

Marriage—Exploring The Depths of God’s Creation, Pt 2

(shared at MVCC on 2/9/2014)

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Intent: Today message is about confidence building. I want to help spouses, single men and women and teenagers build up confidence in God’s design and intention for marriage between a man and a woman. There are so few influences in today’s world that strengthen or support relationships that honor God. So let’s get started.

In the book of Ephesians chapter 5 verses 22-33, the Apostle Paul speaks about marriage between a man and a woman. It’s a powerful passage that speaks of loving leadership and affectionate submission. It’s worthy of study. At the end of this teaching about marriage Paul says...

Ephesians 5:32 (NIV)

This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

As he’s writing about marriage between a man and a woman Paul is ultimately talking about the coming nuptials between Jesus and His church.

In the last book of the Bible, one of Jesus’ disciples is given a vision of heaven. In part of that vision He is in the throne room of God where he hears these words...

Revelation 19:7-9 (NIV)

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) ⁹ Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’”

Long before our wars and debates on marriage and who should and should not be allowed to get married, God defined His intent for marriage that trumps all human arguments, our US Constitution, the rulings of our Supreme Court, and the proverbial pen of our president. Long before there was man and a woman that would enter into a marriage, God had prepared a Marriage for Jesus and His Bride, the Church. This is a wedding that you don’t want to miss.

One reason God created marriage here between a man and a woman was to continually remind the world of the greatest marriage to come: between Jesus and His Church. When considering why God designed marriage between a man and a woman it’s like God was saying, “*I want My people to understand the climactic conclusion to all of world history and the best union I can create to highlight this is the union called marriage between a man and a woman.*”

But as I said in more detail last week, Satan comes along and introduces sexual perversion in our relationships—adultery, pornography and homosexuality just to name a few. That way people, so distorted and confused in their relationships will have NO idea what the great crescendo of history will REALLY be like. Fortunately for us our marriage ceremonies are great reminders of this epic Marriage to come. When God’s chosen people, the Jews designed their weddings, each element of the wedding pointed to the Great Marriage to come. Depending on who you talk to there are anywhere from 5-10 stages to a traditional Jewish wedding. I’ll focus on the top five that, to me, more powerfully point to the Great Marriage to come.

Stage 1. Betrothal (Hebrew—Kiddushin)

In the book of Matthew we see that Mary, the mother of Jesus is betrothed to Joseph. Once a bride and bridegroom entered into this initial phase of marriage they are considered married. There were no sexual relations during the betrothal, but they would have to get a divorce, called a “get” to break off the engagement. This was also the groom’s opportunity to state his intentions. Consider for a moment why Jesus came to earth 2000 years ago. Yes He came to die for our sins, but He also came to make His intentions known to His Bride, the Church. His life, death and resurrection was, in part, Jesus stating His intentions that one day He was going to marry His Bride, the Church. If you’re in this room today, whether you are single, married or divorced, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, then you are part of His Bride and you can say, “I’m spoken for.”

Stage 2. Contract (Hebrew—Ketubah)

A Ketubah or a marriage contract was presented by the groom to the bride and her father. This “contract” outlined the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride. This was also the time the groom would negotiate the “bride price” which would compensate the father’s cost of raising the young woman. I think we should implement this today in our culture. I’m considering keeping a spreadsheet of costs on all three of my girls to hand to the male suitors who come asking for their hands in marriage.

Child of God, Jesus came to earth to make His intentions known and while here He paid the “bride price.” The Bible states...

1 John 2:2 (NIV)

² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

“Atonement” refers to Jesus’ forgiving of sin through His death on the cross. The Bible states, “You were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Stage 3. Wedding chamber (Hebrew—Chuppah) [pronounced: who-pa]

The chuppah represented a Jewish home. Often Jewish couples would be married under a chuppah. In practical terms the groom-to-be would leave his bride-to-be with her father to return to His home to build a room onto his Father’s house for his new bride. All the while the bride is waiting for the groom to return for her.

People often ask, “When is Jesus returning”? The Bible states...

Matthew 24:36 (ESV)

³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

But what is Jesus doing since He left earth the first time?

John 14:1-3 (NIV)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

He’s preparing the chuppah for His bride. We often read this at funerals but this is wedding language!

4. Wedding (Hebrew—Nisuin)

When the wedding chamber was ready the groom would go get his bride. Bridesmaids would have been waiting with the bride with lamps of oil, ready to light the way for a night trip (Matthew

25:1-13). The groomsmen, as well, had lamps as they would lead a torchlight parade through the streets. When the groom got close, the groomsmen would shout and blow the shofar. It was to announce, “The groom is just around the corner...”

