

The Fall of Marriage

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[0 : 00] This morning we're returning to the topic of marriage for a sermon. My first sermon in this series was last month on the 21st, so if you missed that then you can! go on the church website and you can find it there.

We talked just briefly, we talked about how God is the one who made marriage and how marriage is not just a piece of paper. It's not just a government institution.

We talked about how God himself designed this special relationship between the first man and woman. It says in Genesis that God brought the woman to the man.

And it was God who said, for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.

And we looked a little bit at Jesus' words on the subject in Matthew 19. He said, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.

[1 : 03] God made marriage. We talked about how God is the one who actually joins two people together in a way that we don't understand. It's a special relationship. A holy and sacred thing.

It's a good and beautiful gift of God to us. But I also mentioned last time that this gift of marriage has been deeply affected by the fall of man.

We're not going to actually read that story of how man fell. You can find it in Genesis chapter 3. The devil tempts man to disobey God. And man gives in.

And suddenly the perfect harmony and love that we enjoyed with each other is spoiled by sin. And it wasn't just that we lost our perfect track record or our good standing with God.

It was even deeper than that. We became sinners with a sinful nature. With a tendency to desire and to do what is wrong.

[2 : 05] What is immoral. Good desires were replaced with selfish lusts and cravings. Our perfect care and concern for one another was replaced with a selfishness and a me first mentality.

We see the effects of sin on marriage the moment after Adam and Eve disobeyed God. What does Adam do? When God confronts him rather than taking responsibility for his own sinful action.

He blames his wife. Chapter after chapter of the Bible helps us see the devastation. The consequences of sin for the human race.

Bloodshed. Death. Jealousy. Deception. War. And the list goes on. Our sin affects everything.

Every relationship. Every action. Every thought. Every desire. Including our marriage relationship. And our sexuality.

[3 : 13] What was made to be a good and beautiful gift for mankind. Could no longer be received and enjoyed as intended. Unless both a man and woman humbly seek God together.

And we see the effects of sin on marriage all throughout the Bible. We see it in the first chapters between Abraham and his wife Sarah.

Rather than trust God's promise. Sarah puts her servant Hagar into her husband's arms. To get the son that she desires.

And what does it lead to? Tears. Fighting. Jealousy. Misery. Because God made marriage to be one man.

And one woman exclusively. And whenever that design is violated with another. There can be nothing but problems and pain.

[4 : 10] Well that was Sarah. We also see that Abraham himself didn't do much better on two occasions. He also failed to trust the promise of God.

And tried to take matters into his own hands. To save his own skin in foreign territories. He said his wife was his sister. Which led to her being taken from him twice.

We see the effects of sin a little bit later. On marriage with Abraham's grandsons. Esau married two Canaanite women.

Who were not worshippers of the Lord. And who lived according to the wicked practices of the Canaanites. And it caused major tension in the family. And made life bitter for his parents.

Jacob also had some stuff going on with his marriages. He was a deceiver. And his deceptive ways came back on his own head.

[5 : 11] When his uncle tricked him. Into marrying both of his daughters. And Jacob loved Rachel. More than Leah. And we read of the anguish of soul.

And the pain. Of those two sisters. Who had to share the same husband. And they were inflamed with jealousy and rivalry. Towards each other. We also read of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And the men there. Who exchanged natural relations. For unnatural ones. And burned with lust towards one another. We read about how they treated women.

As objects to be used. And abused. They even tried to molest travelers. And visitors. Who were passing through. We also see.

A little bit later in the story. The tragic effects of sin. Overtake the family of Jacob. When one of the men from the town of Shechem. Takes and rapes. Jacob's daughter. Dinah.

[6 : 15] We see it again with Judah. A little bit later. The son of Jacob. As he sleeps with a prostitute. Who happens to be his own daughter-in-law. And gets caught.

And exposed. We see it with Pharaoh. The king of Egypt's own wife. As she lusts after Joseph in Egypt. And then falsely accuses him of assault.

Which lands Joseph in jail for years. And all of this is just from the very first book of the Bible. We haven't even got to the time of the judges.

