

Scripture Reading: Psalm 45

“To the Chief Musician. Set to “The Lilies.” A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

1 My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. 2 You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. 3 Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. 4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. 5 Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; The peoples fall under You. 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. 8 All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad. 9 Kings’ daughters are among Your honorable women; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. 10 Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father’s house; 11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him. 12 And the daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor. 13 The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold. 14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. 15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King’s palace. 16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make princes in all the earth. 17 I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.”

“I Will Show You the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife”

In looking at where we are at today here at Church of the King, your elders thought it would be wise to spend the next few weeks giving some pastoral teaching and advice on marriage and courtship, especially for our children and young adults.

- I trust that we all agree that marriage is under attack today and so it is important to understand how God views marriage!**
- So this week we look at marriage!**

Next week I will address how our young people should prepare for marriage if that is God’s calling on their lives and how we can all assist them in this Godly venture.

- Something we think is important and timely because of the number of children and young people that we have at Church of the King today.**

I will be sharing many things that most of us know, and even know well, but it is always good to remember what is so precious in God’s sight...

- These are truths we are to remember & it is our responsibility to impart them as we bring up the next generation, or those new in the faith, in the fear and admonition of the Lord!**

And finally, as Job and Katie prepare to take their wedding vows the following Lord’s Day, Michael will show us where all of this is going in history! I know he may have panicked a bit when he saw my sermon title, but I promise to leave him the best for last!

Our plan is NOT to recount the marital and sexual sins of our day because quite honestly they are legion, and the real danger is that as a fish in water does not think about being wet, we can easily forget how far from the Biblical standards we have wandered in our modern age!

- **And of course my first task this morning is to show why the examples that we saw in the life of Jacob last week are also NOT to be our normal!**

Yes we do see polygamy, which is having a man married to more than one women, at various places in the Scriptures and often with men who are used as examples of great faith, like Abraham or Kings David & Solomon. As we shall see in our study of marriage this morning these are violations of God's standard and purposes in marriage, and thus must be seen as we did last week as example of where God draws straight lines with crooked sticks. We should remember that the first recorded polygamist was Lamech who reveled in his wickedness asking for seventy times seven times the curse of Cain. We have seen the trouble that Abraham had with his additional wife Hagar and of course Kings David and Solomon were greatly troubled as well. Jesus told the religious leaders of His day that we find divorce in the Laws of Moses, not because God does not hate divorce, but rather because of the hardness of man's heart.

Thus I think we need to view polygamy in the Old Testament in the same light. It was not God's standard for marriage and Lord willing that will be made clear once more this morning.

- **So my task is simply to remind us what Biblical marriage is and why God holds it to be so important!**

I am going to approach it in the way banks train their tellers to spot counterfeit money! Basically they have them become SO familiar with real money, that any fake money stands out like a sore thumb!

- **We are going to look at what marriage should be, what it means & why it is important!**

So in making my case we need to consider at least four foundational principles of marriage:

- **Marriage is Creational**
- **Marriage is one man – one woman!**
- **Marriage is for life!**
- **Marriage is Christ-like, revealing the mystery of Christ & His Church**

So first, there are two VERY important reasons to see marriage as a created institution:

In the Book of Beginnings we have God instituting marriage where we find some truths that Pastor Wilkins has shared with us many times: Genesis 2:18-25: "18 And Jehovah God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." ...

- **Adam could NOT fully & properly reflect the image of God while he was alone!**

21 "And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man."

Three things to note here:

- **God put Adam in a death like sleep which follows the pattern of evening & morning foreshadowing the death and resurrection of Jesus!**
- **God takes a portion of the side of Adam and builds Eve! Yes, these are terms used for buildings and it is very different than the other forming and filling or even creating God has done here at the beginning.**
- **And finally God brings her to Adam: The Father brings the Bride to the man in a glorious Garden. A reality that we picture in our marriage ceremonies as the father walks his daughter down the aisle decorated like a garden!**
- **A scene that again foreshadows the final reality of Jesus and His bride that Michael will focus on in two weeks.**

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."

