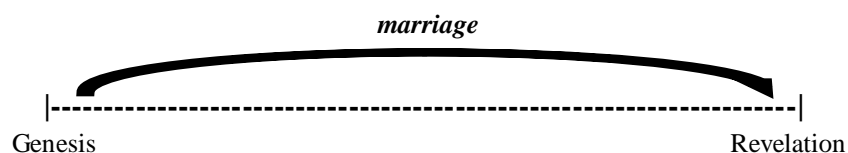


Christian Marriage I

The story-arc of the Bible:



Genesis 2:22-24

²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Revelation 19:6-8

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The Bible begins with marriage (Adam and Eve as wife) and ends with marriage (the church as the Bride of Christ). It is a grand story arc, with the first marriage being a type/promise of the ultimate marriage in the New Creation. In between, it is the story of God’s people as the wayward, unfaithful bride and Christ as the true and faithful bridegroom.

And therefore, marriage is really about the gospel.
And the gospel is re-enacted in marriage.

Ephesians 5:31-32

³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² **This mystery** is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

In the Bible, the word “mystery” means a wonderful truth that was hidden before but now revealed. Paul uses it in an almost technical way to mean “the gospel.”

Ephesians 3:4-5

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Colossians 1:27

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Therefore, marriage is not simply a human institution to which we can apply broad Christian principles to. Marriage is deeply theological and illuminates the gospel. Thus, marriage is gospel-reenactment and the gospel is the marriage of Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Thesis of class:

marriage = gospel

marriage/gospel = transforming love

Principles for Marriage

(1) The False Search for Certitude | Marriage as *Promise*

Two stories from *This American Life*:

- (1) The Rumsfelda couple
- (2) The cosmic dollar couple

Ephesians 5:31-32

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

(2) What are you waiting for? | Marriage as *Journey*

Story from *Sleepwalk With Me*

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

(3) Union with Christ | Marriage as One-Flesh Union

Ephesians 5:31, 28-30

³¹ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body.

Two observations:

- (1) To be “one-flesh” is not just physical union, but whole-life union
 - (2) To be “one-flesh” destroys selfishness, because you are one
 - you stop thinking about “fairness” and start thinking about service
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(4) Other issues: companionship, gender roles, etc.

Notes: The *story-arc* of the Bible

- what is the main story of the Bible?
- not salvation, because doesn't include Genesis 1-2
- some say, "kingdom or mission or gospel," but also marriage

Genesis 2:22-24

- marriage there in the beginning, before the Fall

Revelation 19:6-8

- at end of redemptive history is marriage
- all throughout Revelation, marriage imagery
- final image, Rev. 21, "New Jerusalem as Bride"

When you combine with Ephesians 5

- Paul cites Genesis 2:24 as promise of final marriage
- God was thinking about Christ and church from beginning
- whole story of Bible can be told as a marriage story

Marriage is the gospel

- Paul speaks of marriage as "*mystery*" (Ephesians 5:32)
- "mystery" means gospel (Eph. 3, Col. 1)

Therefore, we need to understand *epic scale* of marriage

- this is not tips for a good marriage / marriage enrichment
- modern conceptions of marriage radically different biblical vision
- we don't realize how much we're affected by our culture

Marriage and gospel are intertwined

- therefore, marriage is really gospel-reenactment / gospel drama
- Ephesians 5:25, "husband give themselves up for wife"

They *mutually inform* each other

- more you understand the gospel, better understand marriage
- more understand marriage, better understand gospel

Main thesis of class

- marriage and gospel is "transforming love"
 - love that transforms you | doesn't leave you same, but towards glory
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Principles for Marriage

(1) False search for certitude | Marriage as promise

- we're looking for certainty before we get married
- we want to make sure we don't make a mistake
- marry the one we're destined to

