

Marriage: God's Holy Sacrament 6

Marriage & Sex are Married

(preached 10/16/22)

Please turn to *1 Corinthians 7:1*.

DESERVES ITS OWN SERMON SERIES.

How often do churches talk about sex? IDK I don't go to them...what I do know is that our society talks about it all the time and, in my view, it's worse than ever. The entertainment industry, politics, big business, news media, and even our public educational system spends thousands of hours promoting and indoctrinating us about it. What was once mostly talked about behind closed doors is now shouted from the rooftops and the Church needs to respond with the Word of God.

KIDS LISTEN? Parents, you might be tempted to send your children down to Kid's Church for this one but I recommend that you allow your older kids to stay and listen to this message. Why? For the reasons I just stated: the world doesn't care how old they are. Satanic elements within our society are attempting to groom children, and have been for years, to accept, embrace, and even indulge in unbiblical views on sexuality. All 3 of my kids are here today listening to this sermon because I want them to know what God says about this important matter. It's up to you.

Marriage and sex are married and as Christians we should never ever attempt to divorce the two.

HEBREW. The Hebrew word for marriage used in the Old Testament is *Ona*, translating to "*to dwell together in sexual cohabitation.*" Just in case anyone attempts to interpret incorrectly, it means **after you've had a wedding ceremony** and not just two people living together romantically.

PLAYING HOUSE. As a matter of fact, there's another Biblical Hebrew word for people who are in romantic relationships but aren't married: *halal* which means "fool, foolishness, to make a show of, fake, façade." In other words, they're playing house without being married. IN Psalm 78 Asaph is speaking about what happens to a nation and people who are falling away from God and one of the things on his list is the following:

Psalm 78:63 (ESV)

⁶³ Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song.

FIRE = PASSION. The fire he's referring to is the same one we'll read about in 1 Corinthians 7 in a few moments: *that of sexual desire and passion.*

Marriage and sex are a married couple and have been since the beginning...and I mean the BEGINNING. I've been quoting a particular verse from Genesis 2 frequently during this series and I spoke it just yesterday during a wedding I had the honor of officiating. Instead of putting it on the screen, let me quote it from memory and I'm asking you to discern if I'm doing so correctly. Ready?

"For a man shall leave his father and mother, cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one spirit." Right or wrong? HEART. Right or wrong? MIND. Right or wrong?

THE CORRECT WORD IS FLESH and when the Lord declared this over Adam & Even back in Eden, **He was talking about them having sex**. In this series we've covered God's first command to the man and then to the woman. Now let's cover His first command to them as a married couple:

Genesis 1:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it**, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

The first part of the verse means have kids, lots of them. The second part means that populating the earth with kids is how you subdue it. Barring the birth of Jesus, there's only one way to do that. I assume we don't need a Gray's Anatomy lecture?

MARRIAGE AND SEX ARE A MARRIED COUPLE AND WE SHOULD NOT BE DIVORCING THEM. Irony: both married and unmarried people sometimes do this. Now we come to our Scripture reading of the day:

1 Corinthians 7:1-9 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶ Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.

⁷ I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

⁸ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.

⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Verse 1: the Corinthian church, which Paul planted, wrote Paul a letter asking him about the very subject we're talking about today. Please remember that Corinth was part of the Greek empire and said city was only a short distance south of Athens. The Corinthians came from a culture far more permissive than the Biblical Hebrew culture of the first century, yet they were dedicated Christians who wanted to follow the ways of Jesus—hence the question. They also understood that Jesus, Paul and others had taken vows of celibacy to completely dedicate their lives to spreading God's Kingdom.

Verse 2: applies today as much as it did then: **the temptation to have sex is overwhelming.** The temptation to not wait until after marriage and to not "limit" oneself to only your spouse after being married has caused many to stumble.

Therefore Paul gives the simple solution, the same one God gave in the Garden of Eden: get married.

PRUDE? Some people think God is some sort of prude when it comes to sex and therefore Christians needs to be prudes too. I remind you: the first command God gave to the first couple was to have sex and lots of kids. Now look at verse 3 of *1 Corinthians 5*: Paul said husband and wife should NOT be denying each other.

NOT JUST FOR PROCREATION. Paul was a celibate, yet he didn't call for restraint within God's solution of marriage! He didn't say: "sex is for procreation only and if you intend to stop having kids, then you can't have sex anymore." He said there should be no denial.