- Adam is excited as he rightly should be!

Next week we will discuss how this is something that our young people should be anticipating, something they should be excited about as well and something they should be preparing for!

- And then the Lord clearly reveals that marriage is to be ongoing...

24 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

- Just as Adam went through a death like experience to receive his bride, here we now have two individuals who must die in order to become one!

They must die to themselves as they begin a life of serving one another!

They must die to their family relationships as they begin a new family.

- They must die so that God can show forth His love to a needy world, as they demonstrate the love of Jesus for His Bride the Church!

And for any who doubt that marriage is a creational ordinance, our second and most convincing reason comes from the Lord Jesus Himself... When questioned about divorce by the Pharisees, Jesus “answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’⁵ 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’? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

- So Marriage is a special relationship instituted by God at creation!

Not something that “evolved” over time or from the animal kingdom, Not something granted by the state, Certainly NOT a sinful institution:

- Nor even primarily a means of restraining sin or to advance good social order.

Marriage does help to restrain sin, it does advance good social order and it does provide a good environment for bearing and raising children... Be we as Christians should understand that Marriage ultimately reveals the nature of God’s eternal character and love as well as Christ & His Church.

We see this clearly taught by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Saints at Ephesus: I could actually do an entire series about marriage from chapters three, four and five, but let me hit some highlights and commend the rest for your further study! In chapter three Paul begins to ponder the mystery of Christ and His great love for His Bride the Church. In Chapter four, Paul challenges the Saints to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” and discusses the unity of the Church where we must bear “with one another in love”

- Paul finally tells the Saints in chapter five that they are to submit to one another in the fear of God. *[notice that we have love and submission!]*

It is here that we learn about the true meaning and focus of marriage!

“5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”

- Paul immediately links marriage with Christ & His Church: You cannot separate them in this entire passage.

“24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 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.”

- **As Pastor Wilkins points out in his many lectures on church history, the center of all of history is God’s dealing with His people, the Bride of Christ!**
- **Marriage IS meant to demonstrate this great mystery of Christ’s love!**

“28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

- **Do you see the linkage Paul makes: Union with Christ is linked with the creation ordinance of marriage!**

32 “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

- **We have now come full circle to the glory revealed in creation to see what marriage is!**

Our simple obedience regarding submission and love in marriage demonstrates the great mystery of Christ and HIS Church:

- **To the watching world**
- **To our next generation**

So we have seen the truths that God reveals about marriage: The institution He created from the very beginning: The joining of one man and one woman who leave and cleave to each other!

- **A bond that is not to be broken because it represents Christ and His Bride the Church.**

This is why God hates divorce and why the penalties for sexual sins, especially adultery are so severe.

And yes we do have to face and deal with such sins in this fallen world. But we should not allow them to take our eyes off of God’s ways and God’s standards... Now I am going to be speaking to our children and young people next week about preparing for marriage...

- **So for my application this morning I want to turn to our married couples and challenge us to be what and who we should be in our Christian marriages!**

And what is the best way to do that? Well how about we simply take a quick look at the vows that Lord willing we get to hear Job and Katie take in a couple of weeks... Vows very similar I am sure to those that we took and vows that I trust we are still taking seriously before our Lord and the watching world.

Men we were asked, “do you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together according to God’s ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Do you promise to love her, guard her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in plenty and want, joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health? And forsaking all others, keeping only unto her, so long as you both shall live?”

We see in that simple vow the permanence of marriage and that your love must be only for your wife until death: Love is a word that gets thrown around a lot today, but it is fleshed out here by saying you are to guard her, to comfort her, to honor her & to keep her!

As we take inventory of our actions this past week husbands, did we guard her or at times tell her, ‘fine, do whatever you want!’ Did we comfort her when she most needed comfort or tell her by our words or actions to quit her whining and complaining? Did we go out of our way to honor her, or just treat her like our ‘old lady’ or see her as the chief cook & bottle washer?

