

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Preaching On Marriage

By Micky Galloway

The Bible is a marvelous book that reveals God’s will to us in all *things “pertaining to life and godliness”* (2 Peter 1:3). The *“gospel of the grace of God”* and *“the kingdom of God”* is all the *“counsel of God”* (Acts 20:24-27). The gospel message is a message that will ultimately make our lives happy. Contained in this message is the will of God pertaining to our homes and our marriages. Obedience is always blessed (Deuteronomy 10:13), but sin brings hardship and never privileges. *“Good understanding giveth favor; But the way of the transgressor is hard”* (Prov. 13:15).

In the society in which we live problems in marriage is a reality. However, God’s will on marriage as revealed in the New Testament is as applicable now as it was in first century times. Without doubt all of us have been touched by the sorrow of marriage problems, divorce, and remarriage in one way or another. As this problem increases in society it will grow as a problem among God’s people. We must, however, be content to *“speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent”* (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11).

God’s rule for marriage is simple: one man for one woman for life. In Genesis 2:24 God said, *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”* This rule is repeated several times in the New Testament (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Eph. 5:31). This rule requires one man for one woman. God’s rule for marriage is simple: one man for one woman for life with one exception. It is simple to say that and find that most all agree. However, in the application there is much disagreement.

This original rule of God excludes ALL immorality. This *“one flesh”* relationship between *“a man”* and *“his wife”* would forbid fornication, adultery, polygamy, concubines, homosexuality, and bestiality. These things would desecrate the union and Jesus says this is grounds for one who is innocent to put away the guilty (Matt. 19:9). One who is guilty of these sins could in no way profit from his sin by desecrating one relationship and forming another. Therefore, the put away fornicator is excluded from marrying another.

Man has not always followed God’s ideal for the marriage relationship. In Genesis 4:19 we read of the first case of bigamy. Later in Genesis 12:10-20 we read of one making his wife available to become the wife of another. Further, in Genesis 16:1-3, one had a child by a household maid. In Genesis 25:1-6 we read of man taking concubines. Moses even made a concession regulating Jews who were divorcing their wives (Deut. 24:1-4). The Jews questioned Jesus, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”* (Matt. 19:3 NASU). However, as Jesus explained God’s original marriage law he said, *“... but from the beginning it hath not been so.”* Jesus ended the Mosaic concession and commanded that *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Matt. 19:1-6). The only exception that Jesus gave is *“for fornication.”* Jesus allows one who is innocent to put away their guilty companion and *“marry another.”* In every other case except this one case Jesus said if one marries another *“he ... committeth adultery”* (Matt. 19:9).

We are now being told that 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 teaches that those involved with polygamous marriages may keep their multiple wives. Note the following:

“There is absolutely no evidence that those who practiced polygamy had to divorce all but their first wife before they could become Christians. If polygamy is marriage in scripture, it seems that God would not want to break a polygamist marriage any more than he would want to break up a monogamist marriage. Therefore, it seems that when we preach the gospel to a society who still practice polygamy, before we demand that they break up their polygamist marriages, before they become Christians, let’s make sure that this is God’s will. We are certain of one thing and that is that God wants monogamy. However, it is also certain that God condoned polygamy as a marriage relationship. If God changed his mind about this he never revealed it to us” (**Marriage & Divorce** by John L. Edwards, page 83, NOTE: NOT Johnny Edwards of Plainfield, IN).

Paul tells them not to seek a change in their outward conditions or circumstances of life that God has given to them. Concerning the unmarried and widows, Paul said *“it is good for them if they remain even as I”* (1 Cor. 7:8). Concerning the married, Paul said, *“Let not the wife depart ... and let not the husband put away his wife”* (verses 10-11 KJV). They are

