

God's Plan for Marriage

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 April 2021

Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service and as we come together around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing upon his Word. Let us pray.

Let us pray.

And we give thanks that thou art working out thine own purpose to the glory of thine own name.

That we sin against thee in thought, in word and in deed. But blessed be thy name for the provision that thou hast made for us in thy Son.

As the fountain that has been opened for sin and for uncleanness. And we pray, O Lord, that thy Spirit would work among us and in us.

[1 : 5 0] Bringing us to repentance. bringing us to that fountain that thou has opened for us in Jesus Christ enabling us by faith to draw from that fountain and to receive the cleansing that we stand in need of or to be reconciled to our God to have peace with God we give thanks to thee for the provision that thou hast made for us in him that we can come with boldness and with confidence to seek thy mercy and to seek thy grace to help us in our time of need we pray oh Lord that thy spirit would work in our land oh that thou would bring us oh Lord to days of awakening and days of revival days of stirring up in the hearts of men and women of boys and girls oh we know that without thee we can do nothing that we are dependent upon thee that it is the work of thine own hand that shall ultimately give thee praise so we pray that it may please thee to work among us to accompany the gospel with power oh that it may penetrate into the hearts of our people that they may come to see their great need of that provision which thou hast made for us in thy love in thy compassion and in thy mercy we pray oh Lord that thou would accompany the gospel with thy spirit throughout our land and even into the ends of the earth and all thy servants who have gone forth to proclaim thy truth that they may know the unction of thy spirit upon them we give thee thanks oh Lord for the decrease in the virus among us at this time and pray oh Lord that we would not return to lockdown in the future but that more and more restrictions would be taken away and that once again we would be able to meet us in former days coming together in the house of God coming together to the place of worship coming together without any restrictions to hear the word of God and to meditate upon the word of God at a time of election we pray oh Lord that thou would guide us and grant us wisdom wisdom as we come to elect those who will govern over us and we pray that thou would grant wisdom to our political leaders oh that they may lead our nation beginning with a right fear of God we pray for those who are ill and seek that thy own healing hand would be upon them we remember those who are those who grieve those whose hearts are broken those who are mourning the passing of loved ones and we especially remember the Queen and her loss of her beloved husband and in our new role now as a widow we pray that thou would uphold her and lead her that thou would be the true stay

in her life we pray for her family in their loss of a father and of a grandfather and of a great grandfather we commit her to thine own care and the royal family to the Lord who is full of compassion to the God of all comfort pray that your closeness may be known to each and every one of them at this time as we give thanks oh Lord for her husband we give thanks to thee oh Lord for his devoted public service for his sense of duty for his dedication to the Queen and his family and to the people of our nation and commonwealth but we are reminded here again oh Lord that death is no respecter of persons and as we are reminded again that here we have no continuing city oh Lord that we would be granted the wisdom to seek that city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God we pray for those who may be lonely those who may be feeling the days long oh Lord we pray that thou would draw near to them that they may know the God of all comfort the God who has promised that all those who will put their trust in him that he will never leave them nor forsake them we pray oh Lord that thou would bless our young people and our children oh that thou would raise a generation that would fear thy own name a generation who would be thy witnesses in this world we pray oh Lord that thou would continue with us as we come to read thy word and as we come to meditate upon it we pray oh Lord that thou would bless thy word to us that thou would apply to our hearts through thy spirit and all that we ask for the forgiveness of our sins is in

Jesus name and for his sake amen now let us read the word of God as we find it in the New Testament and in the gospel according to Mark and chapter 10 and he arose from thence and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the further side of Jordan and the people resorted to him again and as he was wont he taught them again and the Pharisees came to him and asked him is it lawful for a man to put away his wife tempting him and he answered and said unto them what did Moses command you and they said Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away and Jesus answered and said unto them for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept but from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh so then they are no more two but one flesh what what what what what

God hath joined together let no man put asunder and in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter and he saith unto them whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her and if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another she committeth adultery and they brought young children to him that he should touch them and his disciples rebuked those that brought them but when Jesus saw it he was much displeased and said unto them suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for such is the kingdom of God verily I say unto you whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child he shall not enter therein and he took them up in his arms put his hands upon them and blessed them and so on may the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word and seeking his blessing let us again read from verse six but from the beginning of the creation