[now if any of you are thinking this is pretty convicting, please understand it was for me as well as I would leave work on the sermon & soon thereafter be short with my lovely bride!]

And did we keep her in our prayers and our thoughts and our actions or did we just think about ourselves and focus only on what more she needed to be doing for ME!

And of course you wives took a similar vow being asked, “do you take this man to be your wedded husband, to live together according to God’s ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony?

And do you promise to obey him and serve him, love, honor and keep him, in plenty and want, joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health?

And forsaking all others, keeping only unto him, so long as you both shall live?”

Now of course we see this modeled after the teaching that Paul gave us above: The husband is to guard and keep while the wife is to obey & serve.

- **This is not the master and slave relationship, but rather the Father & Son relationship that we see in the nature of our Triune God.**

So you face the same questions when it come to love & honor, & the added bonus of seeing how you did with obeying and serving? Did you do so in the same spirit that Jesus obeyed & served His Father?

Or did you do it grudgingly because that is what a ‘good’ Christian wife is supposed to do? Or perhaps you just simply rejected what your husband had to offer & told him to fix his own dinner!

And of course if we continue on in these vows it gets much tougher:

We were asked if we would do these things, “in plenty and want, joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health.”

- **Both are obligated to keep the vows whether the husband just got a promotion or lost his job.**
- **We are to keep those vows whether we are celebrating the birth of a new baby or facing the loss of a young child.**
- **We are to keep those vows whether one of us just got a clean bill of health from the doctor or was paralyzed by a sudden accident.**

That simple statement of “in plenty and want, joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health” covers our financial status, our emotional status and our health status.

- **They are intended to be VERY broad and remind us that we are to keep the vows in good times and in bad times, whether we feel like keeping them or NOT.**

It is far too easy for a woman to decide that the man she is stuck with is not worthy of her respect: Just look at what a jerk he is! Well your vow did not say you would obey and serve him ONLY if he was wise and honorable.

- **How easy it is for a husband, or wife, to say, ‘I just don’t love him or her anymore!’**

That is treating love like some sort of nice drug that is given to you that makes you feel OH SO good and now it has worn off and you have lost that loving feeling... It is gone, gone, gone as that wicked song proclaimed.

Despite all the attempts by Hollywood to convince us otherwise, at bottom love is NOT a feeling... It is an action!

Sure there is tremendous passion and feeling involved in a loving relationship as we shall see in more detail next week...

- **But we should see that as being the same as feeling good about helping someone in need.**

If I don't feel like helping, that does not take away my responsibility and when I do what I am supposed to do, the feelings often follow.

Trust me when I tell you it is much the same in marriage...

If you think the fire and passion is gone, or maybe was never what you thought it should have been, then try following God's commands and see what happens!

Those wedding vows are not taken to put shackles on people and tie them up in a life-long miserable relationship as the modern world would argue...

NO, they are taken to establish the sure foundation of a wholesome relationship that will last and grow until one or both of you are taken to be with Jesus!

I read Psalm 45 as our text this morning and we are going to sing it in just a moment...

Obviously it points ultimately to that Great Marriage of Jesus to His Bride the Church...

- **But I trust we have learned that our marriages are to be a reflection of that great union in the here and now.**
- **Our marriages should give us great joy and be a great witness to the watching world.**

If your marriage is not what it should be, and none of our marriages are all we would like them to be, then listen to the joy and love we see in this Psalm...

A Psalm called, "A Song of Love."

Then move on this week to the Song of Solomon and rejoice together in the glories of love and commitment and then remember those wedding vows and walk in them day after day!

Pray that all of us come to understand how important and serious this is as we strive to make our marriages, and future marriages, more Christ-like!

13 "The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold. 14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. 15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King's palace. 16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make princes in all the earth. 17 I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever."

Communion Meditation: Psalm 45

"My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. 2 You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. 3 Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. 4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things."