

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 — Unequally Yoked

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Marriage, Unequally Yoked, Unbelieving Spouse, Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 6:14

SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. We looked at the ideal for a biblically define marriage. A marriage where the husband models Jesus Christ to his wife and a wife who models a submission as unto the Lord are ideals and standards to pursue.
- B. But the reality is that we live in a sinful, broken world where the ideal is often not even on people’s horizon.
 - 1. It is proper and right to expect a second or third generation Christian to model these qualities and roles properly and well.
 - 2. Though that still doesn’t guarantee anything for sin is our ever present enemy.
- C. The reality also is that as a Church is reaching out to the community of people among whom it dwells there will be a consistent stream of broken lives coming into the church.
 - 1. Each of them unique in one way or another. Each with a past or present that requires patience, care and instruction.
 - 2. You can’t just wave a hand and make things proper or ideal in these situations.
- D. It can be discouraging to be in a marriage that does not reflect what we learned over the last several weeks.
 - 1. For those marriages that have both people being Christians there is a lot of things to learn and put into practice.
 - 2. But what of those who only have one of the two in the marriage who is a lover of Jesus Christ? How does that person live in that marriage in a way that models hope in Christ and a willingness to display God’s victory in Jesus Christ to this world?
- E. The term often used is “unequally yoked.”

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1. This comes from a passage in 2 Corinthians 6 and has been used so often that it is virtually synonymous with a marriage where only one party is a believer.
 2. In some contexts it is used in a negative manner but for us today it will be used in a neutral way, connoting a marriage where either the wife or husband is not a believer.
- F. How one becomes unequally yoked:
1. Both are non-Christians and one comes to faith.
 2. Both are professing Christians and one apostatizes.
 3. One is a Christian and marries one who is thought to be a Christian but isn't.
 4. One is a Christian and wilfully marries one who is not a Christian.
- G. Today we will consider why a single Christian must not marry a non-Christian and what are you to do if you are in a marriage where your spouse is not a Christian.

II. Key texts:

- A. You must marry "in the Lord."
1. 1 Corinthians 7:39.
 - a. In the greater context you are dealing with the city of Corinth in which this Church resides. A city that is twisted and perverse in its morals and lifestyles.
 - (1) To be a very immoral person was to be "corinthianized."
 - (2) It is out of this morass of brokenness and evil that people came to trust in Jesus Christ and the church was born there.
 - (3) But it came with a lot of baggage and it is into that context that Paul is writing. It is not too far from the type of culture we find ourselves in today and the consequences of this sort of culture is playing itself out even in the churches of America.
 - b. The context is that of marriage (27ff) and whether one should do so.
 - c. If you marry, or you remarry, it is only to be done "in the Lord."

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- (1) Not a lot to add to this, it is clear and it is apostolic.
 - (2) Note though the point he makes in the next verse.
 - d. How do you know if a person is “in the Lord?”
 - (1) What is their testimony? How vague is it or how much is focused upon the person?
 - (2) How oriented are they toward the Scripture as their authority?
 - (3) If you were to ask them who Jesus Christ is to them and how that works out in their life what did they say?
 - (4) How sober-minded are they about how they live in this broken and fallen age? Are they keeping eternity in their sights?
 - (5) Do they treasure sexual purity?
 - (6) What is their relationship with the Church? Are they dating it? Are they in love with it? Are they vitally connected or on the fringes? Do they like to differentiate between Jesus Christ and His Body?
 - e. I speak to the Christian man or woman here. The best way to not find yourself in a difficult marriage is to be looking for person who not only says they are a Christian but that their life and actions boldly declare it to be so.
2. 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1.
- a. The flow:
 - (1) This is the common passage that is used related to marriage to a non-Christian. However that is not the actual meaning of the text; rather it is an application.
 - (2) This section is very abrupt in how it begins and ends. This is likely done to heighten the emphasis.
 - (3) “Do not become yoke-mates with unbelievers (14a). That is the command which is followed by five questions, all are rhetorical and all should be answered with a “no.”
 - (a) The point of all of these questions are to drive home the logic of the command.