to remain married. Concerning mixed marriages, the believer is not to initiate a separation (verses 12-13). Concerning virgins, ***“it is good for a man to remain as he is”*** (vss. 25-26). Concerning widows, ***“she is happier if she remains as she is”*** (vs. 40). Paul illustrates this principle with circumcision (vss. 18-19) and slavery (vss. 21-23). Whether then it be one’s marital status, or nationality, or social status, Paul urges them to remain in that situation they were in when they were called to Christ. To apply this principle of ***“remaining”*** to those who are involved in sin (adultery or polygamy), is major abuse of the text. Paul is only considering situations that God “assigns” (Greek: *emérisen*) (vs. 17 - NASV) to each. This means, “according to the limits of the work to which God has appointed us (literally ‘according to the measure of the rule which God has apportioned to us as a measure’) cf. 2 Cor. 10:13” (***Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain***). God does not “assign” or “appoint” sinful conditions! Though society often accepts sinful practices, God’s standard is not changed by society! Paul is not suggesting one may remain in any sinful relationship, whether it is adultery, incest, homosexuality, or polygamy even though this is the accepted norm of society.

Let us have respect for God’s simple rule: One man for one woman for life with only one exception. “(Let) marriage (be) had in honor among all, and (let) the bed (be) undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). Certainly, when we submit to God’s rule for our lives we are preparing for happiness in this life and we can share in the ultimate blessing of eternal life. – ***Fifth Street East church of Christ Bulletin***, July 15, 2018. ■

“Gratitude”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Those who know my family know that we raise animals. We love being able to raise livestock and we enjoy the work. Among other things, it keeps my boys busy, and that is a positive thing (Lam. 3:27). There are many other benefits to this type of work, as well. One thing I noticed, however, was as the animals are fed and cared for, it is evident that they have come to expect a certain treatment from their owners (us). They expect us to feed and water, and to take care of them. When fed, and cared for, it gives us some satisfaction in knowing they are healthy and happy. However, I noticed that not one time since we have owned these animals has any of them ever said, “Thank you!” Nor has any shown the slightest inkling that they appreciated what was being done for them daily. In fact, it is as if they think they are “entitled” to such treatment simply because we own them. (As Paul said, ***“I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness”*** - 2 Cor. 11:1, 21)

Someone will say, “Of course, animals act that way. They are not going to thank you or express appreciation, they are animals!” To this, I say, “You are exactly right!” Yet, all who read this article are not animals! We are more than that! My point is to help us examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) and ask whether or not we are expressing our gratitude to God as we should. Some speak of folks in society as feeling “entitled” to whatever they have in life. Have we become as one of those people? I pray not!

Gratitude is one of the foundational elements in humanity. There are parents who still teach their children to say “thank you,” prodding them and reminding them until it becomes a habit. As children mature, we try to instill in them an attitude of appreciation for gifts and acts of kindness that are shown to them. In contrast, being around an ungrateful person is disgusting! Jesus showed His disgust when He asked the former leper, ***“Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?”*** (Lk. 17:17). Where were the nine? Why did only one express gratitude for Christ’s cleansing when ten were cleansed? Did the nine think they were “entitled” to the healing Christ provided? Not only this, but God shows us that ingratitude has contributed to the downfall of many (Rom. 1:21-32). Ingratitude is more than a social “faux pas.” It is a sin!

Gratitude needs to be seen in the lives of all Christians. Colossians 3:15 states the command to Christians to ***“be thankful.”*** Are we obeying this command? Paul told the Philippians and Thessalonians that we need to be thankful for ***“everything”*** (Phil. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:18). This is more than a subtle reminder that all we have comes from God (Acts 17:25)! Ephesians 5:19-20 and Colossians 3:16 are parallel passages telling us that thanksgiving to God needs to be expressed in our songs. Hebrews 13:15 tells us that we need to ***“give thanks to his name”*** through our ***“sacrifice of praise”*** by the ***“fruit of our lips.”*** Are we doing this? Are we expressing thanksgiving to God for all the things He provides for us in this life? If not, let us change our attitudes today and be truly thankful by recognizing the One through whom all blessings flow (Eph. 1:3)!

Thanksgiving is expressed around the throne in Heaven (Rev. 7:12). Do we expect to go to Heaven? If we are not thankful to God now, what makes us think we will be welcomed in Heaven to thank God there? Let us check our attitudes and show God the gratitude He so richly deserves! – ***Knollwood church of Christ Articles***, July 2017. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250