We haven't even got to the time of the kings. To David. And Bathsheba. And many more mentions and examples. Of the devastation of sin.

On human relationships. On marriage. On sexuality. When the people of Israel come out of Egypt. And camp at Mount Sinai. God gives them his law.

[7 : 11] And some of those laws pertain to marriage. They point people back to what marriage was intended to be. Two of the Ten Commandments speak of the marriage relationship.

You shall not commit adultery. And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. These things wouldn't even need to be said. If they hadn't become the norm.

In the world at the time. Men and women were getting married. They were making that covenant with each other. And then they were breaking that covenant. By getting together with other men and women.

Asides from the one that they'd. Pledged themselves to exclusively. They were looking at the neighbor. And their families. Their husbands. Their wives. And desiring to be with someone. Other than the one that they had been joined to by God. Also given around the time that the Ten Commandments were. Were the rest of the law. One piece of that is Leviticus 19.29.

[8 : 15] God says do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute. We might wonder why a law like this even needs to be given. How sad.

How sad. That fathers would sell their own daughters. To other men. For the night. The effects of sin on us. Gave rise to all kinds of sexual perversion.

Deviations from the good design of God. Attempts to gratify the cravings. Of our sinful nature. Nearly a whole chapter in Leviticus.

Is dedicated to instruction. About forbidden sexual relations. And we'll just read a few verses from Leviticus 18. The Lord said to Moses.

Speak to the Israelites and say to them. I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt. Where you used to live. And you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan.

[9 : 16] Where I'm bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws. And be careful to follow my decrees.

I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws. For the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord. No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations.

I am the Lord. Do not dishonor your father. By having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother. Do not have relations with her.

Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife. That would dishonor your father. Do not have sexual relations with your sister. Either your father's daughter.

Or your mother's daughter. Whether she was born in the same home. Or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter.

[10:16] Or your daughter's daughter. That would dishonor you. And the list actually just keeps on going here. Most of the chapter.

Listing off different family relationships. And again we might wonder. Did they really need to be commanded by God. Not to have sexual relations with their own parents. With their own grandchildren.

With their step siblings. And with their aunts. With both a mother and her daughter. With the neighbor's wife. But these things were the norm. In Egypt. And in Canaan.

The effects of sin were so deep. That what God had designed for marriage. Had been utterly corrupted. When we get to the bottom of the list. It says this.

Verse 23. Do not have sexual relations with an animal. And defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal. To have sexual relations with it.

[11:14] That is a perversion. Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways. Because this is how the nations. That I'm going to drive out before you. Became defiled. Even the land was defiled.

So I punished it for its sin. And the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native born. And the foreigners residing among you.

Must not do any of these detestable things. For all these things were done. By the people who lived in the land before you. And the land became defiled. And if you defile the land.

It will vomit you out. As it vomited out the nations. That were before you. The effects of sin upon us are so great. That women were seeking after intimate relations.

With animals. Men were seeking after relations with other men. And women with other women. Contrary to our very nature.

[12:17] Contrary to our very physiology. What is God doing here? Not only is he naming the sexual sins of the people of this time.

But he is calling his people back. To the way that marriage and sexual relations were meant to be. Back to a man and a woman. Joined together by God for life.

To the exclusion of all others. Back to the holiness. And the sacredness of marriage. Instead of the selfish pursuit of sexual pleasure by any means.

Because of sin. We have become like animals. When it comes to sex. Chasing cravings.

Lusts. Passions. Pleasures. Without regard for true love. And loyalty. And we might look back at all that and think.

[13:16] Well we're much better in the world today. We don't do any of those things. And thanks be to God. There has been some significant. And lasting cultural change in parts of the world.

At different times. But if we peel back the covers. I think we find that our world is just the same. In many ways. With much of these things going on in secret.

In the dark. At night. Drunkenness and carousing. Hasn't gone away. Orgies. Haven't gone away. Sexual perversion of all these kinds. Haven't gone away. As a society. We feign shock at some of these things. During the day. And in public.

