

How Can 2 People With A Freewill Become One?

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Sunday School

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Bible Text: Matthew 5; 1 Corinthians 7

Preached on: Sunday, April 18, 2010

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Boy, this place looks thin this morning.

Ok. We are studying Matthew chapter five, the Sermon on the Mount and we are studying the subject of marriage and this morning we are going to look again at 1 Corinthians chapter seven, but I would like to say at the outset that the mystery of marriage has to do with the complexity of freewill.

It is very important that from time to time we try to embrace the perspective of God and just look at the world, look at everything that takes place in life from the standpoint of how God sees things. And if we do not do that, then we are not going to see the big picture of what life is really all about.

And, I mean, why do we really even have marriage? Where did the idea of marriage come from?

Well, it originated in the mind of God. And so if we are like the ecclesiastical man that we read about in the book of Ecclesiastes and we only view life as a man under the sun, which is what that book is really all about. It is about how many views the universe, not how God views it, how man views the universe. And, of course, the point of Ecclesiastes is: You can't figure anything out. You really can't. From one end of the heaven to the other, you can't search it out. You can't really understand it. You cannot answer the main questions of life, the big questions of life like: Where did you come from? Why are you here? What makes right right and wrong wrong? By what authority do we conclude these things? And how do we know where we are going when we die?

Man has no answers for these things at all. And so if we are going to understand the answers to the big questions of life, we have got to get out of this self centeredness mentality that is ours by nature and begin to think God's thoughts after him. And then we can understand it.

So what is marriage really all about? Well, if you begin to study that subject from God's perspective then you understand that it is one of the most important types to be found in the Bible. And marriage began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and we have

marriage all throughout the Scriptures. The book of the Revelation closes with, you know, the bride and groom and the bride, you know, and... so the whole Bible from cover to cover is about marriage and ultimately what it is about is the complexity of the human will. And the question: How can two people with a freewill be one? That is it. How can two people with a freewill be one? How can you not have conflict, war when two people with a freewill try to live together? How is this possible?

Well, the message of salvation is a revelation of how two people with a freewill can be one and have a perfect relationship forever. And that is what the message of the Bible is about. It is how we can have a relationship with God as individuals who have been created with a freewill and we can have a perfect relationship with the holy God for all eternity. That is what marriage is really all about. It is what it symbolizes. It symbolizes that thought.

And, of course, the only way that you can be one with God is realize the truth of yourself, the truth about yourself, the truth of your mind and your freewill and the dangers of it. And, of course, the message of the Bible is the only threat that we have in the course of our existence on this planet is ourselves. It is our freewill. It is a frightfully dangerous thing because it has the power to destroy you forever. You can choose salvation or you can choose against the Lord. You can resist the Spirit and we have the freedom to do that. And so it isn't Satan that is our greatest threat. It is not the people around us that are our greatest threat. The message of the Bible is: We are our own greatest threat.

And so being one with the Lord and resolving this dilemma of how two people with freewill can come together and be one and be happy forever is by way of the cross. That is the only way, by way of the cross where we, at last, realize the dangers of our own mind, the dangers of our own freewill and the dangers of our nature that we are born with and we are educated into that danger that characterizes each one of us and we make a choice. And that choice is, "Lord, by your grace and by your mercy, will you change me by recreating me? Because that is the only way that it can happen. I have to be recreated by the creator God to be like you, because I don't want to be the way I am. I want to die to self. As a matter of fact, I judge myself worthy of death and so my understanding is you died on Calvary in my place and I agree with it 100 percent. I deserve death. I deserve to be cast into hell forever. I don't want to live anymore. But I want you to live and I want you to be my life."

And based on that, when it is true, when it is honest from the heart, when we are worshipping the Lord in Spirit and in truth the Lord will respond to that, the broken and contrite heart. He will intervene and he will answer that request. And he will give us his life as a free gift. That is called salvation.