Remember every element in the Jewish wedding points to the Great Wedding to come...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NIV)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

I share this today to encourage those of you who are married to not lose heart. Young people, please lean into God’s purpose for your future marriage for it will paint a portrait of the Great Marriage of Jesus

and His Bride that is just around the corner. What’s to come at the end of human history is SO IMPORTANT that what we do with marriage and how we use our sexuality today goes a long way to highlighting what’s to come or distorting what’s to come.

5. Wedding Supper/Kiddush (Matthew 22:1-14)

When the couple is married they enter the chuppah. The wedding is consummated and seven days later when they emerged the wedding supper begins. The Father of the groom would invite everyone to a feast to celebrate the marriage of his son to his new bride. In Matthew 22 Jesus tells the parable of the heavenly wedding banquet to come.

At the banquet the groom and bride would celebrate the Kiddush: This is a shared cup of wine between the groom and his bride. When the bride drinks from the cup, after the bridegroom, it is a sign that she is accepting the covenant her groom has signed during the Ketubah signing earlier in the marriage process.

Consider what Jesus said to His disciples on the night before He was crucified while celebrating the Lord’s Supper (Communion/Eucharist)

Matthew 26:27-29 (NIV)

²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Jesus was saying the next time I drink from this cup I’ll be doing so at the wedding banquet that my Father is throwing for me and my bride, the Church. When Christians take the cup of communion we are saying to the Lord, I’ve embraced Jesus, the groom. *I’m ALL IN to the Marriage to come.* This Great Marriage was announced by JESUS 2,000 years ago and it’s not up for vote, referendum, or change. You have to decide if this MARRIAGE to come is important enough to you to enter into and celebrate your little earthly marriage in a way that points people to that glorious climactic wedding party of all of history.

There’s a warning in this parable. Jesus told His listeners that His Father was inviting His chosen people, the Jews, to the party, but they rejected Jesus. They are in good company. The Jews made light of Christ and still today governments, presidents, legislatures, judges, teachers, artists, Hollywood, and some twisted religious people make light of Christ, biblical marriage between a man and a woman, and of the great salvation offered by Jesus.

Although all are invited to the Great Marriage and subsequent wedding feast (through salvation) many will refuse. And for those who ignore Jesus or want to rewrite His teachings on marriage and sexual impurity, Jesus reminded all who would listen, “my Father won’t overlook this hypocrisy.” Jesus’ parable continued...

Matthew 22:11-14 (NIV)

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless.

¹³ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

The King, referring to God Himself, walked through the party and found a “guest” who did not have on the wedding clothes. He was not wearing the clothes of righteousness. Remember Jesus credits us with His righteousness when we embrace Him by faith. And by living by faith, in agreement with His words and actions, we’re dressed for the Wedding. None of us have the proper wedding garments by nature. We need Jesus!

The day is coming when those who ignore, mock or seek to rewrite God’s Word will have to give an account to Him. If you deny Christ’s sovereign rule over your life here and continue to perpetuate on the world pretend, artificial, bogus unions you call marriage then you risk hearing the words of the King to his attendants in Jesus’ parable, “Take him away.” Christ will usher the unrighteous right out of His presence. Many are called to the wedding-feast, through the free gift of salvation, but few are wearing the wedding-garment, the righteousness of Christ.

This wedding between Jesus, the Groom, and His Bride, the Church, is the climactic event of all of human history. And it’s going to happen. God’s already put it on the calendar and no government or politician can remove it. So men and women and teenagers examine yourselves today. Are you ready for the Groom, Jesus, to come? Are you clothed in Christ’s righteousness by receiving Jesus by faith?

In regards to your marriage or your future relationships and possible marriage, ask yourself, “Do I care enough about the greatest Marriage of all human history that I will seek to honor the Lord with my body and only enter into relationships that honor Him. Teenagers, I know Satan is throwing a lot at you. I know some of you are confused. But I’ve watched God heal, make new, and transform addicts into followers of Christ. When you say I’m predisposed to “x”...you’re right, you are predisposed to sin because of the sinful nature you inherited, but Jesus came to give you a new nature, pure and undefiled. He does this so that His Bride will be PURE at His coming. If you’re looking for healing look no further than Jesus who has been transforming lives for thousands of years. Married couples, lean into Jesus and strive in your marriages to paint the best picture you can of the Great Wedding to come.

Remember these words from the Bible—“*You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body* (1 Corinthians 6:20). You’ve been offered an invitation to the Great Wedding, don’t miss it. “*Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb*” (Revelations 19:9).



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