

“What God has Joined Together”

Mark 10:9

Introduction: When societies and cultures become confused about something important to human welfare, a good question to ask is “What does God think about it?” A good follow-up question is “What does God say about it?” A vital and enduring topic that is valued by God and essential to human well-being is marriage. In many nations throughout the world, this ancient, yet present vital human relationship is being contested, abused, and replaced. God’s people, the church, always will ask, “What does God think and say about marriage?” We must begin and stay there.

Think about it this way: what would happen if a large segment of the world’s population jumped off high buildings because they had “decided” that the law of gravity no longer applied to them? Chaos, grief, and suffering would result. In the same way, much of the world has concluded that what God has said about marriage no longer applies. We can expect that this decision will result in corruption and deep pain for humanity.

Let’s attend to three unchanging biblical realities: 1) the creation of marriage, 2) the definition of marriage, and 3) the value of marriage.

I The Creation of Marriage.

Marriage is a result of God’s creative wisdom and love. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 22, 24

- A. Human beings, male and female, are creatures made by God in God’s own image and likeness. Genesis 1:26-27
 - 1. Man and woman, as God’s image-bearers, were created to be expressions of God’s presence and rule over the earth. Genesis 1:28
 - 2. No other living creature or thing had this divine privilege.
- B. Human beings are blessed by God to fulfill his purposes for them on earth.
 - 1. The man and woman were blessed to populate the earth. Genesis 1:28
 - 2. The man and woman were blessed to “rule over” the earth and the creatures on it. Genesis 1:28
- C. God was intimately involved in creating the man (Adam). Genesis 2:7
 - 1. God is a master sculptor forming the man from clay.
 - 2. God is the life-giver to the first human being. “breathed the breath of life”

D. God was intimately involved in creating the woman (Eve). Genesis 2:22

LIFE International Sermon Outline on Biblical Marriage

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1. God is a master artist shaping the woman from the man's rib.
2. God, the Creator, established a unique expression of committed human companionship in the man and woman union.
Genesis 2:18, 23-24

Application: Mankind, through religion and godless philosophy, has devalued human life by removing every involvement of God in human creation. When people are no longer defined as God's image-bearers with a divine purpose, human lives become cheap and disposable. Sinful human powers redefine human worth and human purpose. Heartache and death result. Some evidences of this departure from God are abortion, infanticide, spousal abuse, genocide, and sex trafficking.

II The Definition of Marriage.

Marriage is the God-established union of a man and woman in a relationship of love for life. Genesis 2:24

“For this reason a man will leave (abandon) his father and mother and be united (committed) to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

- A. According to Jesus, marriage is more than a social agreement; it is a sacred act of God. Mark 10:9 “...what **God** has joined together...”
- B. Marriage is a recognized and honored social change in status.
 1. A leaving of parental ties in order to establish the higher priority in marital ties. “leave” and “be united.” Genesis 2:24
 2. Ideally, then, marriage is a God-ordained, socially affirmed man/woman union for life. Within that protected union, children are born, nurtured, and released to benefit the world.
- C. Marriage creates a mysterious “oneness” that mirrors God's relationship to his people. Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31-32

Application: How does your culture uphold or depart from God's definition of marriage? What threatens biblically defined marriage in your culture? How can Christian husbands and wives, the church, express hope for marriage through both beliefs and behaviors? How will you stand strong when God's view of marriage is increasingly rejected?

(Having considered the creation and definition of marriage, let's focus now on...

III The Value of Marriage.

The high value of marriage is revealed in God's use of marriage as a symbol of his loving commitment to his people.

- A. The Old Testament prophets present God as Israel's husband. Three examples:
 - 1. Ezekiel 16:8 "...I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine." A marriage.
 - 2. Hosea 2:16 "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband;' you will no longer call me 'my master.'"
 - 3. Jeremiah 3:14 "'Return, faithless people,' declares the LORD, 'for I am your husband.'"
- B. The New Testament presents the church as the bride and Jesus as the Bridegroom.
 - 1. Paul the Apostle writes, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." 2 Corinthians 11:2
 - 2. Paul the Apostle pictures the church as the wife of Christ. Ephesians 5:25, 31-32
 - 3. In a glorious scene, the Apostle John describes the joyful meeting of God and his people "as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." Revelation 21:2

Application: Revelation 21:2 takes us back to the beginning, to Genesis 2:24—husband and wife, bridegroom and bride in joyful, total commitment. Both in the Old Testament and the New, marriage is a picture that God himself uses to demonstrate the great salvation offered us in Christ Jesus. Jesus was born, lived, died, was buried, and rose again so that sinful people may live in a personal, loving union with God forever. The church, his bride, must bravely stand for God's view of marriage, always speaking the truth and living her life in love.