And when that happens, then we have the mind of Christ and he gives us his life and once he does that, then oneness is the result. And it is a oneness that is equal to—and I say that carefully—it is equal to the oneness between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is equal to it in every respect. We are actually brought into the family of God. We are

born into the trinity. And all the glory and all the possessions of the trinity become ours as a gift. That is the message of the Bible.

Now, if we understand that marriage as a concept is that of dealing with the most complex thing in the universe and the second most complex thing in the universe, namely God being the most complex issue or subject in the universe. How could we ever understand and fully know God? Well, you can't, obviously.

Well, how about those created in the image of God? Well, we are talking about something amazingly complex when we start talking about human beings because we are made in the image of God and that very fact makes us very, very complex. And so when it comes to dealing with the free will of human beings, we are talking about something that is incredibly complex.

One of the great miracles of life is how anybody gets along with anybody because of this, because of free will. How can you have community? How can you have family? How can you have civilization when you understand what the Bible has to say about free will?

Well, if you want God's perspective and he tells you right up front that civilization is not possible with man left to himself. And he said, isn't it in Matthew 24? Yeah, for the... let's see if I can spot it.

Yes, it is in verse 22.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”¹

Well, the only thing that keeps civilization progressing along is the merciful and gracious intervention of God into human affairs and his restraining power. And, of course, we are going to see what happens when the Lord is not involved when he takes the Church out and when he takes his Holy Spirit out in those to whom he has given it.

He uses us for restraining the corruption in the world and restraining total destruction of the world. It is his Holy Spirit in people and as we input our impact government and so forth, we are the working of the Holy Spirit in the world through, you know, the Lord's people. And so the point is without God's intervention it is impossible for human wills to get along at all.

And so, again, when it comes to marriage, we are talking about this great mystery. How can two people with a free will come together and agree and be one? How can that be?

And, again, the unfolding message of the Bible is: It is possible, but it is only possible by way of the cross of Calvary.

¹ Matthew 24:22.

And so marriage in the Bible, from God's perspective, is a picture of human redemption. And how to resolve this dilemma—two people with freewills coming together and being one—that is what the message is about, in essence, from cover to cover.

[off mic voice]

Do it your way?

[off mic voice]

Yeah, yeah, that's right. Well, that's true. Yeah, well, especially when it is the Lord that says that. Otherwise, you have got a totalitarian dictator. You are not that, are you, PC?

[off mic voice]

Ok, so 1 Corinthians seven has to do with this complexity that we are talking about. How can two people exist together on this planet? Well, I can tell you now that not only can nations not survive in relationship with one another, but neither can communities survive and neither can a husband and wife survive in a marriage situation without understanding the message of the cross. It is not possible.

People that are not saved that are married are really not married, not from God's standpoint they are not. They have got an arrangement that they are tolerating, but it is not a marriage. Somebody that says that lost people get married and love one another, that is not true. It is not possible to love outside of Christ. The human mind doesn't know the concept of love or at least the reality of love without being born of god.

“[He] that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”²

So if you are not saved you do not know love and so marriage, as we see it in the world practiced by most people is just a tradition. And that is why most of them end in divorce is because it is just tradition.

But 1 Corinthians seven addresses this complexity. And I am telling you. When two people on this planet decide they are going to enter into this close relationship with one another in marriage, 1 Corinthian seven is saying right up front: You can count on it. You are going to have trouble, because you are talking about two people that by nature are self centered. We all are. We are all self centered. And we all have a freewill and we want what pleases self. No man by nature is caring of anyone beyond the self. That is, by nature. That nature, sad to say, continues with us even after we get saved. We still are prone to go back that direction and you would wonder how even saved people can have a marriage when you think about this thought.

How many people do you know that you believe walk in the Spirit every day? Do you? You might start with self. Do I walk in the Spirit every day?

² 1 John 4:7.

Percentage wise if I could put it there right in front of me, percentage wise, what percentage is sold out to the Lord and what percentage of my life and my existence is, in reality, carnal and has more to do with self than it does the Lord and others? That would be frightful to know. So we will turn away from that right now before we get discouraged.

[off mic voice]

Yeah.

[off mic voice]

That's right.

