

What Is A Marriage

Ephesians 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV))

Over the past several weeks, as I have studied through these precious words that speak so clearly and sweetly of the blessed relationship of marriage, I must confess that the “other relationship” that the world has redefined as “marriage” has continually seeped into my thoughts. But as I prepared the series of messages about “Husbands And Wives”, I knew that I needed to resist the inclination to speak about that “other relationship” in the same context as the “one true marriage relationship” that God has defined for us here in the scriptures for fear that even the mention of those thoughts would to some degree distract or corrupt our understanding about the “one true” relationship that God has put into place for us as husbands and wives.

And for that reason, I resolved to wait and to address that matter separately. And I’ll do that today. Those words again from Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 25,

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May I begin by saying that most all that I will have to say to us this morning, you have already heard and is common to your understanding. And you probably have already formed opinions and beliefs about it, and perhaps even strongly so. But I will need to go ahead and say these things in detail anyway so that our thoughts can be relatively on the “same page”.

First, may I make clear that the “other relationship” I made reference to a moment ago is the “homosexual relationship” that the “world” has defined as “same-sex marriage”; the union of two people of the same sex, a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, in a homosexual based relationship.

And as we know, the current impetus being put forward by our culture is that everyone within our society would accept and embrace those “same-sex” relationships and

marriages as being the very same as a relationship and marriage between a man and a woman, male and female. And the impetus is strong, coming both from the political establishment and through the courts, as proponents seek to make laws and guidelines of a “legal” nature and obligation, requiring all people to accept and abide by their terms.

Although I, myself, have formed my own personal beliefs about this matter, and I do find myself, at times, voicing those beliefs very strongly, it is my sincere hope that both my own beliefs and the words that I will give to us from this pulpit today will be from the view that is presented within these scriptures, the true word of God and not in any way from some corrupt personal point of view.

And may I pause for a moment and address that point. As we know, each of us has our own personal “opinion” on just about every matter that we encounter each day. And sometimes those matters are charged with emotion, such as this one often is. Unfortunately, our emotions too often cause corruption within us and cause us to “over-react” and “over-state” our feelings and opinions.

May I confess to you, that as I evaluate the content of my own “personal opinion” on matters, any matter, I find that there is always some degree of corruption within it making it “ungodly”; and because of that, I do try, whenever possible, to withhold my “opinion”.

And I recommend that to you, that when you hear words coming out of your mouth such as “well, I’ll tell you what I think about this matter”, then you probably are going to express an opinion that has some degree of corruption within it and you might want to guard or even withhold the “opinion” you are about to offer.

What is the basis of that corruption that so often seeps into our thoughts and opinions? And likewise, what is the corruption that is present within this new “onslaught” from the proponents of “same-sex marriage”? It is what our bible scholars have defined as “relative thinking”, that prideful expression of “my claim to my right to myself”, also expressed in words like, “if I think something is true, it is therefore true”. And “what is true for me might not be true for you, and what is true for you might not be true for me”. All such thought processes are “relative” to each individual, making it impossible to actually determine real “truth” about a matter.

But thanks be to God, He knew that we would do exactly as we are doing. And so, He established for us a “standard of truth” that is not relative to us as individuals, but is the “same truth” for everyone. And it is my sincere hope that as we continue with this

pursuit today, God's Holy Spirit will guide our every thought to find His "real truth" about this very special matter of "homosexual behavior".

And because we are Christians, may we understand that there is only one "source" to which we can turn and find God's standard of "truth"! It is the scriptures! Yes, we who minister these scriptures to you each Sunday do expound upon the words that are given here in our bible. But even then, I would encourage each of us to take the time to always go back and examine and re-examine the exact words of scripture, else we are in danger of allowing some "personal opinion" to seep into our understanding.

So then, may we first simply turn back to our scripture passage for today and begin our examination there.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV))

The central point that seems to be in debate within our society today is expressed here in these first words, "what is meant when the words, "husband" and "wife" are spoken?" What is a husband and what is a wife?

Turn with me to the beginning of these scriptures, Genesis 1, and read with me what God tells us about the first relationship and marriage.

26 . . . God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28 (NKJV))

And then in Genesis chapter two, we read further about how God created and formed the precious "wife" for the man.

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib,

which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:18, 21-25 (KJV))

If we simply take these scriptures as they are given to us without adding comment or explanation we see simply that God created a man and a woman, male and a female, and that she was “uniquely fitted” to meet the needs of the man. Genesis 2, verse 18
18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.(Genesis 2:18)

Genesis 1, verse 27 . . .

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

The Hebrew words given here for the male and for the female are distinctly different from each other. The word here for the male is “Zakar” and the word for female is “Neqebah”, the male being distinctly masculine and the female being distinctly feminine. The distinction is especially important because of the next thing that God said to the male and female . . .