But at night. And in secret. These are things people are doing. Prostitution is considered normal. In many places in the world. Mistresses and affairs are practically expected.

[14:16] In some cultures today. Where just a hundred years ago. They would have been.

Unthinkable. What they call open marriage. And swingers. Are getting more attention in the media and news.

And the entertainment industry. In our North American culture. Is only getting more. And more. Perverse. Using sexual content. To get people's attention.

And to sell. The pornography industry alone. Is evidence. That our world hasn't changed. How many men. In North America today.

Have simply traded. One kind of prostitution. For another. For another. How many women. Are now selling themselves. Directly online. To make fast money.

And all through the times. In which the Bible was written. God has been consistent. And clear. From Genesis. To Revelation. This is not good. This is not.

[15:15] What he made marriage to be. This is not. What he intended. For our sexuality. This is the corruption. Of sin. Spoiling. One of the special gifts. Of God.

And for those. Who embrace. Sexual perversion. Or immorality. Of one kind. Or another. It's not bringing. The real. And deep happiness. And pleasure.

That God made. To be had in marriage. People say. That they're happy. Participating. In these. Kinds of things. That we've talked about. But they aren't.

Practically every week. Someone who's been working. In the sex industry. Wakes up to the reality. That they've sold. Their body. And soul. For nothing. And that they.

Now feel. Dead. Empty. And worthless. Because of it. People say. They're happy. Doing these things. But they aren't.

[16:12] There may be. Some fleeting pleasures. At times. These things. Are integrated. With hormone release. In our bodies. There may be. Some emotional attachment. But there is also.

That gnawing. Emptiness. And deadness. That eats us alive. And if we continue. On with it. It's because. We've lost hope. Because maybe.

We feel. It's the best. That we can get. In this life. Or maybe. We're just trying to. Continue to scratch. That itch. Get that little bit. Of distraction. That will get us.

Through another day. Without having to. Really think. About the deeper problems. In our lives. And in our souls. Many in our world today.

Try. Marriage. Thinking it to be good. A lifelong love. Till death do us part. But because of sin. In our hearts.

[17:08] Many marriages are failing. Many are ending in divorce. Jesus spoke about this. There was a time. When the Pharisees.

Came along. Which we looked at. A bit last time. And they asked him. About divorce. They wanted to know. Is it lawful. According to the law. That God.

Gave to Moses. Is it lawful. For a man. To divorce his wife. For any and any. Any and every reason. Even the question. Shows. How sin.

Has so deeply affected. Our understanding. Of marriage. Like. Do you think that she only exists. Or that marriage only exists. For your pleasure. For your.

Purposes. Jesus. Jesus responds with this. He says. Haven't you read. That at the beginning. The creator. The male and female.

[18:02] And said. For this reason. A man. Will leave his father and mother. And be united to his wife. And the two. Will become one flesh. So they are no longer two.

But one flesh. Therefore. What God. Has joined together. Let. No one. Separate. Why then.

They asked. Did Moses command. That a man. Give his wife. A certificate of divorce. And send her away. If God really meant. Marriage should be permanent. Why did he give the law later. Through Moses.

That allowed for divorce. Listen to Jesus answer. Moses permitted you. To divorce your wives. Because your hearts were hard.

Moses permitted you. To divorce your wives. Because your hearts. Because your hearts. Were hard. Again. We're back to the sinfulness.

[18:59] Of the human heart. And the effect. That it has. On relationships. It affected so deeply.

That there needed to be a way out. When one or both in the marriage. Made being together. Utterly intolerable. And unbearable. For the other. For the other. In other words.

Marriage. And sexuality. Are broken. Are broken. Because we are broken. We are broken. We are broken. By sin. And every marriage. Is the union.

Of two. Broken sinners. Which means. That any hope. Of enjoying. The good gift of marriage. And the happiness. That God made. To go with it.

Can only come. By finding. The real solution. To our. Sinfulness. God's solutions. Which he has. Provided. Is there any good news?