God made them male and female for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh though then they are no more two but one flesh what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder previously we have done some studies in the gospel of Mark and we reached chapter nine this evening I would like to give some thoughts to what we have here in chapter ten the chapter begins with a matter of marriage and divorce and as we know people have different opinions about those things and we do not want to cause any offence or grief or pain but it is our duty when these subjects confront us in the Bible that we deal with them in a compassionate and in a biblical way this is especially true for us in our own day when marriage is under demonic attack and easy divorce is a pattern and also we live in a day when cohabitation instead of marriage is the norm it is so easy for us to accept these things and instead of the church leading society unfortunately society leads the church and if the church is unclear regarding these subjects then it is no wonder that society is confused and does what is right in their own eyes but what

[12 : 29] I want to do this evening is to simply try and stay within the context of the chapter and look at these subjects Jesus left Galilee for the last time and went into the coasts of Judea by the further side of Jordan he was heading towards Jerusalem and the cross of Golgotha the people followed him and he began to teach them and we presume that he was still teaching when the Pharisees came with a precise question to Jesus is it lawful for a man to put away his wife Matthew records for us that they said is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause now this was an already an old question and was probably one that they had debated among themselves the question of divorce was a hotly debated issue at this time in the culture of the time women had nothing of the independence that they have today the value of women was heavily discounted they were looked upon as property and their lives were so governed that life for many

Jewish women was miserable people the whole question arose because Moses had to enact laws in order to regulate devotion protect women from those who suffered from an inconsiderate and casual devotion the law was given to limit the powers and abuses of men towards their wives the whole debate was around what was given by Moses as recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 24 when a man hath taken a wife and married her and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her then let him write her a bill of devotion and give it in her hand and send her out of his house and when she is departed out of his house she may go and be another man's wife however like everything else sinful man manipulates it to his own sinful desires they began to question what

Moses meant by uncleanness or as the ESV translated he has found some indecency in her what uncleanness or indecency does Moses have in mind well among the Jews there were two opposing groups on the matter of interpreting this law of Moses on the one hand there was a school of thought led by Hillel who interpreted the words of Moses to mean that a man could divorce his wife if he found anything in her that displeased him for instance there was a Jewish book written that told husbands that if a wife refused what he says that he should divorce her if a man found a woman more beautiful than his wife it was enough to warrant divorce but there was another school of thought that was more conservative who interpreted the words to mean that divorce was to be strictly limited and could not be granted but under the most extreme and narrowly defined conditions of which adultery was the main one now

Mark tells us that the purpose of the Pharisees in bringing this question to Jesus was to tempt him or to trap him while others were listening to Jesus and according to Matthew there were people getting healed at this times that the Pharisees sole aim in coming to Jesus is to try and entrap him the question was very divisive because they were trying to trap him in a no win situation if he sided with one group then he would become unpopular with the other group the Pharisees aim was to use a currently hotly debated issue and get Jesus to take one side or the other and to stir up the people and provoke them against Jesus to try and make Jesus unpopular their whole desire was to try and trap him also we find that

Jesus was in the region of King Herod the one who beheaded John the Baptist we can read about that in chapter 6 of this gospel John confronted Herod and said to him it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife Herod had divorced his wife and Herodias his brother's wife also divorced Philip her husband and Herod and Herodias both lived together as a married couple Herod had John imprisoned and eventually he had him beheaded and all because John had a biblical view upon marriage so the Pharisees probably hoped that Jesus would criticise and that he would suffer Herodian wrath for their disregard or for the biblical law just like what happened to John the Baptist it is a reminder to us of how cunning and how sneaky and how crafty the enemies of

[18 : 44] Christ were and that is still true regarding the enemies of Christianity the enemies of the gospel they can be very cunning and sneaky and crafty however in answering the Pharisees Jesus takes them back to Moses and he says what did Moses command you and they said Moses suffered to write a bill of devotement and to put it away now Jesus gives to them the reason why Moses permitted devotion because he answered and he said unto them for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept he points out to them that Moses was not commanding devotion but that he was permitting it and regulating it because of the hardness of their hearts after showing why Moses permitted divorce Jesus gave them God's plan he said but from the beginning of the creation