[off mic voice]

That's right. Absolutely it is not.

Yes. As a matter of fact, we all have some kind of desperation, some sense of desperation from meeting with the Lord. I am talking about a reason that just makes you go there. You won't. It just isn't going to happen. You have got to have a reason that is real to you or it will never happen.

It doesn't matter how many times the Bible teacher gets up and says, "You need to do this. You need to do this every day." And people will sit there and say, "Yeah, you know, that is right. That is what I need to do."

And then a week later nothing has changed. And when you reflect back over the past week at how much quality time was actually spent with the Lord every day, sad to say most people—I am telling you—most people will never consistently do it. It just isn't going to happen.

And that is tragic to tell you the truth. It is really tragic. But until God works desperation into your life and you see the reason as real to you, it will never happen.

One of the things that helps a lot is just discipline, just the discipline. This is something I am resolved to do. I am going to do it whether I feel good or not. I am going to do it. I am going to do it. I will never fail to do it. Even if I am sitting there and it seems like the Lord is a million miles away, I am going to sit there anyway. And this time is reserved for him.

And when you start crying out to God for him to come and visit you, he will. He shows up. He shows up. He will keep you straight and he will give you soundness of mind and he will give you direction for your life. He will do that. But until we just about destroy ourselves, the reason for meeting with him doesn't seem to thrive very well.

But anyway, 1 Corinthians seven is really a treatment of this freewill thing and the delicate nature of it and complexity of it and limitations that we have in affecting the freewill of the people around us.

Now this is true whether you are talking about just your interrelations with people, whether it is in business or just neighbors. It is a very complicated thing. But what intensifies the complexity of this issue is marriage. And the reason is because two people with freewill come together and they see one another on a regular basis. They live with one another. They are always together. They do things together. They see each other on a regular basis and their life is all bound up together.

Now that becomes an intense experience with the complexities of the freewill. But you are going to invite a ton of problems when you get close to any other human being. And the reason is because you are going to start having a relationship with somebody that is really just like you, self centered. And getting along with another human being that is self centered is hard. It is hard. And the Lord wants us to know that. He wants us to enter into that because he wants us to experience in a practical way something of what he is dealing with and the glory of his grace and his mercy that he continues to have anything to do with us in view of how we are.

How in the world does the Lord put up with us? Why in the world does he continue to follow after us and want anything to do with us in view of our self centeredness? And we are absolutely that way. And I am telling you. Marriages are in trouble in the world. And there are very few people that are happily married, very, very few people happily married.

There are a lot of people married, but they are just tolerating the situation. Truth be known many people that are married would give anything if they could get out of it and try it again with somebody else because this ain't working kind of thing. That's the mentality of most people.

Of the 60 percent that do get a divorce the remaining probably 35 percent or 30 percent are not really that happy, truth be known. Precious few they get married are really, really happy and wouldn't change it for anything in the world.

Now, how can a person marry and be happy? How can you resolve this dilemma of the free will? And the answer is: Each has to have the mind and life of Christ. And that is the only way. That is the only way to have a happy marriage. Each has to have a completely separate individual relationship with Jesus Christ.

It has nothing to do with the husband or the wife whichever. It is individual. The cross of Calvary and the message of this Bible is to individuals alone. It is not to families. It is not to communities. It is not to nations. It is to individuals. Christ died for me.

Now when I am right with the Lord and when my wife is right with the Lord, then the only thing that can result is a oneness. If we have oneness with the Lord, we have to have oneness with one another of both are saved. Now that is the only way marriage can work the way it should.

And, of course, when we have the mind of Christ we do understand something of the complexity of the human will and if we have the life of Christ we have something we have a caring spirit. And a person that is married to somebody and really cares about his mate is not going to force their freewill. The Lord doesn't force ours. He courts us. He woos us to himself. He educates us. He gives us information. He reasons with us.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD.”³

And when you have the right spirit in you, you are going to understand his reasoning and so forth and well the relationship just gets good. It gets good.

And so in our relationship with one another, when we practice the same methods that the Lord practices toward us, number one, he cares for us and we start caring for one another.

