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Marriage Is Given by God
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Dear radio friends,

The truth of marriage is always urgent. Always the truth of marriage needs to be preached and taught. There has never been a generation that held marriage highly enough. There has never been a generation that honored marriage as the holy institution of God. How much more is that the case with our present generation?

There is a deep chasm between the biblical truth of marriage and the world's view of marriage. And the difference is gargantuan. Our age is the age of living together, of homosexuality, of take-it-or-leave-it marriage, of uninhibited sexual intercourse. Our age holds marriage as given by God in contempt. The biblical truth and vision of marriage is ludicrous to most people today.

This was also the case in Jesus' day. When Jesus, in Matthew 19, gave a glimpse of the magnificent view God has willed for the marriage of His people, the disciples responded and said to Him in verse 10: "If such be the case with a man

with his wife, it is better not to marry." That is, Christ's view of marriage was so enormously different from what they had been taught that they could not imagine that it was a good thing. And so it is unless you are given ears to hear and hearts to understand.

If that was the case when Jesus lived, how much more is the magnificent and holy view of Jesus for marriage unintelligible to the world in which we live. Our age, man's idol, is self. The main doctrine of our age: do as you please. The central worship of our age: entertainment. The shrines of our age: TV and movies. And the most sought-after act: uninhibited sexual intercourse. Such a generation will scoff at Jesus and His view of marriage when He teaches that marriage is God's bond, for life, of one man and one woman. They will find that message unintelligible. And Jesus would say also to this generation: Not every one can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given: he that is able to receive it, let him receive it (Matt. 19:11, 12).

We begin today a series on

marriage, the family, God's covenant, and living for the glory of God. We begin by confessing that our own sin and selfishness so corrupts us that we need the grace of God if we are to feel the wonder of God's purpose for marriage. We need the Word of God, by the Holy Spirit, to open our eyes. We need the grace of God to change us.

We need that because, not only are we sinful, but we live in a world that uses the sacred word "marriage" to refer to two men, or two women, joined together. It may well be only a short time before there is the collapse of our society into barbarism, and the coming of the Antichrist. And in that age we are called as Christians and as the church to proclaim the greatness and the glory of marriage. But that greatness and that glory are beyond our ability to feel and to understand without God's revelation in our heart, without the illumination and the awakening of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. We cannot know marriage; we cannot live in marriage; we cannot live godly lives in the family, without learning from God. We

must sit at the feet of Jesus if we are to know. God must set us free from this self-centered,

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God-denying, lust-filled, sex-intoxicated world. My prayer is that the Word of God alone

may then govern us and that Christ may give us to see what God has created marriage and the family to be.

You might say to me, "Well, pastor, yes, but don't you understand? I need something more. I need something more than just truth from the Bible. I need to have my marriage fixed. I have to have him changed. We need some practical help! Things are going downhill. It doesn't work just to bring us simple truths from the Bible."

The grace of God, dear child of God, for you and for me, begins with His Word. Jesus said in John 17:7: "Sanctify them [make them holy, give them power unto a holy life] through thy truth: thy word is truth." The foundations must be laid within our hearts. The footings must be placed within our souls. We must be given a place to stand

amid the winds of our age and our own sinful flesh. We must come to the Word of God. And we must bow without reservation to it.

I want to show you today that marriage was indeed given by God in the beginning; that it is an institution of God; and that it is God's doing.

The institution of marriage for a male and a female, till death do them part or till God do them part, was God's doing. God designed it. God instituted it. And God gave it. He did that, as recorded for us, in Genesis 2. This is the most basic and foundational truth that can be said about marriage. Marriage did not evolve by society. Marriage is not a cultural thing. Marriage is not something that an old bygone age thought up and now we may discard. It is God's doing for man and for woman. The world rejects that. The world scoffs at that. That is why they treat marriage as they do. That is why news publications promote with glee the latest divorce and all the rest. Let this truth be impressed on our hearts: Marriage is God's doing, it is God's institution.

First of all, from Genesis 1 and 2, we learn that mar-

riage is God's doing because it was for marriage that He created the male and the female. In Genesis 1:27, 28 we are told

that God made man, made us, male and female, in order that we might reproduce. We read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created

he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them [that is, unto the male and the female], Be fruitful, and multiply." But what was the relationship of the male and female that they were to have to one another in which they were to be fruitful and multiply? God explains that, beginning in Genesis 2:18ff. He explains what His design is for the male and for the female. We read in verse 18 that "the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." God says "Solitude is not My design. This is not good. I will create a woman. I will create a help meet for him, a help suitable for him, tailor-made, designed by Me to complement the man, to complete, to make him full and to make him whole."

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Now note that God did not then just go and do it. But as we read from verse 18 and following, He caused the animals to pass, two by two, before Adam (male and female), in order that Adam could name them, and so that Adam could feel his need of a woman—feel it in his heart. We read in verse 20, after all the animals passed, “But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” And God said, “I’m going to make someone for you. But I’m not going to make someone unimportant. I’m not making for you, man, someone to use. I’m going to create someone that is vitally important for you.” This was God’s doing.

In verse 21 we read: “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman.” He made the woman from the man—not from an animal, not an adaptation from an animal—but from man, who was made in the image of God, so that the woman equally stands in the image of God. He made the woman from the rib of Adam: the bone that protects his vitals, his heart.

Husband, the woman was not made from the foot-bone of

the man, for you to trample over. She was not made from your head-bone. She was made from your rib-bone, whereby you are taught to love her as something near to your heart. She is given to be as a protection to your tender heart.