God made a male and female for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh so then they are no more two but one flesh what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder here we see that Jesus goes beyond Moses and the law and brings them to the dawn of creation he brings them to a creation ordinance he points out that the origin of marriage is not man made but that the origin of marriage is from God in Genesis chapter 2 we read and out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof and

Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field but for Adam there was not found and held meat for him and the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man and Adam recognised at once what had happened and so he declared this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she can be called woman because she was taken out of man Adam knew that God had provided him with a helper and companion and so he breaks forth in a celebration and he says therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh and so

God established marriage as the first and the most basic of human institutions we learn that marriage was originally instituted not by men not by society but by God himself and that the first marriage was celebrated in the sinless garden of Eden where God united the first man and the first woman in wedlock for their mutual comfort and for their mutual well being this is God's plan for marriage it is a commitment between a man and a woman to live in a permanent and exclusive union marriage is as it were the clasping of hands the blending of hearts the union of two lives as one God we are told made a male and female we are physically and biologically different he made us male and female but both the male and the female bear the image of

God in Genesis chapter 1 we read so God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him male and female created he them the physical and biological difference is not by accident of nature it is rather a gift from God sexual identity and sexual function are part of God's will for mankind God blessed them and God said unto them be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth and God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good God blessed them and gave them power to reproduce themselves so that reproduction is a blessing and it is a gift from God the first words that are recorded as being directly uttered by man are the words of

[24 : 16] Adam when the woman was brought to him this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh apart from the fact that the woman is part of himself it is also true that the word flesh is used in the Old Testament as a term of close relationship this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh for instance in chapter 37 of Genesis we read regarding the brothers of Joseph that they said come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and let not our hand be upon him for he is our brother and our flesh in chapter 29 of the same book Genesis we have the words of

Laban to Jacob Laban said to Jacob surely thou art my bone and my flesh we read in 2nd Samuel chapter 5 then came all the tribes of Israel to David and to Hebron and spake saying behold we are thy bones and thy flesh so the phrase my or your bone and flesh is an alternative way of expressing a relationship Adam there was expressing his relationship with the woman that God brought to him when he said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh he was expressing an intimate and close relationship with the woman that God had brought to him and God's plan was for the man and the woman to be in an exclusive and intimate union with each other and that is what marriage is an exclusive union of a man and a woman with each other it is not up to politicians or to our secular institutions to define marriage for it has already been defined for us it is an exclusive union of a man and a woman and any other union is to violate

God's perfect plan for humanity there are those who say that the phrase my or your bone and flesh expresses not merely an intimate relationship but it's actually a covenant formula that speaks of a shared and equal loyalty for for instance as we noted there in 2 Samuel chapter 5 when the tribes came to David at Hebron it was not just a statement of relationship but it was a pledge of loyalty as if they were saying to David we will support you in all kinds of circumstances Adam's words there when he said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh it becomes a covenantal statement of commitment to the woman and that is what marriage is it is an exclusive relationship between a man and a woman wherein they commit themselves to a shared loyalty that is why marriage is not to be entered lightly but after due consideration and after due preparation it is an exclusive union based on love respect and trust it's not a private arrangement but a covenant freely entered between a man and a woman in the sight of

God a covenant was an exclusive Solomon binding mutual agreement between two parties so that in God's eyes marriage is a covenant of committed companionship therefore he says shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh the strongest bond of earthly life is that between a child and its parents but in marriage we are commanded to leave father and mother and enter into this new intimate and loyal relationship the strongest bond of early life is that between a child and its parents but here we are asked or commanded to leave father and mother and enter into this new intimate and loyal relationship now that that fact does not mean that when one is to leave father and mother and cleave to one's wife and to commence another loyalty to his wife it does not mean that the man need not honour his parents but it does mean that the needs of the wife must take a higher priority covenantally joined they become one flesh what has been pinpointed here is solidarity there can be no more intimate relationship than that this relationship between a husband and wife must take priority over all other relationships what therefore

God has joined together let no man put as under this was God's plan for marriage this was God's plan for humanity the law of divorce was not God's plan for humanity but God's accommodation for the reality of so many hardened hearts and and along this becoming one flesh which we have already pointed out as many solidarity and that is not something that cannot be achieved at once it is not something that automatically happens on the day of one's marriage a person may think on that day that they know everything that is to know about each other but they will soon discover that marriage is a process of two people becoming one over the period of a lifetime and

