only two curses are mentioned:
 - The serpent: vs. 14
 - The ground: vs. 17
- The first man and woman – particularly the woman – were **not** cursed by God

The Consequences of the Fall

- Genesis 3:16 (NKJV, with annotations)

“Unto the woman he said, ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow (this word could also be translated sorrow, sorrowful labor, or painful toil) and your conception (and/or pregnancy); in pain (or sorrowful labor) you shall bring forth children, and your desire (or turning) shall be for (or to) your husband, and he shall rule over you.’”

The Consequences of the Fall

- Genesis 3:17-19

“And to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and ate from the tree of which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful (or sorrowful) toil you
will eat of it

all the days of your life;

The Consequences of the Fall

- Genesis 3:17-19 (continued)
It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you will return."

“The Economics of the Fall”

- What mean by economics?
 - How scarce resources are allocated among competing ends
- The Garden of Eden:
 - An Economy of Abundance
 - Resources aren't even scarce!
- The World of the Fall:
 - An Economy of Scarcity
 - Resulting from the curse on the ground
 - What does this do to *life*: to people & their relationships?

“The Economics of the Fall”

- The result of the curse on the ground:
- “Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you”
- The result in a word: Scarcity
 - Instead of God’s abundance to live
 - Scarcity – the challenge to survive
 - Difficult choices will need to be made
 - Not “what to eat?” but “who gets to eat?”
- Impacts people and their relationships

“The Economics of the Fall”

- The approach by Dr. Carrie A. Miles
 - Founder/Director of Empower International Ministries
 - Ph.D. University of Chicago – Social Science
 - Dr. Gary Becker – Nobel Prize for work on how economics drives non-financial behavior
- Applied discipline of socio-economics
 - Combined with study of the Biblical text
 - Confirmed with history in the pre-industrial world
 - To evaluate how scarcity affects human relationships and behavior
 - Implications for our world as well

The Impact of Scarcity on Man

- The ground is cursed
 - Men are forced into struggle with the ground and with each other
- Men will suffer sorrowful toil (Hebrew: “*Itsabon*”)
 - Men must work hard to survive
 - Wouldn't this affect women as well?
 - We will see this word (“itsabon”) again

The Impact of Scarcity on Man

- Man eats by the sweat of his brow
 - Anxiety, concern about competition, pressure to be the best, avoid shame
 - Pressure to dominate others (or be dominated) – or find place in social hierarchy
 - Must not show weakness
 - Hierarchical power arrangements in which a few men dominate everyone else; e.g., slavery & despotism
 - Hard hearts
- Will return to dust - death

Impact of Scarcity on Woman

An issue of translation of Genesis 3:16

- The popular English translation
 - “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing”
 - Raises an important question: How did God do this? Implications of a curse.
- A more accurate translation (KJV & NKJV):
 - “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conceptions” (entire process)
 - (More consistent with the original Hebrew, the impact of the curse on the ground, and human history!)

Impact of Scarcity on Woman

- What did God actually multiply?
- “I will greatly multiply your ‘*itsabon*’ . . .”
 - *Same word as used for man in vs. 17*
 - Woman must also work hard to survive – “sorrowful toil”
- “. . . and your conceptions/pregnancies”
 - Most important resource in scarcity: Children
 - Therefore woman’s most important “job” – her value: bearing & raising children – which also limits other activities
 - Her life now defined by this “role”!
 - Also results in polygamy and brideprice

Impact of Scarcity on Woman

- In pain/*sorrow* you shall bring forth children
 - Same root as '*itsabon*' (sorrowful toil)
 - In Genesis always used for grief or distress – emotional (not physical) pain (see Gen 6:6)
- Why such sorrow in bringing forth children?
 - A world where children are valued as resources rather than as individuals
 - A world of high infant and childhood mortality
 - A world of conflict between her children (see Genesis 4 – Cain & Abel)

In Pain/Sorrow . . . (Gen. 3:16)

- Gen. 3:16 – “In *sorrow (grief)* you shall bring forth children”
- Gen. 6:6 – “The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with *grief*.”
- Gen. 45:5 – (Joseph to his brothers) – “But now, do not therefore be *grieved* or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

Note: The same word!

Impact of Scarcity on Woman

- “Your *desire* shall be for your husband” (or “you will turn to”)
 - Women are dependent on men: financially, for status, for their very survival
 - Women want to marry dominant men (even though they may be unpleasant to live with)
- “And he shall *rule* over you.”
 - Male dominance of social institutions (women limited to the home sphere)
 - Husbands have more power in the marital relationship
 - Subordination of women to men
- A double-bind for the woman
- *There is another point of view on “desire” & “rule”*

What is the “Woman’s Desire”?

