

Happily Ever After

April 24, 2016 ~ Mark 10.1-12

Marriage & Divorce

- ❖ Pharisees came testing Jesus c/divorce (*trouble either way*)
 - ❖ **Mat 19.3** (*pp*) adds the phrase, “*for just any reason*”
 - ❖ Jesus addressed adultery of the heart (**Mt 5.27-30**)
 - ❖ And narrow grounds for divorce (**Read Mt 5.31-32**) in Sermon on Mount
- ❖ They felt they had Moses in their corner (**Read Deut 24.1-4**)
- ❖ 2 schools of thought in His day
 - ❖ One conservative (*Shammai*) and the other liberal (*Hillel*)
 - ❖ Conservatives emphasized “*uncleanness*” as infidelity
 - ❖ Liberals applied “*no favor in his eyes*” very broadly (*e.g., poor cook*)
- ❖ Jesus surprises them by going all the way back to the Garden of Eden
 - ❖ Some of Moses’ law was to regulate excesses of sinful behavior
 - ❖ Jesus emphasizes the intended earthly permanence of marriage
 - ❖ **Read vs7-9** ~ “*For this reason . . . let not man separate*”
- ❖ What produces this oneness? It is merely ‘sexual union’ or is it marriage?
 - ❖ This question is addressed by Paul in **1 Cor 6**

Oneness of Union (Read 1 Cor 6.12-20)

- ❖ This isn’t entirely clear only from **Genesis** and the **Gospels**
 - ❖ Paul makes clear that ‘sexual union’ qualifies as the oneness of Genesis
 - ❖ But the oneness of harlotry / fornication falls far short of God’s intentions
 - ❖ **v19** ~ Paul emphasizes our spiritual oneness with God
 - ❖ **v20** ~ As well as God’s ownership of our bodies and spirits
- ❖ In the very next chapter (**1 Cor 7**) Paul speaks again of ownership
 - ❖ **Read 1 Cor 7.3-4** ~ “*Let the husband render .. but the wife does.*”
 - ❖ These words fall very harshly upon independent and egalitarian ears
 - Liberals scoff contemptuously at this concept
 - ❖ Perhaps we / you regard them as beautiful . . .
 - But I ask the married, “*Do we truly practice them?*”
 - Do we truly exercise this right of ownership God says we have?
- ❖ Oneness of union is a process, a “*mode of transportation, not a destination*”

Xition: Three P’s on Marriage . . .

Three P's of Marriage

1. Propriety of Marriage

- ❖ Marriage was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden
 - ✧ God said, “It is not good that man should be alone.” (Gen 2.18)
 - ✧ He'd said, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.” (Gen 1.28)
 - ✧ God appears to have instituted marriage as ‘*normative*’ for man and woman
 - ◆ **NOTE:** Define terms ‘*normal*’ and ‘*normative*’
- ❖ “But did Paul relax this marriage requirement in the NT?”
 - ✧ 1 Cor 7.1 ~ “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”
 - ✧ 1 Cor 7.7 ~ “I wish that all men were even as I myself.”
 - ✧ 1 Cor 7.8 ~ “I say to the unmarried . . . it is good if they remain as I am.”
 - ◆ But in 1 Cor 7.26 we learn why . . . ~ “.. because of the present distress”
 - ✧ But marriage is not the only path / Jesus in parallel Matthew passage
 - ◆ Read Mat 19.8-12 ~ “He said to them .. let him accept it.”

2. Purpose of Marriage

- ❖ Some view marriage from a strictly functional perspective
 - ✧ They cite Gen 1.28 as “*the*” reason for marriage
 - ◆ But these people are ignoring the “*not good*” of Gen 2.18
 - ◆ After all that God declared “*good*”, we should reflect on what was “*not good*”
 - ◆ Companionship is obviously a huge benefit of marriage
- ❖ Augustine highlighted 3 benefits of marriage
 - ✧ 1) offspring, 2) faith, and 3) sacrament
 - ✧ He believed the last (sacrament) to be the greatest because it must exist
 - ◆ A marriage may not produce offspring, it may not increase our faith, but
 - ◆ As long as the marriage lasts, it reflects the ongoing sacramental union
- ❖ I pointed out another benefit in a facebook post a year or two back
 - ✧ Gary Thomas in “*Sacred Marriage*” wrote this when asked about marriage by his brother, “If you want to be free to serve Jesus, there’s no question – stay single. Marriage takes a lot of time. But if you want to become more like Jesus, I can’t imagine any better thing to do than to get married. Being married forces you to face some character issues you’d never have to face otherwise.”
 - ✧ Sanctification is another huge benefit of marriage
 - ✧ **III: CPC elder** ~ Prescriptive that elder be “*husband of one wife*” (1 Tim 3.2)

Xition: We’ve covered Propriety and Purpose of Marriage, now Picture . . .

