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“Sex, Part 2”

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Genesis chapter 1, verse 1-5, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (3) Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. (4) God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. (5) God called the light day, and the darkness He called night And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”* We lose a little bit of the poetic language when these verses are translated. We lose some of the rhythm. But what’s happening is that God is creating this...creating this...creating this, and it was good, and again creating this...creating this...creating this, and it was good. So written and in reality God put this groove or beat behind everything. This rhythm has stayed the same from the beginning of time. Every day leads to night and every night leads to morning. Every fall leads to winter and so on. Six days we work, one day we rest. God put wove this groove into the fabric of the universe. It’s always flowing behind everything.

Last week we began to unpack sex because there is all these preconceived notions about Christians and that God is this killjoy in heaven who doesn’t want us to have sex, and we’re all repressed angry humans who have used that pent up frustration and funneled it into trying to destroy everyone else’s happiness, or that we’re all Ned Flanders. But the Bible teaches that God created man and woman and sex and we talked about how God created thousands of cells for the purpose of sex. God created us for sex. It wasn’t an accident, he didn’t set it into motion and walk away. Still some believe he created sex for procreation but they miss the whole point. So we go to Song of Solomon and see the fertile ground from which life springs from. We see Solomon work his magic saying things like, “you were honey I would eat you, if you were wine I would drink you, if you were milk I would take a bath in you”. And God responds to Solomon by saying, “you dirty rascal”? No! He says, “Drink your fill, o you lovers!” Solomon doesn’t sound repressed and God doesn’t sound like a killjoy. And this doesn’t sound like procreation to me, it sounds like God is pro-sex. And we also talk about how powerful sex is, it goes beyond the mere physical act it is a mingling of souls. And God puts these parameters around it saying that a man will leave his parents and cleave to his wife and the two become one flesh. When you have sex you leave bits of yourself and you take of bits of your partner. For example, when victims of sexual abuse and molestation’s physical bodies are healed, are they then healed? Absolutely not! It is not merely a physical act it is an act of the soul. And then we ended last week talking about how gracious and loving Jesus is to those of us who failed to remain pure. It’s fascinating to me that the ones who Jesus lashes out at are these religious, pompous teachers and he is so loving and gentle to the ones who commit the most deplorable acts ever. Like the woman caught in adultery who is drug out to the feet of Jesus. The men say the law says to kill her, what do you say? And he said, “I say the one of you who hadn’t sinned yet, throw the first rock.” As they walk away, Jesus asks the woman, “has no one condemned you, then neither do I.” Jesus was so patient and gentle with those who fallen out of his ideal.

Today I want to look at sex in light of God’s rhythm. Love gets a lot of mileage in our tired culture. We love our iPods, we love our potato chips and we love our wives. Surely we’re not talking about the same thing. I hope that the same way we feel about our Doritos is not the same way we feel about our bride. I hope there’s more there than that. The Hebrews did things very different than we do, life was very detailed and layered. I think we forget sometimes that Christianity is not a Western religion. They use words pictures and ask rhetorical questions. The Hebrews didn’t just see love and sex, it was a complex structure based on three words.

The first Hebrew word is raw-ah. Raw-aw is the Hebrew word for companionship. When I think companion, I think about a dog, but that is not rayah. The Hebrew word carries with it this implication; that I have seen in you both good and bad and I’m still willing to walk with you. This is the foundational element of Hebrew love. You cannot have love without raw-ah. Raw-aw can be for a man or a woman but not an inanimate object or animal. So a Hebrew couldn’t love a house or a camel, it wouldn’t make sense. Raw-aw never takes place on a first date because every man can at least pull off one good one; we can put on the cologne, we can iron the nice t-shirt. But rayah does not occur when all is well, it is a decision that takes place the first time you see the dark side. It takes place at the point when you see the bad and choose

to walk away or say I've seen this about you but I'm here anyway, when you decide to keep going even those there are some things you don't like. For some of us that happens at 6 weeks, for others 9 months. Unfortunately for some of us that happens after we get married. But some try to hide who they really are and bring a great deal of pain upon themselves. I know its dangerous to throw yourself out there, to say this is who I am, here's my weaknesses, here's my strengths. Because what if someone says I can't live with that, it's a scary deal. Nobody loves rejection and that's why we hide from others. But without this foundation of raw-aw, love goes no further.