I know husbands that treat wives terribly. They get upset with them when they go do something, when they are not fulfilling their expectations they, you know, give them what for over. And they are on... I think I said this the other week. I am sure I did. I think that we all in our marriage situation ought to extend to our mate the liberty we want them to extend toward us. And so if we love our wife or husband the way we love ourselves, then that is going to go a long way toward having a good relationship.

I think it is evil to ever scream or holler at a wife or husband. I think that is absolutely the worst thing in the world. Or to say things that are unkind to... and especially in a heat, when you get mad and you say something. So many marriages are destroyed because of remarks that are made because that is our defense mechanism and we want them to understand who we are and what our position is and so sometimes we use words that really hurt.

It is better to not say anything than to say things that hurt. That is not right. It is not loving.

Well and, sadly, most people enter into this marriage relationship they don't know any of these things. Most young people that get married, they are getting married to keep from burning with lust. And they see something that they want and that is the only thing that really matters. I think this woman will make me happy.

And it is no real understanding of the things of God. There is no meeting with him, no understanding of fear of the self and the dangers of the self. There is no understanding that you are fixing to marry someone that is just like yourself, that is self centered and

³ Isaiah 1:18.

what kind of complexity that is going to invite into the situation. None of that stuff is understood.

And so people get married and they go off and after the honeymoon is over and, you know, the novelty of it all is over and the thrills and everything. And then you settle down to the realization that you have married somebody with a freewill and you say, “Uh, oh, man, this is hard. This is complicated.”

[off mic voice]

Yeah.

[off mic voice]

Yeah [?] Yeah.

[off mic voice]

And they sit there and nod as though they already knew it.

[off mic voice]

Well, what is really interesting is how after they go ahead and get married, they will then come back and blame you for not giving them good counsel because now they are in a mess and you are the reason. You didn't tell them all these things that they should have...

[off mic voice]

Yes, yeah, yeah.

So some people begin to find these things out after they get into the situation and so, listen to me, folks. 1 Corinthians seven is about that. It is about realizing after the fact.

See, 1 Corinthians seven begins with the carnal man, you know, “It is better to marry than to burn.”⁴ That is basically what it is saying in verse nine.

“But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”⁵

And so the thrust of the marriage relationship as Paul begins to even present it is from the animal level of sexual desire. That is how he begins the whole subject on this amazing chapter concerning marriage.

Well, all of the sudden they get married. And then, lo and behold, look at verse 10.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:7.

⁵ Ibid.

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.”⁶

Oh, me.

But why should we expect anything different? Because all of the sudden two people get married, all of the sudden realize, “I have just married somebody with a nature just like mine.”

Of course, we don’t say it that way. Here is what we say. “I just realized that I have married a woman that is messed up.”

And the, you know, on the other side that is exactly the same view used toward the other side. “I have married a man that is absolutely messed up.”

And, again, this is realized after you get into the relationship, after the covenant has already been made and you have been locked into this situation until death, until death you do part.

Well, why would the Lord tell us that when he knew in advance it was going to be a rough ride? Once you get in this boat, you are going to ride this river all the way to the ocean, to the end of your life. You are not going to get out of it. You are going to stay in it.

Why would the Lord want it to be that way? Because I think in part he want to acquaint us in a very earthly way with his longsuffering, with his forbearance, with his unusual love, with his mercy and grace. There are going to be times when your marriage mate is going to really do something bad. And what they are going to need from the other is mercy. And sometimes it will be grace. It will be grace.

“Listen. I know that you drove the car without oil in it. And I know that it is going to cost us 3000 dollars, but, sweetheart, I love you anyway.”

I mean, a lot of husbands do not say it that way. That is not what we feel or practice. And to be able to feel or practice the gracious side, the merciful side, the loving side is to have learned before you ever even got married how to go to the Lord alone with your primary concern being you, not somebody else, you.

If we could live every day realizing that our biggest problem is ourselves. It is not the people around us, including wife or children or whoever else, do you understand how much further ahead of things we would be?