Then, when He made the woman, He brought her to Adam in marriage, verse 24: “Therefore a man shall cleave to his wife and they two shall be one flesh.” “And they were both naked ... and not ashamed,” we read in verse 25. That is marriage. Everything led to marriage. Marriage is God’s design. It is God’s doing because He made the male and the female in order that He might unite them in marriage.

Second, from Genesis 2 we learn that marriage is God’s doing in that He had the honor to give Eve to Adam, the honor of a father. We read in verse 22: “And brought her [that is, Eve] unto the man.” He did not hide Eve in the garden and say, “Adam, go find her.” But He was the first Father to give away the bride. “This is what I want for her,” says God. “This is what I want for the woman. I want to give her to this man.”

In a profound sense God had fathered Eve. Eve was His daughter. He enjoyed her, He loved her, He cherished her. But, though she was His,

He gave her to this man in a relationship. He bound her to him and called it marriage. He took her in His own arm and He gave her to the man. He did not leave the woman “out there,” to wait to see what was going to happen. But He gave her to a man to cherish.

We read in our wonderful form for marriage that is used in marriage ceremonies this: “That God witnessed thereby that He doth, as yet with His own hand, bring unto every man his own wife.” God did this. Marriage is God’s doing. He brought Eve to Adam and gave Adam Eve. And God, ruling over all, brings to every man his wife and to every wife her husband.

Third, marriage is God’s doing because it was God who spoke what marriage was to be, defined what marriage was to consist in. Verse 24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Now who spoke the words of verse 24 of Genesis 2? In verse 23 we read, “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, ...she shall be called Woman.” Is verse 24,

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then, a continuation of Adam’s words? Is Adam making the definition of marriage, that a man shall leave his father and mother? Is a man saying this? The answer is, No. Verse 24 was audibly spoken in the Garden of Eden, at that moment, by God. You mean in the sense that Genesis is the Word of God and God spoke all that Word? Yes, but I mean specifically that God said that. Jesus, in Matthew 19, said that Moses was the inspired writer of Genesis. And Jesus believed that in verse 24 Moses was indeed inspired to write, but he wrote down what God had audibly spoken.

Listen carefully as I read Matthew 19:4, 5: “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife.” Jesus there makes plain that it was God who spoke the words that we find in Genesis 2:24. It was almost like a wedding ceremony. As a Father, He gave His daughter to a man. A man spoke a vow: “This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” And then it

was God who joined them and said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Now the point is this: When it is said that a man, you, husband, shall cleave, hold fast to, your wife, and you shall live with her and be one flesh, it was God who said that. Marriage is God's design, God's will, God's institution, God's ordinance. Not living together. That is not His ordinance. Not one flesh sexually first, outside of marriage, and then marriage. No. This is God's ordinance: He brings man and woman, husband and wife, together in a vow before Him, declares them married in His name, and gives them to live intimately as one flesh.

Finally, we learn from Genesis 2 that marriage is God's institution because becoming one flesh is a union God Himself performs. This is the most weighty part of it. Verse 24 speaks, in the ultimate sense, not of what a man does in becoming one flesh, but of what God does. I want you to see that with me a moment. God has taken a rib

from Adam, made Eve, brought her to him, and now He joins them as one flesh. And if we turn to Mark 10:7-9, we read: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: *so then*," Jesus says, "so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Jesus,

there in Mark 10, is quoting from Genesis 2:24. To Him, Genesis 2:24 was the most important verse in the Bible on marriage. It was the foundation. And He says that becoming one flesh is what *God*

joins together.

When a couple speak their vows and consummate their union sexually, it is not man, it is not parents, it is not the pastor, who joins them, but God. God joins in marriage. And because it is God who joins them in marriage, Jesus draws the awesome conclusion: "Let not man put asunder." What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Henceforth, husband and wife, when you are married, you go down life's pathway

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together. For God hath joined you, and God alone is the One who may separate you, which He does in death. Marriage is God's institution, God's design for one man and one woman unto death.

The world does not reckon with this. And the Christians in the Christian church today may act like they do not know it, like they do not know anything about this. But it is very plain. God has spoken this plainly in His Word. It is God who joins a man to his wife and a woman to her husband. God does this. It is His institution. It is God's doing. He made them male and female. He personally gave away the first bride. He spoke the design and intention of marriage. And He Himself united and joins us in marriage. Marriage is from God.

That is foundational. That is the most important thing for you to understand in your heart as you bow before the living and the true God, the Father of Jesus Christ. You must know this and it must be an awesome thing to you. This must be a personal thing to you. You must stand before

God with submissive faith. This is most sobering. Marriage is of God. Your marriage is of God. He has joined you together. Let not man put asunder. It is His doing. Great and marvelous, His works are perfect. His works are sought out in wisdom, say the Scriptures. So it is with your marriage.

This is comfort. If God has done it, will not He aid you? Will not He stand by to aid and to assist His own work? Will not He draw near to a heart that seeks first simply to honor Him and to reckon Him in His works? Oh, He will surely give you grace. Honor your marriage as it is in truth from God. And God will honor you with abundant grace in your marriage.

Let us pray.

Father, we thank Thee for Thy Word, and we pray that the Word may be the foundation of our life, the Word firmly planted in our hearts and souls. Bring it forth to the glory of Thy name and to our own comfort and need. In Jesus' name, Amen.