

Husbands and Wives – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul outlines what it means to be mutually submissive as husbands and wives
2. aim – to cause us to pursue submissiveness in every area of our lives as followers of Christ
3. passage – Ephesians 5:22-33

b. outline

1. The Sacredness of Marriage
2. The Submission of Wives (Ephesians 5:22-24)
3. The Self-Sacrifice of Husbands (Ephesians 5:25-33)

c. opening

1. continuing our discussion of *Paul's worldview* regarding marriage
 - a. the *imperatives* of **Ephesians 5:22-33** can only be understood within this worldview
2. starting with a *definition* of marriage (as its *theological purpose*)
 - a. a *creation ordinance* – at the very heart of human dominion and civilization
 1. marriage serves as the *foundation* of human life (including procreation and family)
 - b. a *creative act* – at the very pinnacle of God's creativity activity (the *one-flesh* union)
 1. marriage serves as a *visible picture* of the triune nature of the Godhead
 - c. a *covenant relationship* – at the very core of a redemptive relationship with God
 1. marriage serves as a *bond* which parallels God's relationship with his chosen people
3. finishing this definition by considering its *value* and its *boundaries*

I. The Sacredness of Marriage (cont.)

Content

b. the value of marriage

1. the *general* value of marriage
 - a. **question:** how does marriage benefit society as a whole? **answer:**
 1. marriage is the cornerstone of a vital *economic* and *cultural* continuation (children)
 2. marriage is the cornerstone of *stability* amongst the citizens of a society (family)
 - b. **conclusion: societies should promote a healthy and biblical view of marriage because it is the means to moral stability and economic growth**
2. the *Christian* value of marriage (carefully treading into **Ephesians 5:22-33**)
 - a. **familiar purpose of this text:** standards established for how husbands and wives are to *relate*
 1. wives are to be *submissive*, and husbands are to *love self-sacrificially*
 2. the passage is *often* treated as a treatise on *how marriages can work well* (and rightly so!!)
 - b. **greater purpose of this text:** marriage as an *example* of Christ's relationship with his church
 1. Paul *compares* the husband-wife relationship to the Christ-church relationship
 2. built on the idea of an *arranged marriage* – the Father seeking a bride for his Son (**Rev. 19:7**)
 3. marriage is an *example* of the relationship of Christ and his church
 - c. **thesis: the self-sacrificial love of Christ has created an intimate, one-flesh relationship between himself and the church, which is pictured in marriage**
 1. **IOW:** the *New Testament* purpose of marriage is to picture the intimate relationship between Christ and his church – thus *Christian* marriage is *much more* than need-fulfillment; it is a love relationship built on *mutual* self-sacrifice and *radical* other-centeredness
3. **marriage is a divine institution established for the welfare of society as a whole and the betterment of individuals, as well as an example of the relationship God has established between himself and his chosen people in Jesus Christ**

c. the boundaries of marriage

1. the reality of the Curse
 - a. the **Curse** = the judgments pronounced by God upon all creation as a consequence of the Fall
 1. the term comes from **Gen. 3:17**: "*cursed is the ground because of you*"
 2. uttered against the original parties involved in the transgression

