

Marriage

- **1970s** = 400,000 marriages a year in the UK. **2013** = 240,000 (population has risen *10 million* in that time).
- **51.5%** of people 16+ are married. **42%** of marriages end in divorce (Dec. 2012). 13 per hour.
- Marriage is now considered **archaic** and **irrelevant**. *It is not marriage that fails, it is people that fail.*

Dignity of Marriage Heb. 13.4; Eph. 5.22-32

- Marriage is *honourable* in all. Honourable = highly esteemed, great value. Used of the 'precious' blood of Christ.
- 'in all' – **all** should hold it in **honour**. This will maintain sexual purity in society – 'bed undefiled'. Why?
- HIGH VALUE – married will *not* commit adultery. Those *not* married will reserve sexual activity for marriage.
- **God** honoured marriage by *establishing* it; **Christ** by *attending* it (Cana); **Spirit** by *comparing* it to Christ/church.

- **Eph. 5:** Christ and the church is a **pattern** for marriage. **Husband** should behave like *Christ*; **wife** like the *church*.
- **Husbands** *love* their wives (v.25). *Agape* = unconditional, self-sacrificial love, for the good of another.
- *Nourish* and *cherish* their wives (v.29). Husband is responsible for providing *food, warmth* and *comfort*.
- **Wives** *submit* to husbands (v.22). Voluntary submission (includes *obedience* but is not inferiority).
- 'As unto the Lord', part of her service for Christ. *Is it arduous to submit to Him...? MacDonald: She is not to dominate or lead, but follow his leadership, wherever she can do so without compromising her loyalty to Christ.*
- Reverence their husbands (v.33). Individual responsibility to *respect, honour* and *delight* in her husband.

Design of Marriage Genesis 2.18-24. Three purposes of marriage:

- **Child-bearing.** **Gen. 1.28:** *God blessed... and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*
- **Control.** **1 Cor. 7.2:** *Because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife...*
- **Companionship.** **Gen. 2.18:** *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*
- **v.18:** 'an help, meet for him' – no *suitable* complement found in animal kingdom (fellowship). God *built* a wife.
- 'an help' – x16 in OT, often characteristic of God. Suggests spiritual help, encouragement, guidance, care, cheer.
- 'meet for him' – agreeing/answering to him, his counterpart. Equality. They are incomplete without each other.
- **v.21:** God took one of Adam's ribs, or from his 'side' to build Eve. **Matthew Henry:** *Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to rule over him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him.*
- **v.24:** Man leave his father and mother. Not *abandoning*, but a 'loosening' or 'departing'. New headship.
- 'cleave unto his wife' – to *stick like glue, cling*. 'one flesh' – two become one, on the basis of marriage (not sex).
- 'one flesh' – one plus one = one! They can no longer act *independently*. They now think and act as one person.

Duration of Marriage Matt. 19.3-6

- A person must never enter into marriage thinking that *divorce* is an option *if* it goes wrong.
- Pharisees sought divorce for 'every (any) cause' (overcooked food, better alternative). Christ takes them back to the beginning: **Matt. 19.6:** *What therefore God hath joined (fastened, yoked) together, let not man put asunder.*
- Paul speaks of the husband being 'bound', 'tied' or 'chained' to his wife as long as he lives (Rom. 7.2).
- **God hates** divorce (*breaking* of the marriage covenant, Mal. 2). Only death **should** break the marriage bond.

Duty of Marriage 1 Cor. 7.3; 1 Pet. 3.1-7

- **Intimacy** (1 Cor. 7). Husbands and wives are *obligated* to have sexual intercourse (v.3).
- Why? This is a preventative of sexual immorality (v.2). Their bodies belong to each other (v.4). *Revolutionary!*
- **v.5:** Do not 'defraud' (deprive). Abstinence allowed if mutually *agreed*, for a *short* time, and a *spiritual* purpose.
- **Husbands.** Eph. 5 (headship and love); Col. 3 (love without irritation); 1 Pet. 3 (treat her as precious).
- **v.7:** *dwell with knowledge*, get to understand her, be alert to her needs as the weaker vessel.
- *Giving honour* = value and high esteem; *that your prayers be not hindered* = obstructed or impeded.
- **Wives.** Eph. 5 (submission and reverence); Col. 3 (submission); Tit. 2 (self-control, submission, busy at **home**).
- **vv.3-4:** God greatly values, not the *outward cosmetics* (adorning) but the *inward beauty* (of her spirit).
- **v.4:** God values a *meek* = gentle, considerate and non-assertive spirit; *quiet* = restful and calm spirit.
- **v.5:** Godly women were: *separate* from the world (holy); *trusted* in God and *habitually obeyed* their husbands.
- **v.6:** Sarah. **Gen. 18.12:** *Therefore Sarah laughed within herself (inner spirit), saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?* No one could hear but there was still reverence at 90 years old – Lord!
- Honouring her husband was part of the very *fabric* of her life and character. May it be so with us and Christ!