[19:58] The answer is yes. There is a lot. Of good news. First of all. For every. Wicked deviation. From God's good design. For every.

Sexually immoral. Thing that we have done. There is a merciful. And gracious God. Who is eager. And willing. To forgive us. And take us back.

These things. That we have done. In our lives. Are enough. To condemn us. To hell. Jesus said so. But Jesus also said. That God is like.

A loving. Father. Waiting for his. Wayward. Son. To come home. And he is eager. To forgive us. Of all that we have done.

And to welcome us. Back into the family. With him. The scriptures. Tell us. That there is a. Sacrifice. Which God has provided. Which can atone. For all of our sins.

[20 : 54] Sexual sins. Marital sins. Whatever. Jesus died. To atone for us. To have this gift.

Of forgiveness. We need to do. As the prodigal son did. In the parable. That Jesus told. We have to come. To our senses. We have to go home.

We have to come back. To God. And we have to do. As the prodigal son did. We have to. Say what he said. Father. I have sinned. Against heaven. And against you.

We have to own. And confess. To God. The sins we've committed. The wrongs that we have done. Sexual. Marital.

Or otherwise. There is no remedy. To our guilt. And there is no remedy. To our problem of sinning. Without first repenting.

[21 : 51] We have to come to God. Through his son. And we have to own. The wrongs that we have done. We have to admit them. We have to seek.

Truly. To be free of them. And to live. For God. And for Jesus. Instead of for ourselves. Jesus preached both. Forgiveness. And repentance.

And if we come to God. Through Jesus. Admitting our sins. And believing in his son. In his name. We are forgiven. We are washed clean.

Of all our sins. Sexual. Or otherwise. No matter how deviant. Or debatable we've been. Listen to these wonderful words. Of the apostle Paul. To the church members.

In the city of Corinth. He says. Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral. Nor idolaters. Nor adulterers. Nor men who have sex with men.

[22 : 50] Nor thieves. Nor the greedy. Nor drunkards. Nor slanderers. Nor swindlers. Will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were.

But. You were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified. In the name. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And by the spirit of our God. God. I love these words. Through Jesus. Atoning death on the cross. We are washed. We are cleansed. Made clean.

From our sins. So much and so deeply. That Paul can say. That's what some of you were. Some of you were. Sexually immoral. But now.

Because of what Christ has done for you. No longer. Some of you were. Adulterers. Cheating on your spouse. But now.

[23 : 48] Because of what Christ has done for you. No longer. Some of you were homosexuals. Engaged in relations with. People of the same sex. But now. Because of what Christ has done for you.

No longer. You have been washed. You are clean. You have been. Sanctified. Which means. Specially chosen. And set apart. For holiness. To God. You have been justified. You are no longer guilty. Of these past sins. In which you lived.

It's because of what Jesus has done. For you. This is precious good news. For all of us. No. Sexual. Or marital sin. Can keep us from the love of God.

So long as we come to him. And repent of it. And seek his forgiveness. Well there's more good news. To go with this. Just like with Israel.

[24 : 44] In the days of Moses. Through Jesus. God is calling. All of his people back. To his good design. And intention. For sexuality.

And marriage. Now. I know. Maybe some might not think. That that's good news. Some might think. Oh. Restrictions. Limits. Another list of do nots.

But haven't we seen. How just doing whatever we want. Leads to brokenness. And pain. And sorrow. God calls us. To have faith in him.

And to trust. That when we do sexuality. And marriage. In the way. That's when we find. The greatest happiness. In those things. Imagine that you gave a young man a gift.

His first ever power tool. A brand new. Milwaukee. Cordless drill. And a set of bits. To go with it. What an awesome tool.

[25 : 46] Just think of all that this is going to do for him. In the years ahead. It's going to save him all kinds of time. And effort. And the young man seems impressed. And excited with this gift.

He delights in the powers. He pulls the trigger on that thing. For the first time. But then what does he do with this gift? Well he doesn't bother to read the instructions.