- a. the serpent (**Gen. 3:14-15**) – a life of *humiliation*, ending in utter destruction at the Cross
- b. Eve (**Gen. 3:16**) – great pain in childbirth *and* a role of *submission* to Adam (**see below**)
- c. Adam (**Gen. 3:17-19**) – great toil in bringing forth food *leading* to physical death (**see below**)
- 3. expanded on by Paul in **Romans 8:19-22**
 - a. all of creation was “*subjected*” = a *specific* action of God *to futility*
 - b. *not just a consequence of sin*, but the *direct* action of God to frustrate his creation
- b. the Curse and the **creation ordinance**
 - 1. the judgment made by God on Adam and Eve was to *frustrate* their ability to keep the commands of **Genesis 1:28** (i.e. to fill the earth and to subdue the earth)
 - a. Eve would now *struggle* to bring forth children (gestation, birth, nursing, etc.)
 - b. Adam would now *struggle* to bring forth food (thorns & thistles, drought, famine, etc.)
- c. the Curse and **marriage**
 - 1. **remember:** marriage is the *foundation* upon which the creation ordinance was established
 - a. Eve was brought to Adam as his “*helper*” to fulfill his purpose; *together* (as husband and wife) they would multiply and fill the earth, and from that, civilization would grow and humanity would take dominion over the whole world
 - 2. now, not only was the *result* of that union corrupted, but the union *itself* was corrupted
 - 1. **i.e.** the response of Adam when confronted by God (**Gen. 3:12** – “*that woman ...*”)
 - 2. like all things in the created order, both the *institution* of marriage and *individual* marriages have been corrupted by sin (from the *outside* and from the *inside*)
- 2. the corruption of marriage **from within**
 - a. **question:** what has been the *primary* effect of the Fall upon the nature of human beings?
 - b. **answer:** a radical *self-centeredness*, a sense of *self-focus*, a *selfishness* in regards to all things
 - 1. **e.g.** this is how the serpent tempted Eve: to a sense of *self-satisfaction* (**Gen. 3:6**)
“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.”
 - 2. we are fundamentally inclined to concentrate on *ourselves* – Adam and Eve took their eyes off of God to seek for something else, and in doing so *locked* themselves into that mode forever
 - c. the **internal corruption** of marriage appears when you attempt to join together two *fundamentally self-centered* people into a “one-flesh” relationship
 - 1. the two *great sins* of marriage (adultery and divorce) are fundamentally *selfish* in nature
 - 2. the two *great sins* of marriage (adultery and divorce) are *exactly contrary* to the purpose of God
 - 1. adultery = a picture of *covenantal unfaithfulness*; divorce = a picture of a *broken covenant*
 - d. result: there is no perfect marriage within this *fallen* world, as long as it is made up of *fallen* people
 - 1. but, God *is* in the process of *redeeming* marriage (as he is doing in all things)
 - 2. **question:** how do you form a “redeemed” one-flesh union in this world? **answer:** by turning the *heart* and transforming the *mind* of both partners in the union *to Christ*
 - 3. in contradistinction to the *modern* approach of applying communication skills, problem-solving techniques, compromise formulas, etc.
 - e. **principle: because of the fallen nature of humanity, and our varying levels of self-centeredness, the internal boundaries for marriage are always far short of the original standard established by God when he brought Eve to Adam to be his perfect fulfillment**
- 3. the corruption of marriage **from without**
 - a. **reality:** fallen human beings have been attempting to **redefine** the *concept* of marriage *in accordance with their own ideas* from the very beginning of time
 - 1. just as Eve “redefined” the value and nature of the Tree of Knowledge to fit *her* desires
 - 2. there have been a number of *redefinitions* of the concept of marriage throughout history
 - 1. polygamy (**Gen. 4:19**), incest (**1689, 25:4**), “no-fault” divorce, “gay-marriage”
 - 3. *all* of these “redefinitions” of marriage strike *at the heart* of the **creation ordinance**
 - a. they violate the “one-flesh” relationship in various way (**i.e.** multiple-flesh, or strange-flesh)
 - b. they *specifically* pervert God’s *intention* for marriage, both within itself and to its global ends
 - b. **example:** the modern “redefinition” of marriage as between two men or two women (**Obergefell**)
 - 1. although there are a number of excuses used to “justify” this, I will only deal with only one:
 - a. “Jesus never spoke of homosexuality – therefore, he does not condemn it, and would grant those formed by God *in that state* to enjoy all the blessings available to others”
 - b. **response:** although Jesus did not *directly* deal with the issue of homosexuality, he *did* deal with the *entirety* of human sexuality and marriage from a *design* standpoint (**Mark 10:2-9**)
 - 1. the Pharisees ask whether it is *lawful* for a man to divorce his wife (**v. 2b**)
 - 2. Jesus turns the question back on them, and they *justify* divorce from **Deut. 24:1-4**
 - 3. Jesus (then) provides a *broad* response to the *overarching principle* in play (**vv. 5-9**)

Husbands and Wives

- a. the “concession” by Moses was only because of the “hardness” of human hearts
- b. the *foundation* of sexuality/marriage is in the *design* by God (**Gen. 1:27**)
- c. the *result* of this design is a *lifelong, monogamous*, “one-flesh” relationship
- c. Jesus appeals to the *original design* of humanity by God (male & female) as the basis of all human sexuality and marriage
 - 1. by *clear* implication, all “other” forms of sexuality/marriage are incompatible
 - 2. **or**: just because you may have been born with *tendencies* toward homosexuality (or any other sexual deviation) does not mean that God’s design for marriage can be *altered* to “fit” your “hardness of heart”
- c. **principle: because of the fallen nature of humanity, and our desire to be “like God,” the external boundaries for what constitutes marriage are constantly being pushed away from what God originally intended the institution to be**
- 4. **marriage is God’s idea**
 - a. it is what he had in mind as the very *foundation* of the human race created male and female
 - b. it is what he intended for mankind to fill his creation and subdue it in every way
 - c. it is what he established to bring fulfillment and stability to every human civilization
 - d. it is what he uses to picture both his own triune nature and the relationship of the church to Christ
 - e. it is what he glories in as he redeems a people for himself and presents them as a bride to his Son