

## The Meaning of Marriage

One way the Bible describes what God is up to in the world is through the figure of marriage. God is drawing mankind into a relationship with Himself by uniting us with His Son Jesus in Marriage, *The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son* (Matt 22:2).

Not only does Jesus teach us to think of God's redeeming work in terms of marriage, but we learn from Rev 21:9-11 that the climactic event of all history is the wedding of Christ and the church.

I. God's pursuit of humanity as His bride is nothing new. We read of it throughout the O.T.

A. At Sinai God took Israel to be His bride - Ezek 16:8-14

1. Yet after only 40 days she broke covenant w/ the gold calf.
2. Her unfaithfulness was legendary.

B. But even in the midst of her unfaithfulness God promises to do something to transform her into a faithful bride - Hosea 2:14-23

1. In the N.T. we learn how this is accomplished - Eph 5:25-27
  - a. The sacrifice of Christ on her behalf is effectual.
  - b. *Clean, holy, radiant, w/out blemish*
2. On the last Day when His redeeming love has accomplished its work, she will be unveiled and nobody will think that the marriage is a mismatch, which is amazing when you consider the caliber of the groom.

II. Marriage is about Christ and the church (Eph 5:32). Paul is teaching us how to think Biblically about the *meaning* of marriage and derive applications from this paradigm. Based on this model, Doug Wilson makes the following observations regarding masculinity and femininity, which we will now consider:

A. **Christlike Masculinity in husbands** (vv. 25-28)

1. *Initiative:*

- a. Jesus was not passive in regards to our salvation.
  - (1) We did not choose Him, but He chose Us.
  - (2) We love, because He *first* loved us.
- b. This is how masculinity grasps the initiative.
  - (1) Husbands, what is your vision? What are your goals?  
Where are you leading your family?
  - (2) Sitting around squandering time is a functional denial of masculinity.

2. *Authority:*

- a. Christ illustrates what authority is and how it is used. He leads, rules & cmnds w/ the interest of His bride in mind.
- b. In 2Cor 10:8 Paul says that God given authority is to be used for the *edification* of those we lead, and not *for your destruction*.

3. *Sacrifice:*

- a. Jesus willingly gave His life.
- b. Not only did He do this at the cross, but He also did this throughout the course of His sacrificial *life*.

4. *Responsibility:*
  - a. Jesus did not just die *instead* of His bride, He died *on account of* His bride.
  - b. whatever *issues* your wife may have, you must not think of them as *her* problems, but as *your* problems.

B. **Femininity in wives:** (vv. 22-24)

1. *Submission:* biblically speaking, submission is a demeanor or attitude.
  - a. NOT - A wife who flinches, Or cowers.
  - b. It IS an attitude which supports rather than competes.
  - c. The world's hatred of the word *submission* is actually the world's hatred of loveliness in wives.
2. *Gratitude:* A central characteristics of the church is gratitude to Christ.
  - a. Gratitude and thanksgiving lie at the center of femininity.
  - b. Giving thanks to a husband (who works, provides, protects, and leads) is closely related to *respect*, which wives are called to in v.33.
3. *Responsiveness:* A husband cannot lead a wife who will not follow, who will not assist, who will not support and help.

III. None of these characteristics are possible as individuals. They are relational in nature:

- A. He does not sit *here*, being masculine, with her over *there*, being feminine.
- B. He initiates, and she responds. He sacrifices, and she is grateful, He honors her in love and she gives him respect.
- C. And this glorious dance should pervade every aspect of their lives. He *bows*, and then she *curtsies*.

When husbands and wives refuse to conform themselves to these qualities it is more than just sinning against some particular law here or there. It is a lie about Christ and the church.