

The Love of Christ in Every Marriage

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I want to read to you the first words in the Bible concerning marriage. This is found in Genesis 2:21. "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man." This is not myth. This is what God did. Our Lord called this Word - the Word of God - He called it truth. This is truth. These first chapters of Genesis, they are truth. Back in the beginning, "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on the man. While he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, He made into a woman and brought her to the man. 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.' Therefore..." So far you have: the woman has been created. But here are the first words - although the word "marriage" is not in this verse, here's where we first see it. Genesis 2:24 "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Those are the first words on marriage.

But here's what's remarkable. You go forward thousands of years, and here comes a man. We know him as the Apostle Paul. You know why he was an apostle? Because the Lord Jesus Christ made him that. This man speaking as he was being led by the Spirit of God under inspiration, he quotes this exact verse in Ephesians 5. Listen to this: Ephesians 5:31. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Same words right out of Genesis 2:24. He quotes in Ephesians 5 thousands of years later to Gentile Christians at Ephesus. And you know what? He doesn't finish that by saying, Ephesians, there you have it. Those are the first words on marriage. That's the classic text that you want to go to when you want to figure out what marriage between a man and a woman ought to look like. That's not what he says. You know what he says? A lot of you do. Some of you don't.

This is what he says. "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." It's like, really, Paul? That has to do with Christ? He goes back and he finds this text that doesn't say anything about Christ. It has to do with a man leaving his father and his mother and clinging, holding fast, to a wife, and Paul being led under inspiration of God - He's speaking the very truth of God - he says, you know what? You know what this really has to do with? It has to do with Christ. It has to do with Christ and the church. I mean, have you ever noticed? Not just the Apostle Paul, but all over the place. It's interesting. Paul, no matter what he's talking about, he ended up at Christ. Have you ever noticed that? And yet Christ Himself came along, and remember on the road to Emmaus? He's got these two men and He opens up Scripture, and He just says, "it's all about Me." You know what's amazing is everything points to Christ. Everything is for Christ. Everything. You go into Scripture, and it says that through Him everything was created. It's for Him. It's by Him. It's through Him. There's nothing made that was not made by Him.

I was out walking yesterday and I was looking - I was looking at the trees and I was thinking, the trees lose their leaves and look dead. And then the spring comes, and there they are again. Something dead coming to life. That's a picture of the resurrection. And then you can

look over and you can see the sun. The sun rises. Jesus says, "I'm the light of the world." Every day, every season of fall and winter and spring, we get a picture of Christ coming out of the grave. Every day as the sun rises. Christ came into this world and He said, "I am the light of the world." It says light came into the world. It came into the midst of the darkness. Every night, we have darkness, and every day, that sun breaks forth over the Eastern horizon.

And it's a picture - all of it - it's declaring the glory of the Lord. We're told in Scripture that you can go out and you can look at the sky and the stars. That's the glory of Christ. That's His handiwork. As I was walking along, I look from the trees and I look over to the river - the San Antonio River - and I'm thinking water. It's not just like the authors of Scripture came along or Christ came along and He said, "Hm, where can I find good illustrations?" You have to recognize, He created everything the way He created it to put His glory on display. It's all about Him and it's all for Him. It's not just second hand. Everything, including marriage.

I look over at the San Antonio River and I'm thinking water. Does water take us back to Christ? He's talking about living water. He has the water of life. He says, "If you're thirsty, you come unto Me." Literally everywhere that we look. You look at the church, and you look at Scripture. It says Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. You look at governments. And what does Scripture say? I mean, it talks about all thrones and power and dominion, rulers and authorities - they were created by Him and they're for Him, and He rules over all of them. He rules in the church. He's the Head of the church. He rules over all the governments of this world. They're on His shoulders, right? We have this Wonderful Counselor, and He comes. He rules the nations with a rod of iron. He is in control. Everywhere we look. You go into the church and you see that they're in this book. And yet, this book is a book of truth, and Jesus came into the world and said, "I am the Truth." He tells those two on the road to Emmaus, "The Scriptures - they're all about Me."

And you know what's interesting? I was watching something the other day and they had the camera pointed in a certain direction and different people were walking by, but I noticed there were couples. That's not uncommon to see. You know, if you went down to San Antonio, this is Fiesta Week, and you looked, you would see couples. What are we supposed to see in that? When you see a man and a woman, and they're married, Paul says the profound mystery of all of this is it's got to do with Christ. You see a man and a woman - they're going to walk up here. You know what we're supposed to see? We're supposed to see Christ. Christ. Every couple - the man is a picture of Christ. And what Paul is dealing with is that the husband ought to love. I mean, if there's anything that we ought to see in a couple, it is the love of Christ. Think about that. He's to love her like Christ loved the church. There is the emblem. Every couple in this world. Isn't it amazing? We walk through life and everywhere we look, where we see a married couple, God wants us to see Christ. I mean, you can look at the trees and the leaves and the water and the sun, but also here, it's like God has surrounded us with all of these pictures of Christ. He is everywhere. And in this, I mean, if there's any demonstration in this of Christ, it's His love.

I mean, think about the love of Christ. I'll tell you one thing about his love for this woman, would you all say it's special? Like really special? Like he doesn't even want to look at any other woman. He wants to gaze in her face. That's the way Christ is. His love is special. It says that

he is to love her like Christ has loved everybody? No. Like Christ loves the church. Oh, what special love!

And you know what? You've got these dry theologians out there that want to tell you that love, there's no feeling. What garbage is that? "It's a commitment." "You do right for the one you love." "You take care of them and you provide for them." "There are certain rules and regulations that guide love." That's all a bunch of garbage. I'm not saying that there isn't a place for love to do right by that person; for love to give oneself. But we all know it. The thing we like about love is the delight of it. And don't we find that in Scripture? You find that Christ comes along, and He talks about the delight that He has for His people. He's crying out to His Father, "Father, I want them to be where I am." "I want them to behold My glory." And you know the thing about the love that Christ has for the church? Dorothy's already beautiful. But, Christ, He takes the ugly. He loves the ugly. But have you ever noticed, He doesn't intend to keep His bride ugly. He loves them beautiful. Isn't that what we find there in Ephesians 5? No spot. No wrinkle. No blemish. You go to the Song of Solomon, which is a picture of Christ's relationship to His church, and He looks at His bride and He says, "You are altogether beautiful." He loves His church beautiful. He loved. He loved. Oh, He loved sacrificially! What love He gave! He gave in His love. His love was very giving. He put it all on the altar for His bride. Did He not? I mean, you think about that.

I was reading in Luke 12. He's just talking about His distress. He's anticipating the coming of the cross, and He's saying, "Great is My distress." He says I've got this cup to drink, or I've got this baptism to be baptized with, and great is My distress until this is accomplished. I mean, Christ walked through this world under great stress. Why? He was looking towards the cross. What was the cross all about? The cross was all about paying the payment that was needed to be paid to make that bride beautiful. Altogether lovely. Great distress. He said that His soul, brethren, His soul was full of sorrow. He was there in the garden. He sweat as it were great drops of blood. He was under incredible sorrow. Why? Because He was going to become sin for the sake of His bride. His love. Have we ever seen such love? I mean, I was trying to think about Him. The distress that He would have been feeling in His soul. Having to become sin. Having a bride, and He has to become sin. He has to be alienated from His Father; forsaken of His Father. He has to become sin. He has to be crushed. He has to bear the wrath of God in the place of His people. What was that like? What horrors before Him! And yet for that joy that was before Him, He endured that suffering. He went to that cross.

And I'll tell you, this King - He's purchased a queen. And He means to take that queen home with Him. He means to. And the time is short. This is an emblem. This is an emblem of a great hope. Oh, can you imagine it? Can you imagine when death takes hold of the Christian? Or when Christ comes? And He comes to claim His bride. And Paul talks about a pure virgin that he wants betrothed to Christ. And Christ comes and takes a pure virgin made beautiful. No spot. No wrinkle. Can you imagine? How many of us in this room? That's going to be us! Can you imagine the first time? There's going to come that time. You altogether in your beauty. We're going to be like Him. We're going to see Him as He is. He says, "Father, I desire that they be where I am that they may behold My glory." We're going to be there.

And what John says - 1 John 3 - we're going to behold that glory. We're going to see Him in all of His beauty. And we're going to be like Him. And there is going to be that first moment where there is going to be the eye contact with the One who so loved us that He gave His life.

He became that sin offering. He took my sin and bore it on Him. My shame was laid on Him. And there He is. Can you imagine the first eye contact with our Beloved? With Him who bought us? What you're seeing here, it points to that. What glory! What hope we have as Christians! Well, you two would like to get married, wouldn't you? Why don't you come back up and we'll do that.