He'll just figure it out. Just do what he feels is right. Who needs the instructions? You drive by his house one day. And you see him. Plunging this drill. Wildly. Into. His front lawn. Trying to aerate his lawn. And you tell him. It's not made for that. It's getting all gunged up with dirt.

It's for holes. And wood. And unscrewing screws. You come by again in the winter. And you see the drill left out in the elements. Battery and all. Minus 30.

[26 : 44] Half buried in the snow. You come by again in the spring. And you watch him submerge the thing completely. In an effort to drill a hole underwater. And then he pulls the drill out.

And finds that it's no longer working. And you hear him blame Milwaukee. For making such a piece of junk. With a defective design. Now that may seem ridiculous.

But that's exactly what we're doing. When we deviate from God's design. With sexuality and marriage. We're trying to use the gift that he's given us. In ways.

It wasn't meant to be used. And so of course we're not having much satisfaction from it. We're just not doing it the way it was made to be done. But think if he was to just use that tool.

The way it was made to be used. Care for it properly. Decades later it's one of your most precious tools. You've built so many things with it. Done so many projects.

[27 : 45] Drilled so many holes. You couldn't be happier with it. That's how our sexuality and marriage can be. For those who take God's word and God's good news seriously.

There is joy. As we walk in holiness. And purity. Whether single. Married. Divorced. Widowed. Because God's way is the right way. It's the good way. It's the pure way. Now that doesn't mean that we can always prevent all the effects of sin.

From doing damage to our relationships. At times we give in to temptation. And we fail. And then we have to bear the consequences. And our spouses are affected too.

At times a spouse may sin against us. And hurt us deeply. And there was nothing that we could do or say to stop that from happening. But even here. If we are walking close to God.

[28 : 47] Trusting Him and obeying Him. It will go far better for us. Than if we go darting down the back alleys of sin. For those who repent and believe.

God has forgiven us of all of our sins. And He is now calling us back. To His good way. To righteousness. To holy sexuality.

And marriage. Listen to how Paul speaks to the churches. In Asia Minor. In his letter to the Ephesians. So I tell you this.

And insist on it in the Lord. That you must no longer live. As the Gentiles do. In the futility. Of their thinking. They are darkened. In their understanding.

And separated. From the life of God. Because of the ignorance. That is in them. Due to the hardening. Of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity.

[29 : 44] They have given themselves over. To sensuality. So as to indulge in every kind of impurity. And they are full of greed. That however.

Is not the way of life. You learned. When you heard about Christ. And were taught in Him. In accordance with the truth. That is in Jesus. You were taught with regard.

To your former way of life. To put off your old self. Which is being corrupted. By its deceitful desires. You were taught to be made new. In the attitude of your minds.

And to put on the new self. Created to be like God. In true righteousness. And holiness. In that passage. He goes on to explain.

How that will apply to. Whether we tell the truth or not. To the things that come out of our mouths. And then he comes down to. Sexuality and marriage. In chapter 5 verse 3.

[30 : 40] He says among you. There must not even be a hint. Of sexual immorality. Or of any kind of impurity. Or of greed. Because these are improper. For God's holy people.

Nor should there be obscenity. Foolish talk. Or coarse joking. Which are out of place. But rather. Thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure.

No immoral. Impure. Or greedy person. Such a person as an idolater. Has any inheritance. In the kingdom of Christ. And of God.

Let no one deceive you. With empty words. For because of such things. God's wrath comes. On those who are disobedient. Therefore. Do not be partners.

With them. For you were. Once. Darkness. But now. You are light. In the Lord. Live. As children of light. For the fruit.

[31 : 39] Of the light. Consists. In all goodness. Righteousness. Righteousness. And truth. And find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do.

With the fruitless deeds of darkness. But rather expose them. It's shameful even to mention. What the disobedient do. In secret. But everything exposed by the light.

Becomes visible. And everything that is illuminated. Becomes a light. He goes on from there. I won't read it all. But. He goes on to encourage them.

Be filled with the spirit. Of Jesus. Which will result in husbands. Loving your wives. And wives submitting to your husbands. It's going to result in husbands.

