

## After We Say 'I Do'

*Ephesians 5:22-33; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-17-19*

### Valentine's Day

*Love is a Many Splendored Thing* Award Winning Song in the 50's (performed by many such as Andy Williams)

'Love is a many-splendored thing  
It's the April rose that only grows in the early spring  
Love is nature's way of giving a reason to be living  
The golden crown that makes a man a king  
Once on a high and windy hill  
In the morning mist two lovers kissed  
And the world stood still  
Then your fingers touched my silent heart  
And taught it how to sing  
Yes true love's a many-splendored thing  
Oh once on a high and windy hill  
In the morning mist two lovers kissed  
And the world stood still  
Then your fingers touched my silent heart  
And taught it how to sing  
Yes true love's a many-splendored thing.

Love is a many 'splendored thing' or a many 'splintered thing'!

Remember the 'Be Mine' Valentine's Day cards?

- Be my what?
- Be my girlfriend/boyfriend?
- Be my husband/wife?
- Be my servant?
- Be my God?

The idea of 'being mine' can get dangerous!

Then the woman whose child *was* the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son and said, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "He shall **be** neither **mine** nor yours; divide *him!*" – 1 Kings 3:26

But God is concerned about the concept of 'be Mine'!

Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to **be Mine**. – Leviticus 20:26

The Coast Valentine's Banquet needs some follow up!

### The Text

<sup>22</sup> Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband. – Ephesians 5:22-33

#### 1. **Embrace the Differences** (don't be embittered by them).

FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME **ONE FLESH**. (31)

There are differences between 'male' and 'female'.

See 1 Peter 3:7

You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

See Matthew 19:3-6

<sup>3</sup> *Some* Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" <sup>4</sup> And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?" <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

See Genesis 1:27

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them.

- We all have strengths and weaknesses.**
- The weaknesses include non-sinful inabilities and sinful habits.**

See Colossians 3:18

<sup>18</sup> Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

- Weaknesses make marriage hard.**

‘Why do we take a vow when we get married? Because it’s hard! No one takes a vow to eat sugar! – John Branyan

- Weaknesses along with strengths make marriage a blessing.**

‘If you were both just alike, one of you would be unnecessary! – John Branyan

‘The value of someone else is not what they give you but what they bring out of you!’ - Norm

- Weaknesses make forgiveness essential.**

List of things I’m going to forgive him for (never made the list!): Good thing that’s on the list!

‘On her golden wedding anniversary, a grandmother revealed the secret of her long and happy marriage. “On my wedding day, I decided to choose 10 of my husband’s faults, which (for the sake of our marriage) I would overlook,” she explained. A guest asked her to name some of the faults. “To tell the truth,” she replied, “I never did get around to listing them; but whenever my husband did something that made me hopping mad, I would say to myself, ‘Lucky for him that’s one of the 10.’” – Turning Point Daily Devotional

- Weaknesses make thinking the best essential.**

Think the best unless there is clear evidence to the contrary:

- Don't hear 'condemnation' but hear 'concern'!
- Don't hear 'subtraction' but 'addition'!
- Don't hear 'rejection' but 'refinement'!
- Don't expect the 'worst' but think the 'best'!

*Jonathan Edwards on Thinking the Best*

Jonathan Edwards, one of America's greatest theologians, thoroughly discussed God's call for charitable judgments in his superb book, *Charity and Its Fruits*.<sup>[4]</sup> Drawing on the passages discussed above (Matt. 7 and 1 Cor. 13), he shows that the Bible condemns censoriousness, which he defines as "a disposition to think evil of others, or to judge evil in them," and commends charitable judgments, which he describes as "a disposition to think the best of others that the case will allow."<sup>[</sup>

- Ken Sande

*"Charity...thinketh no evil."*—1 Corinthians 13:5

Having remarked how charity, or Christian love, is opposed not only to pride and selfishness, but to the ordinary fruits of these evil dispositions, viz. an angry spirit and a censorious spirit, and having already spoken as to the former, I come now to the latter. And in respect to this, the apostle declares, that charity "*thinketh no evil.*" The doctrine set forth in these words is clearly this: that *the spirit of charity, or Christian love, is the opposite of a censorious spirit; or, in other words, it is contrary to a disposition to think or judge uncharitably of others. Charity, in one of the common uses of the expression, signifies a disposition to think the best of others that the case will allow. ... The nature of a censorious spirit, a disposition uncharitably to judge others, consists in a disposition to think evil of others, or to judge evil of them, with respect to three things: their state, their qualities, their actions. ... a censorious spirit in judging evil of the actions of others also discovers itself in a disposition to put the worst constructions on their actions. The censorious are not only apt to judge others guilty of evil actions without sufficient evidence, but they are also prone to put a bad construction on their actions, when they will just as well, and perhaps better, admit of a good construction. ... it lies in judging evil of others when evidence does not oblige to it, or in thinking ill of them when the case very well allows of thinking well of them; when those things that seem to be in their favor are overlooked, and only those that are against them are regarded, and when the latter are magnified, and too great stress laid on them. And the same is the case when persons are hasty and rash in judging and condemning others, though both prudence and charity oblige them to suspend their judgment till they know more of the matter, and all the circumstances are plain before them. Persons may often show a great deal of uncharitableness and rashness, in freely censuring others before they have heard what they have to say in their defense. And hence it is said, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Pro 18:13). – Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits**