FREEDOM NOT SLAVERY. For a Christian who desires for Jesus to lead them in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake, marriage is freedom and not slavery. Remember what Jesus said in John's Gospel: whoever commits sin consistently is a slave to sin. It's only the flesh that views following its own desires as "freedom."

To be free is the liberty to pursue holiness and live that way partnered with the Holy Spirit & God's grace which empower us.

CELIBACY. Most everyone I know of isn't gifted with or chooses celibacy like Jesus, Paul, and the Apostles did...therefore we will all face the tidal wave of sexual temptation.

STALLION. Years ago when I preached on this subject, here's the image I believe God gave me:

- **Unrestrained** sexual passion is like a wild stallion running around on the plains with a bunch of mares, actually considered a nuisance and harmful by the states and counties who sometimes put them down.
- **Sexual passion expressed in marriage** to your spouse is compared to that same stallion with a saddle, bridle, and armor, his rider directing him into battle where he is a powerful and effective.

Thank God that He created marriage! Now I am free and no longer a slave to my temptations that would only cause me to sin if I remained single! In other words, I can still have sex and lots of it, yet still be righteous in the eyes of Jesus! As a Christian, following Christ and obeying Him are supposed to be our #1 priority, *above* our desires and personal fulfillment (opposite to the modern day gospel).

Verse 4: goes back to Genesis 2—husband and wife are one flesh, one body. We're not 2 sovereign beings with complete personal autonomy who happen to be married. We're one and not just in heart, mind, or spirit—in body.

Verse 5: Paul starts right out saying “do not deprive one another.” He goes on to give what I will call a medical/biological exemption that clearly doesn't just apply to what he spoke of in this verse.

Just as single people shouldn't try to divorce marriage and sex, neither should married people. Unless there is some medical/biological reason as Paul points out, married couples shouldn't be depriving each other. I've actually heard some older couples say they've “matured” beyond needing to have sex as if they've evolved to something greater than the rest of us.

OLDER PREACHERS. One of my favorite preachers who used to come to this area when he was still alive was Doc Cornwall. He was in his 80's the last time I heard him speak and during his sermon he said “other people have told me that my sex drive was diminish as I get older, and I'll let you all know when that happens.” Another pastor, Jack Taylor, once said from the pulpit that after his wife of 39 years passed away he remarried when the Holy Spirit gave him the green light. One of the reasons he remarried was because he didn't want to give into temptation to sin sexually.

DON'T DIVORCE IT. I didn't bring up those examples to be ribald or even to make you laugh, but rather that married couples shouldn't be divorcing sex from their own marriage (unless by mutual consent) or encouraging others to do the same, especially under the guise of “maturity.”

WAR HORSE. SATAN. Earlier on I compared in marriage sex to a warhorse and the last part of verse 5 tells us why. The name of Satan isn't really mentioned 35 times in the NT Scriptures usually concerning subjects like the end times and demonic possession. As the writer of 2/3rd of God's NT Word, Paul was very careful about what he wrote. In other words, he wasn't just going to casually toss in the devil unless he knew the devil was truly involved.

PAUL SAYS THAT MARRIED COUPLES WHO DENY EACH OTHER SEX ARE OPENING THE DOOR TO Satan TO STEP IN AND DIVIDE THEM.

DON'T DIMINISH. His use of Satan wasn't an allegory nor used flippantly, but rather shows us the importance of a healthy sex life in marriage. In the very first sermon in this series, I called upon all of us to stop diminishing marriage as just a piece of paper, a formality, or some other lower station. I proved Biblically that it's a Holy Sacrament that was created by God Himself to be valued and revered.

- Have we done the same with sex?
- Have we allowed the fallen world to cheapen and defile it?
- Have we allowed our own flesh to make it a self-gratifying act as opposed to a "one flesh" sharing of love?
- Do we care more about what we want vs. what our spouse needs and wants?
- Have we turned it into an obligation or a system of reward & punishment (in denial)?

SEX IS TO BE BETWEEN A BIOLOGICAL MALE HUSBAND AND BIOLOGICAL FEMALE WIFE, EXCLUSIVELY WITH EACH OTHER AND NO ONE ELSE.

It's supposed to be an expression of love toward each other, an intimate coming together that is physically pleasurable.

Is that the way we, as Christian married couples, are treating it?