- For her very survival in a subsistence-based world –
OR:
 - ESV: “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”
 - NLT (2nd Ed.): “And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you” (footnote in 1st Ed.)
- Origin: N.T. Scholar – Susan Foh on Gen. 3:16 proposed this interpretation in the mid-1970s
 - “Your desire will be to dominate your husband, but he will rule over you.”
 - Based on comparison with Gen. 4:7
 - God to Cain: “Sin is crouching at your door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.”
 - “Desire” must be a desire to dominate
 - Commands in the N.T. for women/wives to submit/not have authority are seen as supporting this interpretation
 - Addressing a sinful tendency of women/wives

Desire to Dominate - Implications

- Sin:
 - The woman's sin was/is against her husband & his headship – not God
 - A strong tendency, even a character defect of women
- Redemption:
 - “Consequently a man must actively seek to rule his wife” – Foh's own conclusion
 - Foh, “What is the Woman's Desire,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1974/75)
 - Male authority as corrective action over women
- Men encouraged to dominance, suspicion & hostility toward women
- Women encouraged to minimize their own initiative
- Would tend to keep women/wives in a very vulnerable position
- Implications in Africa, where there is often a value for men to beat their wives to reinforce control

Cross-Examination

- Metaphor in Gen. 4:7 is of a wild beast crouching – its desire is to consume or devour
 - The issue is appetite, not authority
- Same word used in Song of Sol. 7:10 of the groom's desire for his bride in a positive way
 - The bride: "I belong to my beloved, and his *desire* is for me."
- Actually a judgment on the man (does not fit the pattern in the context)
- How did God do this – accomplish this "judgment"?
- Not consistent with history – women's desire & men's rule
- Jesus challenges men – never women – regarding their use of authority/power
- Seems aimed at today's world of greater power for women
- Do women ever experience redemption from this judgment?
- Does this view *answer* questions or *raise* them?

Impact of Scarcity on Relationships

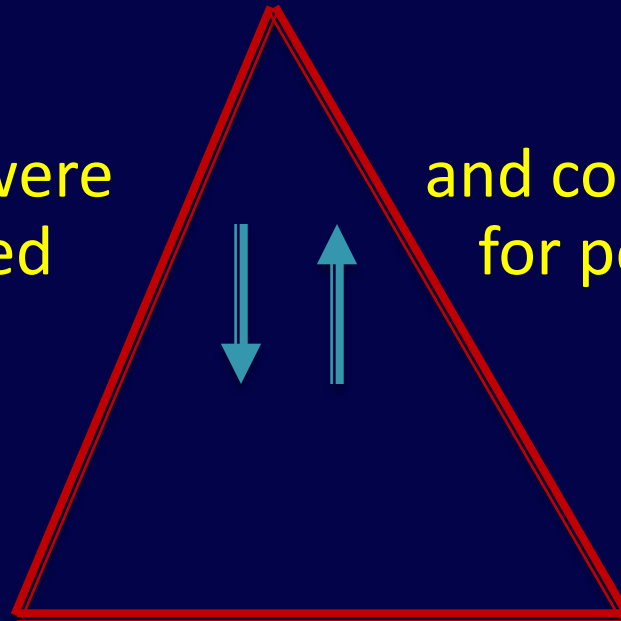
- Relationships become transactional (use others to meet our needs)
 - Brideprice “purchases” sex, food & children for the man
 - Women gain a home & protection
- Sexuality is expressed in a double standard
 - For men: a mark of achievement & conquest. A way to prove their masculinity
 - For women: Something to be protected – more for her family (& future husband) than for her
- Hierarchy determines our treatment of one-another
 - A power and status hierarchy – respect to those above us & lack of it to those below (e.g., treat them as expendable)
 - Scarcity: Limited goods, “zero-sum” approach to position and power

The Fallen World

A few powerful men on top

Most men were
dominated

and competing
for position



Women were subordinated

Patriarchy

Why this Matters

- Consistent with/reinforces careful & accurate translation – and its implications
- Helps make sense of the world:
 - See throughout human history, including Biblical history, & make sense of the New Testament world
 - Consistent with traditional, pre-industrial cultures today (e.g., Africa, India)
 - Contributes to understanding of how the relative wealth of the industrial revolution has impacted (or not) these pressures
 - Explains origin of today's gender norms & roles
 - Helps to decrease our “Understanding Distance” to the biblical world.
 - Clarifies God's creation intent vs. the result of sin

Case Study on Gender - Our Next Step

The New Testament

- Both Jesus & Paul address those toward the top of the social & power pyramid (men) – for example:
 - Jesus in passages where disciples argue regarding greatest, such as Mark 10:35-45 & Luke 22:24-27
 - Paul in Eph. 5:21-6:9 & 2 Cor. 10-12
- Review all passages addressing gender: Those describing women active in counter-cultural ways = one-half of the passages
 - Not what you'd expect for patriarchy
 - Not what people today typically see
- How do you account for this?
- What could go wrong? How deal with it?

For Further Study

- Resources by Dr. Carrie A. Miles (same biblical & socio-economic analysis, with different applications):
- Addresses the post-industrial world:
 - *The Redemption of Love: Rescuing Marriage and Sexuality from the Economics of a Fallen World*, Brazos: 2006 (I can obtain at author's price)
 - *Face-to-Face* (Bible study guide) – Available on Amazon (American edition of the following)
- *New Man, New Woman, New Life* (Bible study guide used in Africa & India):
 - Download for free from ministry web site <http://empowerinternational.org/>