‘Do you find that your instinctive reaction is one of suspicion? Have you cultivated the habit of presuming the worst, rather than thinking the best? You need to be renewed in love. - Colin Smith

2. **Be Jesus to your spouse** (not the most ‘romantic’ celebrity you know).

Wives, ***be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*** (22)

For **the husband is the head of the wife**, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. (23)

But as **the church is subject to Christ**, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. (24)

Husbands, **love your wives, just as Christ** also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, (25)

See Matthew 20:28

just as the Son of Man did not come to be **served**, but to **serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

*Romance and Ditches*

□ **Ditch 1: Romance is unnecessary or unimportant to the relationship.**

Romance is an important part of marriage.

<sup>1</sup> The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s. <sup>2</sup> “May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. <sup>3</sup> “Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is *like* purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you. <sup>4</sup> “Draw me after you *and* let us run *together!*

The king has brought me into his chambers.” “We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine.

Rightly do they love you.” – Song of Solomon 1:1-4

□ **Ditch 2: Romance is the relationship.**

*Doug Wilson on Chivalry and Modern Ideas of Romance*

‘Chivalry: (ladies’ fair and knight’s errant) knight devotes himself to a married woman (his lady) who gives him an article of hers (token to tie onto his lance) and he rides off to kill the dragon was chaste adultery (all-consuming dedication to this woman who was not

his wife) and comes from the French troubadours' 'chivalric ideal' tradition before the Puritans during the Medieval period

'Chivalry in its original form was adulterous: 'chaste adultery' (weird sexual connection that may or may not play out in actual adultery)

'The Puritans took the 'chivalric ideal' and drug it into marriage.

'In his book, *The Allegory of Love*, by CS Lewis, he said if you tried to explain our modern romantic idea that 'my wife is my life partner and best friend, we gaze into each other's eyes and fade to black' – if you tried to explain that to St. Paul or Virgil or the author of Beowulf they would just look at you blinking (and thinking) 'Where did that come from?' ... it came a thousand years after Christ and that idea was married to basic Christian morality by the Puritans resulting in a 'dedicated monogamy in chivalric terms'

'The Puritans brought chivalry into the vision for godly marriage but this would have been foreign to Paul

'Blame the Puritans for the romance novel or the chick flicks!

'When romance novels and chick flicks 'go to seed' the relationship is the standard (follow your heart).

'In my novel there is an objective law outside the two parties, protagonists. There is a love story between them but they are both accountable to someone and something outside of themselves, to which they must be obedient. And the God who is love is the law.

'What the Puritans did was a good and faithful thing but we need to retain historical awareness that this should be ranked among customs that Christians have developed and these things are not equivalent to the law of God. – Christians and Romance Novels, Doug Wilson

- **The issue in marriage is seeking to be like Jesus to our spouse, and not requiring them to be the 'romantic ideal' we see in the culture.**

### **How did Christ love us?**

By resting in the Father's love and meeting our needs, even when we did not love Him.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. – John 15:9

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. – John 17:24

and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” – John 17:26

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” – Mark 10:45

**Solution: Keep one eye on the love of God for me (not my spouse’s love for me) and one eye on their needs (not my needs).**

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. – 1 John 4:10

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. – 1 John 4:11

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. – 1 John 4:16

We love, because He first loved us. – 1 John 4:19

<sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. – 1 John 3:16-18

### **Two Airplane Wings for Marital Flight**

- Focus on the love of God for me in Christ instead of the love of my spouse for me.
- Focus on what my spouse needs instead of what I need.

3. **Worship the ground that the Lord Jesus walks on** (and look to God for your help and happiness).

**This mystery is great;** but I am speaking with reference to **Christ and the church.** (32)

- Marriage is about the mystery of oneness.**

Marriage is not the ‘end all’ but a pointer to the real source of life and happiness: union with Christ as a part of His church.