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.
(Genesis 1:27-28 (NKJV))

Again, I realize that I am saying things that you already know, but I must keep these thoughts as simple and as scriptural as I can possibly make them to be. Here, God created the male and the female and He gave them a command that they were uniquely able to accomplish.

"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. (Genesis 1:28 (NKJV))

As we well know, such procreation absolutely requires the presence of a male and a female. There is no other possible way for mankind to be “fruitful and to multiply”. Folks, God cannot get any simpler in His explanation and instructions. This first man and woman, this first marriage that God put into place was uniquely between a male and a female.

I have given us these words from the scriptures without elaboration or embellishment. This first relationship that was clearly from the plans and purposes of God was between a male and a female, a man and a woman. And that prompts the question, “if God first ordained and put into place the relationship between a man and a woman as the perfect remedy for the problem of man being ‘alone’, does it make it wrong for man to devise an ‘alternative solution’ to what God has put into place, that of substituting a ‘same-sex’ relationship”? May we again go to the scriptures for our answers and there find several very emphatic instructions from God! First from 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9,
9 . . . do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.
(1 Corinthians 6:9 (NASB))

Some might argue that these words do not actually mean “homosexual” as we understand it today. The Greek word here is “arsenokoitēs”. And there is no mistaking its meaning. It describes a “sodomite”.

And in Romans 1 we read,

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 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. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Romans 1:24-27 (NASB))

Note here, and I’ll read it again for us, that God clearly gives us the motivation taking place within the hearts of men and women causing them to behave in these ways. It is “lust”! It is not a genetic condition. It is lust! And God clearly describes that behavior as “impurity”, “degrading passions” and “indecent acts”. Verse 24,

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 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. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with

men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Romans 1:24-27 (NASB))

Again, here we see clearly that it is the sin of “lust” that is the “driving force” behind what God describes as “impurity”, “degrading passions” and “indecent acts”. And yes, “lust” is a sin, one of the three most consuming sins that men and women ever encounter, “lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life” (1 John 2:15-17).

And recall again the penalty for this behavior, 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9,

9 . . . do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.

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One more example of what God thinks about these acts of “impurity”, “degrading passions” and “indecent acts”. It comes from Genesis chapters 18 and 19. There God devoted almost two chapters of the bible to giving us a detailed account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, to say to us what He thinks about homosexual behavior. The people of those cities had become so depraved and consumed with homosexual behavior that God refused to withhold His hand of wrath. And He rained down fire and brimstone upon those cities destroying all the people in them except for the one family of Abraham’s nephew, Lot.

Folks, God does not look with acceptance and tolerance upon man’s alternative substitution of homosexual behavior for His ordained love relationships between a man and woman.

In response to those who would claim that they can be a Christian and still embrace homosexual behavior, we must ask a very simple question . . . “How is it possible for a man to obey these words of Ephesians 5 regarding a husband and a wife if everything that he is doing is steeped in sin?” Those precious words again,

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV))

How can a man who is caught up in what God calls “degrading passions” do these things . . . love their same-sex partner as Christ loves them? Such Christ-like love requires that the “Spirit of Christ” be present within the man before he is able to love with “agape love”. And how can a man “sanctify” and “cleanse” his same-sex partner if

he does not have the “truth of Christ” within him? And how can a man present his same-sex partner “Holy and without blemish” before the throne of God? God tells us clearly that that man will never have the opportunity to enter into His kingdom.

Folks, as disciples of Christ, you and I must never follow after the ways and the demands of the world, being tolerant and accepting and embracing of the sinful homosexual agenda and behaviors as being normal and OK, and especially to accept it as part of the church. Homosexual behavior has absolutely no part within the “Body of Christ” or within the kingdom of God.

And as Christians we are ever and always to be a testimony of God’s truth and not confuse those who would observe us by our simply adopting a “live and let live” or “don’t look, don’t tell” philosophy, or simply agreeing to a philosophy of letting “consenting adults” do whatever they want. May that never be!

It is a difficult “narrow path” that we as Christians must walk, knowing that those dear people who are caught up in homosexual behavior are slowly dying an “eternal death”. We always have the “great commission” of Christ that stands as our guide. And though we see their depraved condition and are often repulsed by it, we still must obey Christ and love them and be willing to continually give the “Gospel” to them so that they might turn and be saved.

Finally, on the authority of these scriptures, may we conclude that homosexual behavior is neither a “political matter” nor is it a “physical genetic condition” that some people are born into and cannot deny! Homosexual behavior is a condition of “immorality” brought on by “lust” within the soul and it is an intentional “act of the will”. It has no place within the kingdom of God, and it has a sure and certain recompense! 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9 . . .

9 . . . do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.
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