3. **Picture of Marriage**

- ❖ **Old and New Testaments** use marriage as an analogy of God's relation to the Church
- ❖ **OT** ~ Jeremiah comments on God giving Israel a writ of divorce
 - ✧ **Read Jer 3.1, 6-8** ~ "They say .. the Lord .. The Lord .. played the harlot also."
 - ✧ God judged Israel and wanted Judah to be warned
 - ✧ But He laments that Judah learned nothing by the fall of her sister Israel
- ❖ **NT** ~ Jesus repeatedly refers to the Church as His bride
 - ✧ **Rev 19.7, 21.2, 9** / marriage supper of the Lamb / New Jerusalem as Christ's Bride

Some Background Thoughts on Men & Women

- ❖ God made men and women to be different
 - ✧ Modernists admit this / but regard masculinity as less noble than femininity
 - ✧ Evolutionary thinking has eroded the 'rightness' of our world
- ❖ Husbands and wives fulfill different roles in God's economy
 - ✧ Men and women are different / Biblical roles circumscribe possibilities
- ❖ These roles went largely untested for millennia . . . but no longer
 - ✧ Judicial activism has become the tool of choice to mold society
 - ✧ But don't despair / Don't even worry
 - ✧ God's design must & will prevail
 - ✧ A complex process (society) must adhere to its design to work

Three Word Pairs for Husbands and Wives

- ❖ **Read Eph 5.22-33** ~ "Wives, submit to your .. respects her husband."
- ❖ Three word pairs describing proper conduct of husbands and wives
 - ✧ Love & Respect
 - ◇ Husbands are to love wives / Wives are to respect husbands
 - ◇ III: "Love & Respect" – Eggerich book and DVD series
 - ✧ Lead & Submit
 - ◇ Husbands are to lead wives and homes / Wives are to submit to this
 - ◇ Fine line between wife's 'helpful advice' and 'stubborn opposition'
 - ✧ Sacrifice & Encourage
 - ◇ Husbands are to lead sacrificially / Wives to build up; not tear down
 - **Pro 31.12** "She does him good and not evil all the days of her life"
- ❖ Husbands & wives need not earn behavior from other / God expects it

Xition: End with story that reflects this as God intends . . .

Story from “*The Making of a Man*” by Richard Exley

- ❖ In March 1990, Dr. Robertson McQuilkin announced his resignation as president of Columbia Bible College in order to care for his wife, who was suffering from the advanced stages of Alzheimer’s disease. In his resignation letter he wrote,
- ❖ “My dear wife, Muriel, has been in failing mental health for about eight years. So far I have been able to care for her ever-growing needs and my leadership responsibilities at CBC. But recently it has become apparent that Muriel is contented most of the time she is with me and almost none of the time I am away from her. It is not just ‘discontent.’ She is filled with fear – even terror – that she has lost me and always goes in search of me when I leave home. Then she may be full of anger when she cannot get to me. So it is clear to me that she needs me now full-time.”
- ❖ “This decision was made, in a way, 42 years ago when I promised to care for Muriel ‘in sickness and in health .. till death to us part.’ So as a man of my word integrity has something to do with it. But so does fairness. She has cared for me fully and sacrificially all these years. If I cared for her for the next 40 years I would not be out of her debt. Duty, however, can be grim and stoic. But there is more. I love Muriel. She is a delight to me – her childlike dependence and confidence in me, her warm love, occasional flashes of that wit I used to relish so, her happy spirit and tough resilience in the face of her continual distressing frustration. I do not have to care for her; I get to! It is a high honor to care for such a wonderful person.”
- ❖ It would be a mistake for us to assume that Dr. McQuilkin’s decision was an isolated choice, independent of the hundreds of lesser choices that went into their 42 years of marriage. A decision of that magnitude is the culmination of a lifelong series of smaller, daily decisions. And, as such, it challenges every man to examine the choices he makes each day and the way he relates to his wife.

- Husbands are to exercise loving, sacrificial leadership
- Wives are to respond with encouraging, respectful submission
- The world scoffs at this / But, **What do you say?** / **What do you do?**
- Only in obedience to God can we hope to live happily ever after . . .

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .