

Ephesians 5:22-33
A biblical theology of Marriage

1. Prayer...
2. Introduction
 - a. Marriage is increasingly unpopular in our culture.
 - b. Comedian Chris Rock asked, “Do you want to be single and lonely or married and bored?” (Keller, 22)
 - c. This question implies that we only have two choices.
 - i. You can be single and lonely... that’s no good.
 - ii. You can be married and bored... that’s no good either.
 - iii. Sadly, many have adopted Christ Rock’s attitude about marriage.
 - d. Tim Keller writes...
 - i. “Over the last forty years, the ‘leading marriage indicators’.... in the United states- have been in steady decline. The divorce rate is nearly twice the rate it was in 1960. In 1970, 89 percent of all births were to married parents, but today only 60 percent are. Most tellingly, over 72 percent of American adults were married in 1960, but only 50 percent were in 2008.” (Keller, 22)
 - ii. Again Keller writes, “More recently, ... a Pew Research Center survey that found that nearly 40 percent of Americans believed that marriage is becoming obsolete.” (Keller, 43)
 - e. The institution of marriage seems to be dying...
 - f. To make things worse a lot of folks can’t even define marriage.
 - g. One scholar writes, “For the first time in its history, Western civilization is confronted with the need to define the meaning of the terms marriage and family.” (Kostenberger, 15)
 - h. That brings us to Ephesians 5:22-33
 - i. This is the longest and most explicit text on marriage in the NT.
 - ii. This morning’s sermon is going to be a little different. Instead of working through this text verses by verse, which I will do the next two weeks.
 - iii. This morning, I want to place this text in its biblical theological context.
 - i. To do this we are going to look at the four major events in scripture.
 - i. Marriage after creation
 - ii. Marriage after the fall
 - iii. Marriage after redemption
 - iv. Marriage after recreation

1. Marriage after creation

- a. We learn several things about God’s design for marriage in Genesis 1-2.

b. Marriage was designed as the first social institution

- i. God created three great institutions, marriage, church, and state...
- ii. God created marriage first.
- iii. This strongly implies that marriage is the foundation for every other social institution.
- iv. This is why the collapse of marriage equals the collapse of church and society.
- v. This is happening right before our eyes.

c. Marriage was designed to produce children

- i. **Genesis 1:28 (ESV) — 28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**”
- ii. This does not mean we should have 20 children.
- iii. But it does mean that marriage was designed to produce children, which implies that children are a blessing.
- iv. Children were designed to flourish in the context of a loving mother and a loving father.
- v. Both are essential...
- vi. If you are a single mom or dad, God will give you the grace you need.

d. Marriage was designed for companionship

- i. **Genesis 2:18 (ESV) — 18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; **I will make him a helper fit for him.**”
- ii. **Genesis 2:23 (ESV) — 23** Then the man said, “**This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.**”
- iii. Your spouse is supposed to be your best friend. This is good’s ideal for marriage.
 1. *Commentator Matthew Henry of the 17th century writes*, “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled by him; but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.” (Blanchard, 404)
 2. Contrast this to our culture’s view of marriage (I have heard of bachelor parties where a guy has to carry around a ball and chain)...

e. Marriage was designed to show equality and distinction

i. Marriage shows equality

1. **Genesis 1:27–28 (ESV) — 27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
2. **Both made in God’s image...**
3. Wherever Christianity goes women are liberated...

ii. Marriage also shows distinction

1. Men and women are equal in value but different or distinct in function.
 2. Adam was called by God to lead Eve. Eve was called by God to follow Adam and be his helper.
 3. We see clear indicators of these differences in Genesis 1-2, before the fall.
 - a. Adam was created first then Eve suggesting he had a leadership role (1 Tim 2:13)
 - b. Eve was created as a helper for Adam (Genesis 2:18)
 - c. Adam named Eve. Naming was a symbol of authority in the ANE.
 - d. The human race was named man (coming from the word Adam) and not women and is represented by Adam and not Eve (Romans 5)
 - e. After the fall God holds Adam responsible for what happened.
 - iii. The NT upholds the pattern of equality and distinction in marriage.
 1. Ephesians 5
 2. 1 Peter 3:1-7
 - iv. We will discuss these claims in much more detail next week.
- f. **Marriage was designed to produce a lasting, intimate, one man, one-woman relationship.**
- i. **Genesis 2:24–25 (ESV) — 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**
 - ii. The one man and his one wife were both naked and not ashamed. In other words, marriage is supposed to be marked by a very close and very intimate relationship between the man and the woman.
 - iii. We also read that Adam was commanded to “hold fast to his wife.”
 - iv. Gen. 2:24-25 rule out several things...
 1. Adultery is not holding fast to your wife.
 2. Divorce is not holding fast to your wife.
 3. Polygamy is not holding fast to one wife...
 4. Homosexual relationships violate the one-man one-woman principal in Gen. 1-2.
 - v. “hold fast to your wife” also implies that the husband is the one who is supposed to cultivate this relationship.
 1. Men, how are you doing here???
- g. We learn several things about God’s design for marriage in Genesis 1-2.
- h. What can we apply from Genesis 1-2?
- i. God’s design for marriage is really good...
 - ii. This is not just what the scripture says this is what the evidence says...

1. Keller writes, “During the last two decades, the great preponderance of research evidence shows that people who are married consistently show much higher degrees of satisfaction with their lives than those who are single, divorced, or living with a partner... Also, children who grow up in married, two parent families have two to three times more positive life outcomes than those who do not. The overwhelming verdict, then, is that being married and growing up with parents who are married are enormous boosts to our well-being.” (Keller, 26)
- iii. God’s design for marriage leads to human flourishing. When we ignore God’s design for marriage it leads to pain and heartache.
- iv. Some of you grew up in broken homes and you don’t want what your parents had. This is understandable. I want the next few weeks to give you hope. It is possible, by the grace of God to have a wonderful marriage, even if it has been miserable for 25 years.
- v. Ultimately God designed marriage to glorify himself, which is why Satan is so bent on destroying it.
- vi. This brings us to Genesis 3 and our second point.
- vii. *First, marriage after creation...*

2. Marriage after the fall

a. *Satan seeks to destroy God’s glorious design for marriage in Genesis 3.*

i. Genesis 3:1–7 (ESV) — 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 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. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

- b. Satan tried to destroy God’s design for marriage by twisting and subverting the roles of husband and wife.
 - i. Adam is called by God to lead Eve, provide for Eve, and protect Eve.
 - ii. Eve is called to be his helper. Instead of helping him she leads him into sin.
 - iii. Adam is supposed to be leading her into righteousness.
 - iv. This is the exact opposite of what happened.
 - v. Eve leads her husband into sin.
 - vi. The worst part about this story is that Adam stood by passively, right next to Eve and watched the whole thing unfold.

1. V. 6 says that he was with her...

- vii. The sin that plunged all of humanity into death and darkness was male passivity.
- viii. Male passivity is the root of 10,000 marital problems.
- c. The rest of Genesis 3 describes the catastrophic results. (death, destruction, & incalculable pain)
- d. Satan is still trying to destroy God's design for marriage-
 - i. Our country is on the verge of legalizing polygamy.
 - ii. Homosexual marriage is now legal in all 50 states.
 - iii. Teen sex is ubiquitous
 - iv. Pornography is reeking havoc on marriage.... (anecdotal story)
 - v. For the first time in our cultures history less than 50% of the adults are married.
 - vi. Adultery is celebrated in Romance novels, movies, and web sites.
- e. Illustration
 - i. When fighting a war, a good general will study his opponent very carefully and figure out how he can cause the most damage.
 - ii. This is why armies often blow-up dams, airports, and strategic bridges first.
 - iii. They want to inflict maximum damage—cutting off water supplies, flooding crops, ruining communication. Etc...
 - iv. The devil is no different...
 - v. He is waging a war against humanity, because humanity is made in the image of God and he hates God.
 - vi. He has been waging this war for thousands of years.
 - vii. He has realized that if he wants to do the most damage to humanity he needs to hit us where it really hurts...
 - viii. Where does it hurt the most?
 - ix. Marriage and the family.... By waging war on the family Satan knows that he can cause the most destruction.
 - x. Here is just one example of the damage done when marriages are destroyed.
 - 1. Poverty...
 - 2. When kids are born into single parent homes poverty skyrockets...
 - 3. The solution to poverty is very simple... all the studies show that poverty is almost unheard of in America when one man remains married to one woman. See Charles Murray's book "Coming apart"
 - 4. Divorce ruins people financially...
 - 5. I have not even mentioned all the psychological and emotional damage.
- f. Satan wars against marriage because he hates humanity.
- g. Is there any hope??? Yes!!! This brings us to my third point-
- h. *Marriage after creation*
- i. *Marriage after the fall*

3. Marriage after redemption

- a. **Ephesians 5:22–32 (ESV) — 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself**

its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body. **31** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

b. What does marriage have to do with redemption? Everything...

- i. When God invented marriage, he already had the saving work of Jesus Christ in mind...
- ii. He designed marriage for many reasons, but one of the primary reasons that marriage exists is to put on display the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- iii. What a contrast to the secular worldview—where marriage really has no purpose, deeper meaning, or goal but to please oneself.
- iv. How does Christ love the church? explain...
- v. How does the church respond to Christ? explain...
- vi. There are thousands of books on marriage... promoting communication techniques, love languages, his needs and her needs, and a thousand other things... some of these things are probably helpful, but they don't get to the heart of the matter...
- vii. Ephesians 5 is the heart of the matter...

c. Application-

- i. Some of you are very discouraged right now. Your marriage is in shambles. You have no hope... in fact, you have been hopeless for years.
- ii. You think that there is no way that God can restore your marriage. It seems way too broken...
- iii. Jesus wants to help... he is committed to helping, because his glory is at stake. Your marriage is a reflection of his marriage to the church.
- iv. No matter how broken things are, no marriage is too broken for God to intervene.
- v. What would it be like if all the marriages at GCF honored Eph. 5?
 1. If husbands... pursued their wives, served their wives, cultivated romance with their wives, provided well for their wives, prayed for their wives, etc...
 2. If wives... submitted to their husbands and supported them and followed their leadership even when it is scary?
 3. What would a lost and dying world see? Joy, peace, love, healthy families
 4. What would children see???
 5. This type of marriage is possible...
- vi. As glorious as marriage is it is not ultimate!!! This brings us to our last point.

- d. *Marriage after creation*
- e. *Marriage after the fall*
- f. *Marriage after redemption*

4. Marriage after recreation

- a. **Revelation 19:6–9 (ESV)** — **6** Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. **7** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; **8** it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. **9** And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”
- b. The Bible begins with a wedding (Adam and Eve in the garden) and ends with a wedding (Christ and his church in the new creation).
- c. God loves weddings... but we will not be married in heaven!!!
- d. **Luke 20:34–35 (ESV)** — **34** And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, **35** but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage,
- e. If God loves weddings and marriage so much why will we not be married in heaven? Marriage in this life, even the best marriages are meant to give us a small foretaste of the joy we will experience with Christ for all eternity.
- f. The joy you experience in the healthiest and strongest marriages is like a small cup of water compared to the ocean of Joy you will experience in your relationship with the triune God in heaven.
- g. Marriage was always meant to point us to this greater reality... the only marriage in heaven will be the marriage of Christ and his bride, the church.
- h. If you never get married, yet you are trusting Jesus, you will someday experience greater joy than the happiest earthly marriage that has ever existed.

5. Conclusion-

- a. When one looks at the state of marriage in our culture, it is very easy to get discouraged.
 - i. All the data clearly indicates that the institution of marriage is no longer esteemed.
 - ii. People are getting married later and later, if they get married at all.
 - iii. Divorce is on the rise
 - iv. And gay marriage and polygamy are celebrated
- b. In the midst of the confusion, godly Christian marriages, that produce godly Christian children will be more and more attractive to a lost and broken world. What an opportunity. Let’s pray...