

Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. Gen. 5:2

This verse from chapter 5 of Genesis restates something from chapters 1 and 2 that also comes up in the Gospels and Epistles. It is the nature of humanity. And the real key to understanding how God created us male and female is that it is a blessing.

Today our world is wracked with questions and anxiety about male and female, procreation, issues of sexual orientation, the nature of marriage, and a host of related topics. The fallen world does not always experience God's created designs as blessings, though. Because of our sinful nature, we naturally reject what is intended to be for our blessings and good, seeing it instead as a curse.

Teaching the 6th Commandment to the 8th graders has become a strange task. The voice of the Church sounds so discordant to the voices of the world that many of the young people assume that anyone who teaches Christian ideas based on the Scriptures must be ignorant of modern realities, suffer from a phobia, or just be mean and hateful. They're taught by the world to define themselves by their desires, that sexual morality is purely a matter of consent, that nobody can say what is right and what is wrong behavior for anyone else. So few people experience the blessing of marriage and family as described in Genesis and taught by the Church for millennia that they think of our teachings as oppressive, stifling, judgmental, and just a bunch of rules forbidding pleasure.

This Sunday the reading focus on God's designs of sexuality. Spoiler alert, I'm going to preach on that topic. But the goal will not be to list everything wrong with the way the world preaches and teaches on this topic via pop culture. I'm not going to preach directly "against" any particular sin, I'm going to hold up the divine pattern as a blessing and examine everything that is right about God's design. As a result, the Law as a mirror will show us not only how we've strayed from God's designs but how we've missed out on the blessings of it, and how our repentance and God's forgiveness begins to restore the blessings inherent in how He designed and created us.

Please plan to be here (or participate remotely if need be) as we try to reframe the whole Christian sexuality discussion in positive rather than negative terms, and help St. Paul's be a light shining in the darkness of the fallen world.

In Christ, Pastor Speckhard