[32 : 27] Jesus is pointing out to the Pharisees that divorce was not what God had planned but it was an accommodation made by God because of the hardness of the heart of mankind there will be the breaking up of marriage and there will be divorce but what is important for us is to acknowledge that it is a matter of the hardness of our heart we are confronted immediately with our sinful hearts and when we are confronted with our sinful hearts our course of action is to repent and to seek reconciliation and to seek forgiveness Paul writes about marriage in the third chapter of Ephesians and he tells husbands that they are to love their wives husband love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies he that loveth his wife loveth himself you see the husband serves his wife by loving it as

Christ loves the church and this points to sacrificial love a sacrificing of self to use our gifts for the good of others a theme with which he begins that chapter of Ephesians when he says be ye therefore followers of God as to your children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savor following the example of Christ Hussain is to make his bride the church to look radiant to himself husbands are to express their appreciation for the beauty of their wives just as Christ Hussain was to make his bride the church beautiful to himself that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish giving thanks always for all things unto

God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body therefore as the church is subjected to Christ so let the wise everything now although the husband is to assume his responsibility of leadership or head ship it does not mean crushing a wife's talents it does not mean making all decisions without reference to her or giving her no power to make decisions or anything on her own head ship does not mean control but head ship means taking of responsibility for that which God commits to one's care as Christ as the head of the church took responsibility for the church that was committed to his care so head ship means taking of the responsibility that

God commits to our care head ship is not making the woman to feel devalued worthless and incapable the husband's head ship is to be modeled on Christ redeeming work for the church which expresses a sense of divine value that God has for the church the wife is to be valued by the husband submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God wives submit yourselves into your own husbands as unto the Lord God you see the husband is to recognize in his wife all sorts of talents and gifts and encourage her to develop these and use them for his benefit and for the benefits of his whole household the husband must recognize that God has provided him with her wife as a helper and the husband must think of her as a useful and wonderful blessing from

God that was God's plan from the beginning that's God's plan for marriage she is a helper and as a helper the man must allow her to help it is a headship that that ministers to the wife a headship that is concerned about her as Christ is for the church it is a headship in love doing all that one can do for his wife to follow Christ's example to his church headship means love that is giving of oneself it is the husband's duty in all his decisions to bring his wife into focus as Christ acts with his church in you so a husband must act with his wife in mind that is God's plan for marriage he must care for her and love her dearly as Christ loves his church and that love must be shared by the wife as the love of church is shared to

[38 : 24] Christ how does a wife help her husband well she helps him by being his companion by being his help promises so so here

Jesus is pointing out that divorce is a rejection of God's plan for humanity but that he has accommodated divorce because of the hardness of man's heart it is a call to what is important when a relationship goes wrong that is it is a call to reconciliation a call to repentance a call to seek forgiveness again turning back to Paul who speaks of the relationship of marriage in relation to the relationship between Christ and the church Paul uses the symbolism of marriage to speak of that relationship between Christ and the church for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined into his wife and the two shall be one flesh this is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and physical relationship between a man and a woman may break down and end in separation and divorce because of man's hardened hearts but that will never be true of the spiritual relationship that exists between

Christ and the church Paul could say in Romans chapter 8 who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword as it is written for thy sake we are killed all the day long we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through whom that loved us for I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord John speaks to us of the marriage supper of the

Lamb oh well it is to be betrothed to Christ by faith to enter in a marriage that knows no separation or divorce a relationship that shall usher us into the marriage supper of the Lamb a relationship betrothed to Christ by faith leading us to the marriage supper of the Lamb our order is to be found in that abiding relationship a relationship that knows no separation a relationship that knows no divorce all is to be found in that relationship and the Lord bless to us our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we acknowledge that because of the hardness of man's heart that that relationship that was founded by thee at the very beginning of time sometimes ends in separation and divorce but blessed be thy name that there is a union that there is a marriage that there is a relationship that never ends in separation or divorce the marriage and relationship that is between

Christ and his people between Christ and his bride and we pray oh Lord that we would all be assured that we are in that relationship that we are betrothed to Christ by faith that shall lead us to the marriage supper of the lamb where we shall ever be with the one who loved us the one who gave himself for us oh Lord we pray that thou would continue with us during the coming days and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen