

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## **The Drama of Marriage — The Foundation**

### **Ephesians 5:22-33**

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

**Keywords: Marriage, Husband, Wife, Roles, Egalitarianism, Complementarianism**

**SermonAudio blurb:**

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue in our series on marriage. My first sermon made three key points out of Genesis 1:26-31 by way of introduction:
  - 1. First, it was a particular act, an unique work of creation.
  - 2. Second, when we consider man and woman we need to understand that they are image bearers of God.
  - 3. Finally, both because male and female are uniquely created by God, they both are image-bearers, and finally they are equal.
  - 4. You will notice that these points are not specifically looking at husband and wife relationships. They are foundational and must affect how we look at each other.
- B. When I last preached I made the argument that the core problem facing Christians in marriage is godlessness.
  - 1. A godless person is a person who simply doesn't really consider God in the equation for whatever they are or do.
    - a. So you have a marriage that still is filled with many things, even good things. You talk about your job, about upcoming vacation plans and such. You talk about your relationship with one another.
    - b. But what is markedly lacking is to have God simply be at the center and as the foundation of your marriage.
  - 2. Few Christians desire a godless marriage, frankly I believe that no true Christian desires it in any real way. But it happens.
    - a. If you are single this applies to you as well. If you are godless now, if you later marry there is no reason to believe your marriage will magically become godly.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- b. In a similar way I tried to encourage those who have unbelieving spouses to not let that reality cause you to not continue to seek the centrality of God in your relationship toward your spouse.
- 3. Four causes of godlessness in a Christian marriage:
  - a. Spiritual immaturity, where we allow the pressures and temptations of this age weigh in until we are drawn away from God and merely move in accordance to this world.
  - b. Unbelief and selfishness, where we do not take care to encourage and speak truth to one another.
  - c. Forgetting God's glory so that we are not asking ourselves consistently how we are honoring God in whatever situation we may find ourselves in.
  - d. Finally, a cubby-hole existence, where there is not over-arching purpose or goal. Work is kept in its cubby-hole, finances it its, and children in their's.
- 4. So we must battle this tendency toward godlessness. How?
  - a. By simply asking how God is factored into your situation. What does the Word say? By becoming ever more Word-saturated.
  - b. What would it look like for you to be trusting God in your marriage at this point?
  - c. And by pursuing the means of grace God has given us through the Word, prayer, the church and godly relationships.
- C. Background: The relationship of Genesis 1 with Genesis 2.
  - 1. Many over the last century have tried to make much of the differences that are found between these two chapters, though there is no need for this other than the presupposition that they are not true.
  - 2. The proper place for the ending of Chapter 1 should have been in our 2:3.
  - 3. In the book of Genesis there are 10 sections. Each beginning with the word *toledoth*, which simply means "story." This serves as the heading for a new story or account.
    - a. Chapter one is simply an introduction into all of these stories.
    - b. Therefore, it may be of help for you to understand that the first half of verse 4 is actually a heading, or a title.

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

4. 4b takes us as the readers back to the time before the work of the third day, briefly described in 1:12, began. Why?
  - a. Moses is now looking at creation with the creation of man at the center. The focus is now upon Adam.
    - (1) Chapter 1 we saw that Adam was created in the image of God.
    - (2) We also found that he was given rule over all of creation.
    - (3) To look only at chapter 1 you would assume that man and woman were both created by God at the same time and the same way. But that is not how it happened.
    - (4) So, how does all of that work itself out? That is where chapter 2 comes in.
  - b. Therefore, there are details he will now insert for us that were of no use in chapter 1.
  - c. Vs. 5 tells us that the plants of the field— plants that are developed through cultivation— were not yet in existence. They were not made because there was no rain yet from God and there was no man to cultivate them.
  - d. Vs. 6 describes how the first problem was resolved. There was created thick mantle of mist that covered the earth. This was how it was watered and how the vegetation survived.
    - (1) It was like a rain forest, but much more than a rain forest.
    - (2) It is also supposed that this is why man lived so long prior to the Flood.
5. A few observations of the creation of man in chapter 2.
  - a. First is that man was a creation of God.
    - (1) This alone is enough for you to spend much time, meaning days, just thinking of the consequences of this reality. God is creator and man is a creature made by God.
    - (2) Every time the issue of the problem of evil comes up it is because the person complaining about it cannot accept that God made man and has sovereign right over him.

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (3) In fact the word “formed” (*yatsar*) speaks of a potter forming clay, which for many of you should take your mind to Romans 9.
- b. Note the “stuff” he was made of—he is very much a part of the creation he was to rule over.
  - (1) There is built into each of us a link to this world.
  - (2) We are to view ourselves rightly, we are but of this world. We rule and have dominion only because of the sovereign declaration of our God.
  - (3) We are part of it and therefore we fit it rightly. We are not invaders into creation, we are the crowning part of it.
- c. But notice also how much more he was than merely the dust of the ground. His power and purpose and value came from the fact that the Lord uniquely made him and the Lord gave him life.
  - (1) When the forming was done, God had the shape of a human. But when he breathed into him, he gave him a soul. At that moment, Man became alive in a way that no other creature was made alive.
  - (2) Just as there is a link of man with the earth so too, there is a link of man with YHWH.
  - (3) Man was the one who stood between the world and God, displaying the image and glory of God.
  - (4) And now, we have a perfect mediator in the perfect Man, Jesus Christ, who stands between us and God.
- d. Finally, here we see that God uniquely formed man Himself. Not merely a divine fiat, but tender care.
  - (1) A potter making a masterpiece. One who would display His image and his glory.
  - (2) Looking to that day when the Word would become flesh.
6. Finally, it is good to understand that the Garden was created by God for Adam and Eve.
  - a. See it like a playground or grand park in which they were to flourish and delight in.

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- b. The rest of the world was not like the Garden, that was to be the task of humanity. And the Garden would be that perfect template for them to consider as they did.
- D. Today we will lay down the actual foundation of marriage and in doing so we will make clear how counter-cultural it is to what we see being played out before us in our nation.
  - 1. Read Genesis 2:15-25.
  - 2. In this passage we have the establishment of marriage by God. And in this passage we have the foundation of a theology of marriage.

## **II. The Foundation of Marriage.**

- A. The task given to Adam by God (2:15).
  - 1. There is the task “to cultivate it and keep it.”
    - a. “Cultivate” is a good word. It literally means to serve, to be a slave. Though Adam was the ruler of this world, it made him the slave to this world.
    - b. It all started here. When Adam was given this great world to dwell in. God said, “you are in charge of all you see, now care for it.”
  - 2. What is important to note is that this responsibility was first given to Adam. Eve is not present in any way.
- B. The need for a helper for Adam (18).
  - 1. What is meant by this term, “helper?” There are two possible meanings, the first being a companion and the second would be a complement.
    - a. In our culture, so heavy on emotion, psychology and feeling the common response is to see that Adam was lonely. In other words we read emotion into the word “alone” in vs 18.
    - b. Though companionship is a valid reality it is not the core reality.
  - 2. The woman was a complement to the man. She was uniquely designed by God to complement him in all ways.
    - a. Meaning, it was God’s design that Adam should not be alone but that he would be created with the need to be balanced out by the woman.
    - b. The woman was designed by God to complement man in a way that nothing else in all of creation could do.

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- c. This is driven home by sandwiching this first mention of a helper with the second in vs 20. In between Adam names all of the animals (a point of dominion) which makes it clear to him that he was alone.
- d. What is meant by a “helper?”
  - (1) She is a partner, a co-laborer in the household and in creation.
  - (2) Not a slave. Not a door-mat. Not silent unless spoken to.
  - (3) In no way can a man rightly read into this text that she is somehow inferior. Which is why I had us consider Genesis 1 first.
- 3. The intense intimacy (21-24).
  - a. Here we see the uniqueness of the creation of woman. Not like the animals nor as Adam. She comes from the midst of Adam.
  - b. Here we see the depth of the intimacy between the male and female. Married or not they are intimately tied to one another through this one act. The human race is utterly unique and incredibly valuable.
  - c. In these two people we have a very unique situation. There are no relatives nor other humans. The very first relationship that God creates is not brother and sister but husband and wife. That relationship is the foundation of all other relationships.
  - d. When Adam sees her we find him bursting out in a song or poem.
  - e. The command that is given is not for them but for their offspring. There is one event that is thicker than blood. It is the leaving and cleaving to spouse.

### **III. Applications and Implications.**

- A. There are certain realities attached to this idea though that need to be seen as well.
  - 1. She is not a co-laborer who goes off on her own to do her own thing. She is created to be alongside her husband in the oversight of creation.
  - 2. But it is more than that. It would be easy to think that the wife’s relationship toward her husband is only toward major decisions and situations.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

3. But the term defines the role of a wife. She is designed and called by God to be her husband's helper in all areas of life. That is her calling and her orientation.
  4. It is not just helping him in his career or in the raising of the children. It is coming alongside him as he carries out his piece of what God has called him to be and do in dominion and care of this creation.
  5. This role as helper, **in the fallen world**, puts the wife in a potentially weak position. This cannot be exploited by the husband.
    - a. She is willfully putting herself under the leadership of her husband. A sinful man with strengths and weaknesses. Arrogance as a husband is a great evil to put off.
    - b. There will never be a time that the husband an excuse to oppress his wife or do any type of evil against her. Verbal or physical abuse, or physical intimidation, or anything in along that line is wrong.
    - c. Know here with certainty that the elders of Missio Dei Fellowship will have no tolerance for that.
- B. It is worth to note that there are two very different orientations built into the two parts of the human race.
1. For the man it is an orientation to the task.
    - a. His eyes tend to be outward, looking for what needs to be done.
    - b. It is important to note to vss 15-19.
      - (1) Adam was given task to cultivate and to care for creation.
      - (2) And it was to Adam that the instructions and prohibitions regarding what he could and could not do in the garden.
      - (3) It was his task to name the creatures. And after the woman was created, it was he who named her (23).
      - (4) And in all of this the woman was not present.
  2. For the woman it is an orientation to the one she is to help. This brings with it a different set of priorities. First is to her husband as to how to help him. And second to the task her husband is focused upon.
    - a. There is nothing in this passage, nor in the bible, that prohibits a wife from working outside of the home.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- b. But it is to the husband and the home that the wife's first priority is always to be.
  3. And this is not merely me pulling this out of thin air. We see Paul making the same point in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9.
  4. But do not wrongly see that this speaks of a hierarchy. It is better to see it as different roles where both are necessary and needed.
  5. But also it is important to see that there is clear structure. It not some vague concept that is open to whatever you and I wish to make it to be.
- C. Understand that the biblical image of a leader is not a despot, sitting over his subjects and ruling in selfishness.
  1. The true biblical picture is not one of patriarchy but patricentricity.
    - a. The first has everything moving toward the head of the household. The result is examples of abuse throughout the bible, such as Abraham pawning off Sarah twice as his sister.
    - b. The second has the head of household looking outward for the well-being of all in his household. He is the faithful leader, judge, provider and protector. His purpose is promote the glory of God within the household.
  2. As we will see in Ephesians 5, the husband is to love as Christ loved the Church. He came to redeem, to save and to serve Her. The husband best leads as he seeks to serve.
  3. Frankly, the best leader is the one who seeks the best for those he leads.
- D. The image given in our text today is an all-encompassing one. The Head/Helper paradigm is not only for supposedly big decisions. It is one that affects everything within your lives.
  1. Husbands, you must grasp that your orientation is to lead, so lead.
  2. Wives, you must grasp that your orientation is to help, so help him.
  3. Parents raise your sons and daughters with these points in mind. Do it with wisdom.
  4. Single men, what are you doing in your lives to become men who lead and lead well?
  5. Example: When a husband wishes to join MDF but not the wife, and the other way around. How that is addressed.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- E. The incredible importance of the marriage is why it is constantly under attack by the power of this age.
  - 1. Whether it is adultery or sexual encounters without marriage.
  - 2. Toss in pornography, homosexuality, polygamy and all the others on the rise and you have a raging battle against God's will.
  - 3. One of the simplest ways to participate on the divine stage is to resist those various lies. Be faithful to your partner. If you are single, make no room for anything else but a true marriage.
  
- F. How to leave and cleave well.
  - 1. Don't tolerate camel's noses.
  - 2. Show respect for the parents but do not allow any of them to become the one to whom you go to for needs. It is our husband or wife who is to be that person, period.
  - 3. You know you have cleaved well when your highest human allegiance is first your spouse. Career, friends, family, children, and society are all servants to the spouse. There is no greater relationship that you can tolerate.
  - 4. This means that as you are given children even they cannot replace that relationship between husband and wife. A child centered home is a idolatrous home.
  - 5. It also means that you are raising your children to leave the house one day. It is your task as parents to have them leave well. Husbands, cut the apron strings that your wife may try to tie to her beloved children.
  - 6. This means that when you leave you really leave. Are you financially or emotionally tied to the parents? That needs to go away.
  
- G. Finally, it has been said many different ways but I fear it is not really grasped. Marriage is your primary responsibility.
  - 1. It is not one of many cubby-holes. So if this has happened you need to do some serious repenting.
  - 2. You don't balance marriage with everything else in your life. Marriage is the circumstance out of which everything else will flow.
  - 3. You don't approach marriage as a police officer or a lawyer or project manager. You approach your career as a married person. Always.

## **IV. Conclusion.**

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- A. This foundation of marriage was given before sin entered into the picture. At that point everything got hard, but the foundation never changed.
- B. All around you are pictures of a corrupted marriage; God has saved you to give you the opportunity to display His glory in your marriage. Make that your desire.
- C. Because of sin the bible gives us certain clear standards for both the husband and wife. These are not punishments but a pathway to both joy and honoring God.

---

---

## Community Group Questions

- **Marriage is not needed to understand our call to cultivate and to care for creation. What is your “garden,” if you will, where God is calling you to exert dominion? Is it flourishing?**
- **Wives, what part of being a helper do you find difficult or unpleasant? How are you actively combating that and what help do you need?**
- **Husbands, how do you view leading? What might need to change in your perspective? Consider things you may need to confess and repent of with your wife in private.**
- **If you are single, how have you viewed marriage? Especially in your specific roles? What are things you have watched from “afar” that are either helpful or unhelpful in the marriages you observe?**