And so the first thing we run into here in this chapter is: Ok, we have gotten married now. We have got a problem. And so the wife realizes she has married not a dream boat, but a clod. And he is saying, “Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart,

⁶ 1 Corinthians 7:10.

let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”⁷

So it is a two way street and everything that is said here... And nothing is preferential of one over against the other. Both are created generically the same, man or woman. And some women have married monsters, monsters. And the Lord doesn't say that it is wrong to depart when he gets terrible, because I am telling you. Some husbands can be merciless in their relationship with a wife, cruel. And they can say things that emotionally wreck them, just emotionally wreck them.

And the Lord says right here, “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.”⁸

Now the reason the Lord puts that in there is because there are situations that are so bad that the only way sanity can be preserved is to get away from the monster. And the Lord is not against that. And I have counseled with a lot of people and when somebody is suffering mental abuse and sometimes physical abuse I tell them to get out.

But, you see, getting out and departing does not carry the idea of divorce. Yet what it carries is the idea of survival and sometimes the only way somebody can survive is to get out. But it is always with a view or reconciling.

Sometimes people have to separate so that they can think, so that they can get their sensibilities back and just get some stability and just begin to think and maybe enjoy the counseling from...

And, by the way, don't go to your best friend for counsel. That will get you into a lot of trouble. I don't care who your best friend is. Go to the man of God. You had better go to the man of God.

And, listen. Everybody is not a man of God that purports to be. There are people—and you can tell when the Spirit of God is on them. You had better find them and get your counsel. I am telling you. I have known people that have royally messed up because their friend has told them this is what they ought to do.

Big mistake.

When you are in trouble you go to God.

Well, for this purpose God has raised up prophets, pastors and teachers. You go to them. You seek out men that have the wisdom of God.

And I will tell you. Over the years I have leaned hard on that. There have been times—I am not talking about just marriage kinds of things. I am talking about just life. I needed

⁷ 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:11.

the man of God. I needed to talk to somebody. And I have been known personally to get in my car and drive hundreds of miles to find a man of God to talk to. And I didn't talk with just one. I would talk with several because you don't want to make a mistake when it comes to these crucial issues in life. You want to get it right.

And so 1 Corinthians seven does provide relief for people by pulling out of the situation.

But as we continue in the chapter you see that the complexity of the free will becomes the most important factor here in what you are dealing with.

It says in verse 12:

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not [now that is free will], and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.⁹

So if the situation is such that, ok, you have got unbelievers, but they want to stay with you. You are not supposed to depart from them in a situation like that if they want to be with you. If you have got that much there to work with, you stay together.

And here is the deal. Here is the reason. If a person really wants to stay with you, part of what is involved there is an ear. And that is what is in view here is the ear. And if you have got an unbelieving husband that wants to stay with you, do you know what you can do? You can witness. You can talk to that ear. And husbands have been won by the conversation of the wife and vice versa.

So as long as there is an ear, you want to stay in the relationship.

Verse 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."¹⁰

So he brings a couple of things here into view. One is the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified by the one that does believe. What does that mean? Sanctified means set apart in a special way. Because a marriage relationship is very special in that there is nothing to compare to it in human experience, in terms of human relationships, because the closeness and the intimacy of a husband and wife.

And so if you are really close to somebody and you really know what they are all about, you have to spend time with people, I mean, a lot of time with people really getting to know them, what they are like on the inside and nobody else knows. That kind of intimacy is tremendously important because the other party can tell the other the truth about himself. A lot of times we don't want to hear it. But a believing wife that has the

⁹ 1 Corinthians 7:12-13.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:14.

wisdom of God can sometimes because of the special knowledge of her husband can tell that husband what he needs to hear to learn the truth about himself so that he can have a broken and a contrite heart and hopefully eventually realize why Christ died on the cross.

And so the unbelieving wife can sometimes by that relationship win the husband and vice versa.

And also the Lord brings children into view here because one of the saddest things when it comes to marriage is the ramifications of the problems in marriage and how it affects the children.