"ALTERNATE" LIFESTYLES. Shifting gears a bit, because it's such a controversial subject in American society: why are other forms of sex and marriage considered wrong according to what God wrote in the Bible?

Marriage and sex represent the covenant we have with our Lord Jesus Christ.

A similar covenant existed between the nation of Israel and God in Old Testament times where the Lord calls Himself Israel's husband over and over, and she His wife.

GOD TAKES IT PERSONALLY. You'll notice, especially in the Prophet's Books like Jeremiah and Isaiah, that when Israel falls away from the faith God takes it personally...very personally. Like a husband whose wife is committing adultery on Him. The Lord actually uses the term adultery and even stronger ones, accusing Israel and sometimes Judah of "whoring" after other gods.

FALLING AWAY. During these times, Israel would stop worshipping God and stop obeying His commandments. They would begin looking to the pagan gods of Gentile nations, following their ways, rites, traditions, and culture. Again: pagan cultures are almost always far more "permissive" as far as following the desires of the flesh are concerned. The Jews had strict dietary laws God had given them, but when they went pagan they could eat whatever they wanted. God wanted them to have sex within marriage, but pagan ways allowed them to have sex with whomever and whenever they wanted.

PROSTITUTION. The culmination of this was that said pagan nations openly practices prostitution and when the Israeli's went pagan, they openly indulged in it. Reminder: prostitution back then was a religious act where you made an offering and did the sexual act to achieve—listen now—the most intimate communion with whatever god the prostitute represented. They could be men or women and were. They would take mind altering drugs and invite their demonic "gods" to possess them, then they would offer themselves (for money) to anyone who wanted ultimate oneness with said demonic god.

As you can see, it's a cheap and twisted version of the same beautiful "one flesh" intimacy that the Lord created for married couples.

"ALTERNATE" ROMANCE IS REBELLION. I said all that to say this: *any other form of "marriage" or romantic relationships that alter what God created are mankind's rebellion against forming covenant with Christ.* It's our way of leaving our Creator/Husband and running after pagan gods. It's our rejection of not just fidelity to Him, but to His commandments and ways, to follow our desires. It's no different than what ancient Israel and Judah once did.

Anyone who considers themselves a Christian and who either lives a lifestyle like this or approves of it needs to repent.

BACK UNDER LAW? Whenever I or someone else says something like this, the response of some Christians is that we're trying to bring the Church back under the Law—the Old Covenant. I've even had some progressive Christians tell me that God "approves." They point to NT verses about love covering a multitude of sins. Therefore the following are quoted exclusively from the NT Apostles:

PAUL. Here is the Apostle Paul warning the Corinthian church that he's heard of sexual immorality among them and he on his way to see them personally to address it:

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

2 Corinthians 12:21 (ESV)

²¹ I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

This is what he told the Ephesian Church:

Ephesians 5:3 (ESV)

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

The mysterious writer of Hebrews said this:

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

MANY MORE. I could quote MANY more, just from the Apostles alone—no need to go to OT Law.

“But Scott, I’ve heard that ‘love covers a multitude of sins’ so isn’t that saying that God allows certain things?”

Let me quote that famous verse to you—in FULL context—and you judge for yourself:

1 Peter 4:1-8 (ESV)

¹ Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

³ For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

⁴ With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of

debauchery, and they malign you;

⁵ but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

⁶ For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

⁷ The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, **since love covers a multitude of sins.**

CONTEXT IS KING. Without expositing this verse by verse, can you clearly see why I'm always saying "context is king!"? People trying to support alternate romantic lifestyles only quote verse 8, but ignore the first 7 verses which blow their interpretation out of the water.

STAY OUT OF SIN. Peter is calling upon his church to come out and stay out of sin and following the passions of the flesh. He condemns a bunch of Gentile practices and warns his fellow Christians not to go back to them. He says the people who openly practice such things will be judged by God and because of that, expresses the importance of preaching the Gospel to them. He calls them spiritually dead. He ends by telling to remain self-controlled and sober.

Verse 8 applies to love between Christians—their brother-sister relationships as members of the Church. Christians still sin against each other, yes? Peter is saying that when Christian love each other—as Christ commanded—His love will allow them to still get along with each other even through our imperfections. THAT is the proper context of "love covers a multitude of sins."

Marriage and sex are a married couple—let's not try and divorce them. Let us hold both in high and sacred esteem just as the Lord does.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (ESV)

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.