Song of Solomon, Chapter 5, verse 16, "*His mouth is full of sweetness And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*" Raw-aw leads into ahabah which is a "love of the will". Ahabah is that there is no place I'd rather be than right here, right now with you. We like to make that sound really romantic, but ahavah is not about romance, it's more like your hiding behind the couch while your spouse is throwing things at you trying to kill you. Now with that picture in your mind imagine "that there is no place I'd rather be than right here, right now with you". Ahabah says, "I'm not going anywhere!" No matter how crazy you are, not matter what issues we have to work through, *I'm not going anywhere.*

Song of Solomon, chapter 8, verse 6 "*Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death.*" How strong is death? It's going to get all of us; nobody beats death. How strong is a love of the will? Solomon says it's stronger than death. "*Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it.*" So raw-aw is companionship, "I know you, you know me" leads into ahabah. There's always this point in time when we say this is the person I want to fight with for the rest of my life, this the person I want to do life with. Ahabah is "I'm not going anywhere." We see that raw-aw is not natural; it takes all this work, time and energy. All this work and no sex. Then raw-aw carries us into ahabah and it's even more work and still no sex. Then we find God's rhythm leading us in dode and dode is still not sex, it's well beyond that. Relationship has been built in raw-aw, and commitment in ahabah, so what happens when dode rolls around is the mingling of souls, two souls coming together. Not two bodies, but two souls. The word dode is used only when it implies that raw-aw and ahabah are present, all other times it is used it is translated adultery. Dode is not merely sex, God's plan is not merely an exchange of fluids, it is the mingling of souls. You don't make love to a body; you make love to a person.

This is god's rhythm, his beat, his groove that raw-aw would lead into ahavah and ahavah would lead into dode. We've elevated sex to this really difficult thing when in fact it's easy, it's the raw-aw and ahavah that take some much work. They're like a 900 lb gorilla if you ignore them they can kill you. But we've elevated sex and look how out of tune we've become. Never in the history of the world has sex become so divorced from relationships. If you don't think this is a real issue, did you know that the pornography industry in the USA last year made more money than all professional sports combined. So the sexual revolution has a husband who instead of going to bed with his wife at night sneaks into the Study to look at porn online. When sex becomes detached from relationships, all that is left is technique. Which is why our culture is saturated with manuals and videos and books all trying to help us improve our sexual technique. And no matter how good we get at sex it is still increasingly frustrating and unsatisfying. It doesn't seem to remove our loneliness at all, in fact it adds to it. Because we're playing out of tune to God's rhythm. Before the fall even occurs, God says that it's not good for man to be alone. 95 percent of Jesus' message is about right relationships with God and man. Raw-aw is huge and it's blatantly missing from our culture. Can't we see that sex isn't working the way we're doing it. Then there is this ahabah piece. Relationships based only on sex don't wear very well, do they. New cars lose their new car smell very quickly. Men should know that ahabah is the piece that makes women feel the most safe and secure. Ahabah is huge for a woman. A lot of men reap what they sow when it comes to sex in their marriage. Men who fail to convince women that they are beautiful and that they are secure in their commitment will never get to dode. Women flourish when men say, "I'm not going anywhere." Raw-aw into ahabah gets us to dode.

So how do you work at this if you're single? The best advice I can give you is to get a bunch of roommates. The worst possible thing you can do if graduate from college and then go live alone. You convince yourself that you have no weird quirks. Then you meet this beautiful young lady or this handsome young man and

you go and get married and then in your first two years you get educated on all your quirks. Get roommates...ones that aren't like you...it'll be horrible, but as those two pieces of iron slam against one another, you might just be sharpened. With roommates you will eventually have conflict. Growth occurs in community, in real relationships. That is why you cannot be a member of this church and not be in a home group. And home groups are horrible; they are not ideal. They're painful and it's hard to find one you like. Why? Because we don't like people to see our junk and that's what happens when you walk with people. It's scary but it's the very process that sets us free. In isolation we live in a mirage. We're our own sitcom where everyone else just comes in and out. It's the altar of self and it will kill you. Then you get married and you spend the first three years trying to figure out basic things you should have already known about yourself. Don't leave alone; get roommates. Conflict is good. Because it's coming when you get married. Don't throw two sinful people that are as different as man and woman together in one house and expect them to flutter about all the time. Raw-aw into ahabah into dode.

So how do I get this into your heart and into your mind so as you leave here you will think about it and feel it. So God has this rhythm; He created this, He created this, He created this and it was good. This rhythm is playing, this beat is playing. And everything is in this groove and our soul testifies to the rhythm. When we're walking right in it we know it's right. We can feel that this community, this conflict is bringing life, we can feel it. When we play within the rhythm, there's all this fruit. When rayah moves into ahavah, then there's this mingling of souls and sex works. And there's no guilt afterwards and you're not dissatisfied. But if we get outside of that rhythm and hit some bad notes, I don't care if you're tone deaf you know something is wrong. And the sex that you thought would get you out of your loneliness only makes you more lonely. Because we are out of rhythm we're playing the wrong chords. So may we dance in the rhythm that he has created. May husband work hard at raw-aw because it is the foundational element of true relationship. May ahabah swell in the hearts of men and women. And may we love one another deeply. It is my hope that this rhythm will stay in you're heart and that we will leave here different than when we came in.