The mystery is not how a man and a woman fulfill each other even though they are so different; the mystery is how a sinner and a holy God can become one and the sinner is satisfied in the process!

The difference between God and sinners is infinitely greater than the difference between two sinners!

- **Marriage is about the mystery of oneness between Christ and His people and this oneness make oneness between husbands and wives possible!**
- **Fire your spouse as the ‘source of life’!**

Marriage is one of the most common idolatries in life.

The carving tools we use in marriage: flattery and anger!

See James 4:1-5

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup> You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

See Romans 1:25

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

### *John and Molly Wesley’s Tragic Marriage*

‘The biggest death nail laid to Wesley’s marriage was laid before he even entered the marriage. John Wesley had it in his mind that his job as intenerate preacher shouldn’t have to be weighed down by his private decision to marry. In Wesley’s mind, he would not preach one less sermon, nor would he travel one less mile on account of a personal matter. Like it or not, Molly would simply have to adjust her expectations to fit John’s “higher calling”. In a strangely admirable yet misguided thought– Wesley believed his preaching was beneficial to God’s kingdom and his marriage was beneficial only to his own (Wesley’s) kingdom. To Wesley, one was eternal and the other was temporal. Wesley thought that his work for God’s shouldn’t suffer from a self-interested decision. Just to show you how much Wesley valued his nuptials, he didn’t even mention it in his journal

for that day! He preached sermons the day before and after the marriage ceremony. The very next Sabbath day, Wesley referred to his new marriage as a “cross” that he would reluctantly bear for the sake of the movement (many followers of Wesley thought it would be best for him to marry [for various reasons]; it could be said that he was pressured into marriage). Evidently this reference made Molly unhappy with John. If the marriage started off bad, it only got worse. Molly repeatedly complained about John’s insensitivity to her. He was constantly traveling and didn’t pay too much attention to her. After a few months of suffering this neglect, her attempted solution was to try traveling with him. Maybe this would help. Unfortunately for her, the life of a circuit rider was not peaches and cream. Traveling hundreds of miles on horseback and sometimes in the rain was unpleasant to say the least. On occasion, they would have crowds jeer at them. There were also some reports of threats on their lives. This initial attempt to improve things was probably the only bright spot of her character. Her fits of rage were legendary (John probably felt every ounce of the truisms of Proverbs). Once, she was recorded as physically dragging him around by the hair. If the situation wasn’t bad enough, enter Sarah Ryan. Sarah Ryan was a new convert and had been married 3 times by her early 30’s – never being officially divorced of any of the three. John appointed her the matron of one school for children he helped get started. Upon opening John’s mail while he was away (John had naively gave her permission to open his mail), Molly interpreted the written documents between John and Sarah to be more than simply ministry to a woman under his care. At one public meeting, Molly bust into the room shouting that Sarah was a “whore” (her words, not mine) and called into question Sarah and John’s relational integrity. Molly withheld the letters from John and wouldn’t give them to him. In secret, John stole some of the letters back. To get revenge, Molly doctored some of the messages and sent them to the London newspaper to be published, slandering her husband publicly (which basically made it look like Sarah and John were involved in a secret love affair)! Towards the end of their marriage, effectively, they lived in separation. Never officially divorced, but they separated for periods of time. Obviously, John was not the only one at fault. Molly disrespected her husband by many of the things she did to him – both privately and publicly. Instead of married to his wife, John Wesley was married to his work. - <http://churchintoronto.blogspot.com>

- **He wasn’t willing to ‘be Jesus’ to her and she was determined to make him instead of looking to God!**
- **What produces an ‘uncommon union’ in marriage? Give God your heart, not your spouse.**

*Jonathan’s Edwards wife’s response to his death*

‘Jonathan Edwards was one of the most powerful preachers and writers in Church history. When he was 55 years old smallpox vaccinations had just come on the scene and since they were proving helpful, he was vaccinated. But the doctor gave him too much,

and he developed a fever which killed him. This brought a severe trial to his wife, Sarah. But she did not complain; she submitted to God's sovereignty. And she did not despair; she trusted God's goodness. We know this because of a letter she wrote to her daughter about her husband's passing. Here's what she wrote:

My very dear child, What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.

Your ever affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards - [livingbyfaithblog.com](http://livingbyfaithblog.com)

### **Glorifying and Enjoying God**

How do we rest in Jesus, hope in God and pursue love in marriage?

- Embrace the differences. (rest in Jesus and let them do so as well)
- Be Jesus to your spouse. (pursue love)
- Worship the ground that Jesus walks on. (hope in God)