

Celebrating Marriage

Celebrating the Proclamation of Marriage

I. Introduction

Celebrating the Proclamation of Marriage.

“Marriage was designed from the beginning to display the new covenant between Christ and the church . . . The very essence of this new covenant is that Christ passes over the sins of his bride. His bride is free from shame not because she is perfect, but because she has no fear that her lover will condemn her or shame her because of her sin. This is why the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is at the very heart of what makes marriage work the way God designed it. Justification creates peace with God vertically, in spite of our sin. And when experienced horizontally, it creates shame-free peace between an imperfect man and an imperfect woman” (Piper, *This Momentary Marriage* pgs. 33-34).

I would like to persuade you that **the key to proclaiming this gospel through our marriages is that we first remember how much we are** _____ (v. 12a).

- William Smith, in his wonderful book entitled *Loving Well* says, “In my relationship with God, what’s always been most important is the quality of his love for me, not the quality of my love for him. It’s only as the reality of his love for me becomes my present experience that I will be more concerned about expressing my love to others than insisting they express theirs for me” (pg. xix).
- *Let us take a look at how Paul describes God’s love for us in Ephesians 3:17b-19*

II. The Limitless love of God – Read Ephesians 3:18-19.

A. _____ of God’s love can be seen in the invitation to salvation to all people.

- Acts 2:21

B. _____ of God’s love can be seen in that God chose us before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and that our relationship with Him continues for all eternity (John 3:16).

C. _____ of God’s love can be seen in Ephesians 2:6 when it says, “and [God] raised us up with [Christ] and seated us with him in the heavenly places . . .”

D. _____ of God’s love can be seen in that He reaches down to rescue believers who were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

E. Let me ask you to consider, how frequently do you meditate on the limitless love of God for you?

- “Only through a present, rich, practical relationship with Jesus will you be able to develop rich, practical relationships with each other” (William Smith, *Loving Well* pg. xxi).

III. As a result of remembering the limitless love of God, what are the fruit that will overflow?

A. A heart of _____ (v. 12b).

1. "(Put on) [compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience]. It is immediately evident that these qualities overlap. A person with "a compassionate heart" will also be "kind." One who is lowly or humble in disposition will also be "meek," etc."¹

2. Compassion – "The expression *heart of compassion* indicates a very deep feeling, "a yearning with the deeply-felt affection of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:8)."²

3. Paul displayed this type of affection and compassion in Philippians 1:8-11.

B. Practice _____ (v. 13).

"Anyone who has been wronged feels a compulsion to make the other person pay down that debt. We do that by hurting them, yelling at them, making them feel bad in some way, or just waiting and watching and hoping that something bad happens to them. Only after we see them suffer in some commensurate way do we sense that the debt has been paid and the sense of obligation is gone . . . What then is forgiveness? Forgiveness means giving up the right to seek repayment from the one who harmed you" (Tim Keller, "Serving Each Other Through Forgiveness and Reconciliation" pg. 1-2).

¹ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 156). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

² Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 156). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

“Forgiveness is the fertile soil in which unity in marriage grows. When you are living every day in the confession and forgiveness pattern, you are forsaking your way for a better way. Your marriage is no longer a daily competition for who is going to get his or her way . . . forgiveness puts you on the same page with each other. You have both submitted your desires to the desires of Another” (Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect??* pg. 98).

C. Put on _____ (v. 14).

“It is *intelligent and purposeful self-giving* [love] that Paul has in mind, the fulfilment of both the law and the gospel. In the present context it is especially *mutual* love, love for one another within the Christian community.”³

D. Be _____ (v. 15, 16, 17).

E. Let the Word of Christ will dwell in us richly (v. 16).

³ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, p. 158). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

F. Exalt Christ through our _____ (v. 17).

“In the name” means, accordingly, “in vital relation with him,” that is, in harmony with his revealed will, in subjection to his authority, in dependence on his power.⁴

G. Both spouses will embrace their _____ (v. 18-19).

1. A husband will love and lead without being harsh or domineering.

Tim and Kathy Keller, in *The Meaning of Marriage* write, “The husband’s authority (like Jesus’ over us) is never used to please himself but only to serve the interests of his wife. Headship does not mean a husband simply ‘makes all the decisions,’ nor does it mean he gets his way in every disagreement. Why? Jesus never did anything to please Himself. A servant-leader must sacrifice [himself] to please and build up his partner” (pg. 241).

2. A wife will use all her resources to bless her husband and their marriage while willingly submitting to his leadership.

a. Proverbs 31:26-28

b. Ephesians 5:22

c. In Titus 2:5

⁴ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon* (Vol. 6, pp. 163–164). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

IV. Conclusion - Let's see if I can tie this all together for us.

"At the end of the day, Christ's love is the great foundation for building a marriage that sings. Some who turn to Christ find that his love comes in like a wave that instantly floods the hard ground of their hearts. Others find that his love comes in gently and gradually, like soft rain or even a mist. But in any case, the heart becomes like ground watered by Christ's love, which enables all the forms of human love to grow" (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* pg. 239).

"The whole business of marriage... [is] the loving joyful service of God, as we look outward from our marriages and as couples seek to care for God's world together... This is delight with a shared purpose, intimacy with a common goal, and companionship in a task that stretches beyond the boundaries of the couple themselves... proclaiming Jesus Christ is at the forefront of that service" (Christopher Ash, *Married for God* pgs. 33,37,44).

V. Discussion Questions

A. Spend a few minutes honestly assessing how your marriage is doing at proclaiming the gospel to those around you?

B. Is there a couple you know that you can begin mentoring or be mentored by in the coming months? *The goal of course of being mentored is to eventually mentor another couple.*

C. Discuss with your spouse 1 or 2 areas you would like to change as a result of the teaching you have heard thus far.

D. In some way, reaffirm your love and commitment to your spouse.