MARRIAGE IN THE BACKGROUND
Why Marriage?
September 19, 2021

One of the ways we can know the importance of something is the amount of time or press given to it. If we were to read the number of times scripture tells us who married who and the number of times it uses the words husband or wife we would be here all day. But what does God say about marriage and in particular how does He use marriage that would allow us to see the sacred elevation He gives to this institution?

Scripture begins and ends with a marriage.

Genesis 2

Revelation 19:6-9
And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'

21:1-4
Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, [a]John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Marriage is not something that God brings to mankind for us to do with as we please. As I stated last week there is much more to God's heart for marriage. There is more than we can truly cover in one message but let's look at three main characteristics of marriage that we see carried throughout scripture.

Who we marry is important to God and the sacredness of Marriage.

Genesis 24:1-4
Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you swear[a] by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the

Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Genesis 28:1-9
Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

God has called Abraham out from the nation he was in to be separated unto God and this unique relationship is to be protected right down to who they marry. Above all things that should concern us in choosing a mate is their relationship with Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18
Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what [d]fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what [e]communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you[f] are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore

"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."
18 "I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty."

If, as we learned last week, we are to learn God and know Him in marriage than we must do so in the context of a Christian marriage. While we want our mate to be mature, able to break the apron strings of parental control we most to know that they are desiring to and working towards a growing humble relationship with Christ. Paul will later ask the question of a wife or husband, "how do you know whether you will be able to save them?" Peter will challenge the wife and husband to live with their spouse so as to lead them to the Lord if they are unsaved but this is not to be seen as easy. It is one thing is we come to Christ after being married but if we are saved we should only be looking to unite with another growing believer to keep the sacredness of marriage and to promote healthy spiritual growth for each other and future children.

Our vows should reflect the sacred covenant of marriage.

Isaiah 54:4-6 (look at all for the how God commits to His bride)
“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.
5 For your Maker is your husband,
The Lord of hosts is His name;
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.
6 For the Lord has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,”
Says your God.

Malachi 2:13-16
And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the Lord with tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering anymore,
Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.
14 Yet you say, “For what reason?”
Because the Lord has been witness
Between you and the wife of your youth,
With whom you have dealt treacherously;
Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.
15 But did He not make them one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks godly offspring.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.
16 “For the Lord God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one’s garment with violence,”
Says the Lord of hosts.
“Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously.”

1 Corinthians 7:1-5
Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Hebrews 13:4
Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

What is the theme in these verses? Marriage vows are to be taken seriously because they are for life. They reflect God's commitment to Israel first and then Christ commitment to the church. Marriage is honorable and we are to treat it as honorable in every way.

Our marriages are to be an important part of our witness.

Ephesians 5:22-32

As followers of Christ we are to live with our spouse in a way that mimics are walk with God. If we are constantly fighting for our own way, seeking to rule over each other or manipulating to get our own way then what does that say about our walk with Christ? (It probably looks much the same.) Instead we are to live in humble submission to Christ and to each other for the sake of witness to the world around us. If you continue to read into chapter 6 Paul will include in this the parental child relationship and our relationships with employers or employees.

1 Timothy 3:1-7
This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a [a]bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not [b]given to wine, not violent, [c]not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not [d]covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a [e]novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The call to lead in the church is tied to how one leads in their home. Notice, it is not about is everything is perfect but is the man leading. The evidence should be clear.

What we see through these references is that marriage was never meant to be what feels good to us or how our culture is currently defining it to be. Marriage is a major part of God's plan and design for mankind and is especially significant in His plan for those who would follow Him. Marriage is not only to be pursued, seen as an honorable institution for us, but should be entered with a humble attitude that sees this union as a sacred, divine given gift of God. Our marriage should not only move us toward a deeper relationship with God but should speak forth the grace and beauty of God to those who have the opportunity to observe us.