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- (b) There is no place for the Christian to be in close association with the philosophy and powers of this age..
- (4) This then is supported by the reasoning of the Church being the temple of God.
 - (a) Why would the temple of God have something to do with the idols of this age?
 - (b) All of this harkens back both the Old Testament where we see Paul quoting twice from it; as well as the massive number of idols in Corinth from which the vast majority of the people came.
- (5) This leads to the call to come away and out from the powers of this age. Be a distinct people.
- (6) Finally, 7:1 restates the point in 6:14.
- b. It is worth the comment that in 4:12-14 and 7:2 he is making the point that he is not to blame for their lack of openness to him.
 - (1) He has not done anything to do them wrong; rather, he has been like a parent to them.
 - (2) The reason that there is suspicion and problems is directly due to them having fellowship with the sin and thinking of this age.
- c. The point in application.
 - (1) The yoke speaks of a close relationship where there is a direction that needs to be taken but taken together.
 - (2) It is not a carte blanche rejection of interacting with this world and non-Christians. He is abundantly clearly in all of his writing to make the point that we are to be in this world without becoming of this world.
 - (3) Take any situation or action that will likely cause you to link up with the thinking of this age. These are to be avoided. Any relationship that brings to you the opportunity and temptation to compromise the faith is to be avoided.

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- (4) Taking this then to the issue of marriage, there is no other relationship in this age that is more intimate and life-consuming than marriage.
 - (a) The call of Christ and the call of the gospel is one of discipleship. Following and obeying all that your Lord commands you.
 - (b) That means it is a journey. And to choose to marry an unbeliever means that the journey is made all the more harder for your spouse will never pull in the same direction.
- B. If married you must remain with that person until death or abandonment.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 7:10-17.
 - a. Point one, don't leave your Christian spouse (10-11).
 - b. Point two, if you have a non-Christian spouse you don't leave them either (12-13).
 - c. Point three, you have tremendous opportunity to live out the hope of the gospel before your spouse and children (14).
 - d. Point four, if there is a divorce it is not initiated by the believer. And if a divorce is desired by the unbeliever, you let them go (15).
 - e. Point five, the soul of your spouse and children is ultimately in the hands of the Lord. Your call is to be faithful before God in your marriage.
 - 2. 1 Peter 3:1-5.
 - a. The focus here is upon the woman and the reason is that she is the one in the weaker position. The specifics are to her, but the application is to both man and woman.
 - b. His point is simple and yet it is firm—live out your faith from the inside out.
 - c. Several points of application:
 - (1) Your mouth and your actions must make the same point. And your actions speak louder than your words.
 - (2) You are under constant scrutiny by your spouse, embrace that as a gift rather than a burden.

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- (3) Do not let this age tell you how to keep your husband or wife (3).
- (4) Make sure that the internal “clothing” matches the external clothing.
- (5) A bitter, restless, and pushy spirit is not proper for the believing spouse (4).
- (6) At all times remember that your ultimate calling is to hope in God (5) not fix your marriage or “get them saved.”

III. Secondary texts:

- A. The following are passages that are examples of many others that would connect with what has already been taught above.
- B. Matthew 5:16
- C. Luke 12:51-53
- D. Romans 12:17
- E. 2 Corinthians 8:21

IV. Conclusion.

- A. To the single:
 1. Do not be in such a hurry to marry that you marry unwisely.
 2. Make certain of your potential mate’s salvation and love for the Lord.
 3. If you marry, make sure that there is not merely the same hope in Christ but also similar doctrinal convictions.
- B. To the married where one is not a believer:
 1. Do not seek to be free from this marriage. That is clear from the scripture. We will consider divorce and remarriage next week.
 2. Do not capitulate regarding sin in the marriage.
 3. Develop up biblical non-negotiables and then show compromise on other things that your share.
 4. Remember that your first love is Christ and His Church.
 5. Do nothing that contradicts the gospel’s claims and demands. When you do, confess it.

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6. Do not expect your spouse to love the things you love and do not expect him or her to have the same goals.
 7. Your role in the marriage as well as your duties do not change. Embrace them well. Husbands, love your wife and care for her in ways that only the gospel can create. Wives, submit and respect your husbands in all things proper.
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Community Group Questions

- **How can Missio help those in marriages where only one spouse is a believer? How about your CG? Do you seek to create events where a person could bring their unbelieving spouse to be a part? What ideas might you come up with?**
- **If you are a person in one of these marital situations how can your CG members come along side to help you?**
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