Caring and. Providing for your wives. Cherishing them. And wives respecting your husbands. Which brings us to the third and final.

[32 : 36] Good news I'll mention today. Just to recap. The first one. God's going to forgive us. Of our marital and sexual sins. If we repent. He will do that. Number two.

God is calling us back. To his good design. For sexuality and marriage. And our last one. For this morning. God offers us. Everything we need. To live according. To his.

Good design. For sexuality and marriage. In every season of life. As we. Heard. God puts his own spirit. In us. He goes to work.

On our very desires. And changes our hearts. So that more and more. We love. The right way. The way that is good. And less and less.

Do the things. That are perverse. And impure. Appeal to us. Remember how Jesus said. About divorce. The divorce law was given.

[33 : 33] Because of the hardness of hearts. Well this is good news. Jesus gives us a remedy. For that hardness. A solution for that tendency.

To be selfish. And to go our own way. It's God's spirit in us. He unleashes. He unleashes. And unlocks. Love.

Real. Pure. True. Love. For others. For our spouses. For people of the opposite sex.

Who we're not. Married to. We begin to care for them. Truly. And deeply. The degrading things.

Being done to people. For entertainment. And pleasure.

Begin to disturb us. We begin to. Wonder about that young lady. On the screen. Or on the picture. Whose little girl is she?

[34 : 30] And how are things in her soul. That she's now sold herself. Like this. To be abused. Objectified. By men. Not only are we called back.

To God's design. But we're given the power. From him. To live that way. To live in purity. And holiness. And of course.

It still takes some effort. It takes intentionality. Especially in this world. Where we're bombarded. By impurity. And immorality. Everywhere. But God gives us grace.

And power. Powered deep down inside of us. And he leads. That change in us. As we trust. And as we obey. We begin to use the Milwaukee.

For what it was made for. And we find that life goes better. Two people. Who seek. God with all their hearts. May find.

[35 : 28] Their marriage restored. Strengthened. Sweetened. Where it was hopeless before. Single people. Entering into marriage. With the right person.

A person who shares their faith in Jesus. Find a firm foundation. To build their marriage. And family on. Right from the start. Others. Remain unmarried.

But have no regrets. And bring great honor to Jesus. For how they love the people around them. With a pure love. God gives us.

His spirit. And guides us. With his instructions. For sexuality. And marriage. And when we trust him. When we yield.

To both his spirit. And his word. It results in the best. Of all outcomes. In our lives. Especially as it relates. To marriage. And sexuality. Our lives.

[36 : 25] Whatever our marital status. Become light. In a dark world. And what comes out of our lives. Is goodness. Righteousness.

And truth. I'm going to bring this all to a close here. And I know. Maybe some people are looking for something more practical. Like what's the stuff I need to do.

But we need to have the framework. We need to see. What's really going on. In our world. In our relationship with God. Where does that. Stuff that makes things fall apart.

Come from. And when we see that. Then we can begin to. Find the right solution. And begin to get into the practical. How do we do this. In the relationship.

So we'll just close with this. Human sexuality in marriage. Has fallen hard. From what God made and intended. But God's grace and mercy.

[37 : 20] Is so great. And his spirit so powerful. That we can be washed. Clean. And forgiven. And we can be transformed. And made new. So that once again.

We can honor God. With our bodies. And in our relationships. And even find that happiness. And joy. That we know. Marriage and sexuality. Was always for.

Let's pray. Amen. Father in heaven. We thank you. That your word.

Is a light. To our feet. And a lamp. To our path. And that you guide us. And that. When we trust you. Things.

Really do. Turn out. For the best. And I pray. That we would see that. In each of our own lives. We each have different lives. Right now. With different relationships. Some are looking at.

[38 : 19] Getting married. Maybe dating. Others have been married. For a long time. We pray that you would just. Work these. Truths that we've discussed. Into our hearts. Deeply. We want to honor you.

And we long for that. That good gift. To be a good gift. To be. Experienced with joy. In our lives. So work in us. We pray. We ask this in your name.

Amen. Amen.