Now this is very, very important in the mind of God. It would be better for a man to have a millstone put around his neck and to be cast into the sea than to offend one of the little ones. This is in every relationship in life and I am telling you there are some children in this world that are totally confused because of divorce. They don't understand it. They are supposed to look up to adults. They are supposed to be their role models in life. And when all of the sudden you see the husbands and wives that can't get together and provide some kind of stable environment for the child, it puts the child in terrible confusion.

At Calvary Christian School, sad to say, the teachers are the only real parents that a lot of these children have ever really known. And I have known children to come here to this school and view the teacher more as a mother than their own mother and likewise the fathers, same thing. And so you have to think very carefully and understand that when it comes to getting married there are many factors that become very important that go way beyond self concerns.

I see people getting divorced all the time. They are not thinking about the children. That is secondary or maybe even not on the plate. The main thing is I am not happy and I am getting out. Let the children do the best they can.

[off mic voice]

Yes, that is that freewill thing.

[off mic voice]

Yeah. Yeah and that peace thing has more to do with the individuals being able to have some kind of relationship with the Lord than does anything else because... and I repeat this. This is a tremendously important point. Marriage is supposed to be the ultimate type in the Bible of salvation. But marriage in most cases is the ultimate stumbling block between an individual and God. Very unusual. It is almost an oxymoron how that is possible. It is almost like a contradiction. I mean marriage should be something that really facilitates a relationship with God. But the opposite is usually the case. And the reason is because you get locked in, two people looking horizontally, neither are looking vertically, looking horizontally. More just wrapped up in each other and in a tizzy, what

you might say, because each is making the other miserable. And when you are like that you cannot have the kind of relationship the Lord wants to have with you. He needs people that have soundness of mind, that have stability, that have power in their life. And a lot of times when people are going through marital problems they are so messed up they can't be a blessing to anybody. They are consumed, I mean consumed with the wife or husband or whatever situation. The idea of witnessing to somebody and really caring, you know, to get involved in the Lord's ministry and to be the light of the world. It is not there. It is not possible because they are too mentally devastated.

That is why he goes on to say, listen. It is better to remain unmarried, because of the problems you are going to get into in marriage, it is better to be unmarried. And he says that. I mean, this is the point that he makes in this chapter because the truth is when you get into this human will thing and you begin to experience the delicacy of it, it is so easy to bruise another human being. And if you do not have the mind and spirit of God that is what you are going to do. You are going to injure the person that you are married to by saying hateful things by not really loving them and showing them that they are loved.

[off mic voice]

I think that it is because the Lord nailed him on the Damascus road and brought him down to see the monster that he was and I think when he saw it the only thing that mattered to him was the Lord. And I think that it consumed him to the point that anything else would have been a distraction from that. I think that is probably the answer more than anything. I don't think he wanted anything to get in the way of being totally available and totally surrendered to the Lord, totally.

So to others that want to argue that, Paul said, "Here is my statement on it. It is better to marry than to burn."

Some people say, "Well, the reason I got married was not because of that, it was because of loneliness."

Yeah? Well, that may be. But that may not be a spiritual thing, loneliness. I mean if you have got a God centered mentality, the Lord might say, "Well, where am I? I told you I would never leave you nor forsake you. You have me. You have me always."

And so loneliness can be just an excuse to justify a bad attitude and to justify one's own misery as though that is a noble thing to be miserable.

As Christians we ought to be the happiest, most satisfied people on the face of the earth because we know the truth and we know him that will never leave us nor forsake us.

Well, our time is passed, gone. Let us look to the Lord in prayer.

Father, thank you for this time we have had. We thank you for the Scriptures that teach us the truth. We do thank you for the homes, the families we do have in this church and

for the blessing that many are. I just pray that you would help us to learn from these things and to be prepared and able to teach the younger that they might understand these things in advance of marriage. We pray for the services today. We just thank you for brother Charles. Ask you to bless him as he comes to bring the message and we ask these things, Lord, for thy sake. And it is in thy name that we pray and ask this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.