Rumsfelda couple

- couple had been together for 13 years since freshman year college
- one day, guy said, "why don't we get married?"
- girl, "okay, but before we do, make sure b/c never been anyone else"
- decided to go month break in which sleep with other people
- borrow from Amish practice *Rumsfelda* | only rule, just sex, no love
- both thought, of course our love is stronger than this
- during month, it was intense, passionate, overwhelming experience
- let's do another month | couldn't help but get attached
- after two months, decided to break up

Cosmic Dollar couple

- after month of dating, guy wanted start dating exclusively
- went to deli, got dollar as change with name, "Esther" on it
- strange coincidence, guy was thinking about asking Esther go steady
- decided to go to frame store, frame dollar, and gave it to her
- Esther got very quiet, said, "remind me to tell you about this later"
- several years later, moved in together
- as unpacking, guy found framed dollar, "what was this about?"

- girl just broke up, discouraged | asking God, “who’s one for me?”
- decided write name on dollar and whoever returned, be The One
- didn’t want to tell you because didn’t want to freak you out
- girl – every time I would have doubts about you, look at dollar
- how can I break up with him if he’s one who gave me the dollar?
- dollar has kept them together over the many years of hardship

Both couples are looking for certainty | “the one”

- how do I know this is the one I’m supposed to be with?
- Rumsfelda couple did it by trying out all the options
- Dollar couple did it by finding this cosmic sign in the dollar bill

But both are mistaken

(1) There is no mythic “The One”

- you will always marry the wrong person because both sinners
- we get so discouraged when encounter difficulties
- someone getting divorce b/c “love shouldn’t be this hard”
- love/marriage is hard because two selfish sinners living together
- you’re really looking for the Messiah (Jesus)

(2) Certitude doesn’t come from trying all options or cosmic sign

- certitude comes from the promise (vow)
- the promise is how you know spouse is one supposed married to
- therefore, there’s no mistake
- couple looked to cosmic dollar assurance | Xians look to promise

Ephesians 5:31 – “hold fast to his wife”

- this is technical language in Bible
- covenantal language | marriage is a covenant
- covenants cannot be broken

(2) What are you waiting for? | Marriage as journey

Sleepwalk with Me

- struggling comedian dating girlfriend for 8 years
- goes to sister’s wedding, gets pressure to marry
- girlfriend is also upset why he won’t even consider it
- explains his life is really uncertain (unemployed comedian)
- can’t think about marriage until gets life in order

Problem – we think of marriage as capstone of life *fully accomplished*

- only once we have a secure job, a house, and future is certain

But marriage is a *journey* together towards a destination

- marriage itself is not the destination, but the journey
- link hands, walk together towards glory

Ephesians 5:25-27

That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

(3) Union with Christ | Marriage as One-Flesh Union

[1] To be “one-flesh” is talking about *sex*

- two bodies interlock / becoming one

But more than just sex

- two lives interlocking / becoming one
- sex is fitting consummation and expression of *one-life union*

This is why sex outside of marriage is *violation of purpose of sex*

- being united bodily without being united comprehensively
- cowardly act selfishness – I want naked with you, but nothing else

Fact that sex *produces children* is fitting and right

- what do children need more than anything?
- father and mother love each other | stable family
- unless can promise child – I will love your mother/father always
- totally irresponsible act bring child into world w/o promise

[2] One-flesh marriage *destroys selfishness*

²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body.

Many marital conflicts because we think we’re *two separate people*

- competing interests | concerned about fairness/equity

But if realize, not two people, but ONE person / ONE body

- let’s say your right hand is doing more work than left hand
- wouldn’t say, “that’s unfair – make sure equal work”
- you don’t think like that | *you don’t keep count*
- of course, marriage should be fair, in that no one exploits other
- but true one-flesh marriage doesn’t keep records
- and thinks of benefit to other more than self

Therefore – one-flesh marriage *destroys selfishness*

- by definition, you can’t be selfish
- or another way put, to be selfish is to serve your spouse!

(4) Other issues: companionship, gender roles, etc.