

Marriage: Sacred and Binding

Matthew 5:27-32

Aaron Binion

Read the books and you can fill the love tank, speak the love languages, understand his and her needs, strive for love and respect, but marriage is impossible without a new heart. Marriage is theology applied as the gospel is lived out with the husband playing the role of Christ and the wife the role of the church. Biblically defined compatibility is two saved people serving Jesus, fighting sin, growing in grace, and living out scripture. Falling in love and living happily ever after is a fairy tale because it doesn't consider sin. Marriage will show you just how far you fall of God's glory (Rom 3:23). Take two people who sin and without Christ mediating they will devour one another. TV shows set unrealistic expectations as two people look for something only satisfied in Christ. Marriage is for holiness not happiness. When both spouses aim at pleasing Christ marriage can work (Ps 127:1, Jos 24:15). Fall in love and the first step isn't getting a preacher or going to the chapel, it's glorifying God. Marriage is sacred because it's God's plan and binding because it serves a religious purpose.

Defined

Marriage starts in Genesis. For six days God said let there be and it was good. Then for the first time God said something wasn't good, it wasn't good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18). God conducted the first marriage ceremony (Gen 2:22-25). He is the one who defines it - one man and one woman till death do them part. It's a God-ordained covenant (Mal 2:14) of unconditional love and forgiveness just as you have experienced in Christ. God is the witness. It's a solemn arrangement involving a ruler (God) and two subjects (spouses) with blessings when His rules are followed but consequences when His laws are broken. One flesh means the two become one (Gen 2:24). The union serves three functions: procreation, illustration, and sanctification. First Corinthians 13 defines love as an act of the will, followed by emotion, that creates an action on behalf of its object. Marriage is a vow of unconditional love to one another no matter what.

Problem

God ordained a perfect marriage with mutual love and respect but sin brought conflict (Gen 3). God put them together, but they started sinning and blaming each other. You will desire to control your husband but he will have the rule over you (Gen 3:16 NLT). Eve sinned by acting independently of her husband. Adam sinned by following his wife instead of God. Both reversed God's intended roles.

According to Jay Adams, a prominent Christian counselor, role reversal is still the main problem of failed marriages. Adam, cursed with the pain of work, by nature becomes neglectful of God and his relationship with his wife (Gen 3:17-19).

Ephesians 5:22-32 is summarized with two questions: "Husbands do you love her enough to die for her? Wives do you love him enough to live for him?" Colossians 3:19 adds, "Husbands love your wives and do not be embittered against them."

Women nag (Prov 25:24, Prov 27:15) and men neglect (Prov 27:8), but scripture puts the blame of a failed marriage not on the wife but the neglectful husband.

Solution

As head of the home the man reflects the Savior who took on the responsibility of our sin (2 Cor 5:21). The man is responsible even if it's not directly his fault. The formula is timeless husbands love your wives as yourself, wives respect your husband (Eph 5:33). When you fall short quickly seek reconciliation and forgiveness. When you get angry be angry and sin not, don't let the sun go down on thy anger (Eph 4:26). Hardships make you like Jesus who died for His bride. When it feels like she doesn't love you anymore - Christ died for you when you didn't love Him (Rom 5:8). When she wants nothing to do with you, He said love your neighbor (Mt 5:43). When it feels like she hates you, He said love your enemies (Lk 6:27). Like Jesus, love anyway.

Binding

Marriage is binding - an agreement or promise involving an obligation that cannot be broken. The context of Matthew 5:31 was people not considering the context of Deut. 24:1-4. Moses didn't give men permission to divorce flippantly but rather for protection of the woman. Jesus and Paul further explained in Matthew 19:8 and 1

Corinthians 7. Anything else, look for ways to escape the problem, issue, temptation but never the marriage.

Priority

Realize human nature is to fight, Jesus said fulfill your vows to the Lord (Matt. 5:33). After glorifying God protecting the marriage is top priority (Prov 13:10). Recognize your own sin (Matt 7:3). Deal with your own sins first, repent, and turn from it (James 5:16). Replace harmful words with helpful words (Prov. 16:24, Ephesians 5:14). Starve a cold but feed a fever. On one hand Job 31:1 and on the other Prov. 5:18. Every time we sin it's because we haven't looked for a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Rally together in adversity (Prov 17:17) Look in the windshield not the rearview mirror (Prov 19:1). Don't sweep stuff under the rug (SoS 2:15).

Steps

1. Work out your own salvation (Phil 2:12). The heart of the problem is the heart (Jer. 17:9). Only new birth produces a heart for marriage (Jn 3:5-8, Eze 36:25).
2. Make Christ the center or separateness will bring sabotage.
3. Can't change anyone but yourself.
4. Learn how to fight at Calvary. Fight for not against each other.
5. Love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Cor 13:5).
6. Radically fight against sin.

A verse for husbands:

Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Marriage is a stewardship and the husband will be accountable to God for what he does with her. A lifelong marriage is only a preview and preparation for the marriage of Christ and His Church (Rev. 19:6-9).