

# Introduction

## 1. "For Better For Worse"

- (1) I left you a perfectly good
- (2) Spiritual warfare launched pandemic
  1. You can't have a healthy church
  2. Singles should care, too
- (3) Vacation drama

## 2. Empty Vows

Ephesians 5:25-33

→ Good news!

- (1) Campaign Promises
  1. So conditioned, we'll settle for the lie
- (2) Academic Promise
- (3) Career Promise
- (4) Relationships
  1. Friends
  2. Family
  3. Churches
- (5) Marriage Promise

### 3. Marriage Vows

#### (1) Classic Vows:

'I take you,  
to be my wife/husband,  
to have and to hold  
from this day forward;  
for better, for worse,  
for richer; for poorer,  
in sickness and in health,  
till death us do part,

(2) In spite of every conceivable variation, they all mostly lead back to this idea:

1. When loving each other is hard, I will persist in these vows as an anchor for our marriage.

#### (3) Marriage is not a contract

1. Contract = reciprocation

- Love needs refueling (fall out of love)

- My vows are conditional

2. Covenant = adoration

- Love needs reflection

- My vows are unconditional

Galatians 3:15 - To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

# Covenantal

# Contractual

## Chart # 1

(Heb. 9:15) Redemptive

Presentful (Jesus)

1. Do you see hard seasons as transformational or transitional?

(Jer. 31:31-34) Considerate

Conceited (Argue)

1. "Oh yeah, well you ..."
2. Do you require reciprocity to honor your laws?
3. Chart # 2 → Crazy, Energizing, Rewarded

(Gen. 12:1-3) Blessing

Burden (Joy)

1. "Marriage is just hard"
2. Hard to love

(Ro. 11:27) Forgiving

Forgoing (Shame)

1. Past hurts → repress or confess?
2. Keeping score? (Record of wrongs)

(Heb. 8:10) Priority

Peripheral (Love)

1. Spending time together is rare
2. What they need a priority?

(Ps. 105:8) Faithful

Fickle (Health)

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(4) If you have used language like:

1. "I didn't know if our marriage would make it..."

or

2. "I'm not sure how much longer I can do this..."

3. "I can't live like this anymore"

4. If you use distance, time, qty. to measure your marriage, negatively, that's part of the problem.

Ecc. 5:5-6a - It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. [6] Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake...

(5) When something happens, when you're hurt, let-down, disappointed.

1. The health of your marriage hangs in the balance depending on whether you slip into contractual thinking or remember your vows... covenantal thinking.

2. Whether you see the season as redemptive or resentful

3. Whether their actions make you considerate or conceited.

4. Whether settle for burden or blessing

5. Whether the pain they caused you makes you pursue forgiveness or forgoing.

6. Whether you make your marriage a priority or put it in the peripheral

7. Whether you are faithful to your vows or fickle w/ them.

(6) Because God cares about your vows, even if you don't...

James 5:12 - But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Numbers 30:2 - If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Psalms 89:34 - I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

(7) Remembering your vows coincides w/ image bearing, & image bearing is where all joy & flourishing comes from.

Genesis 9:15a - I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh...

"Till" Death Do Us Part

lifetime of mutual sanctification (8) Death is the only thing that severs the covenant. Why?

# I. The mystery of marriage (v32a)

## 1. History of the mystery

### (1) The culture's mystery

1. If you're not a Christian, why care about marriage?
2. Christian vs. Non-Christian wedding.
3. Jews are self-centered  
- Marriage is mystery to them

### (2) The Church's mystery

1. **Greeks** - utilitarian (kids), courtesans (sex), concubines (cohabitation)
2. **Romans** - legalized prostitution
3. **Jews** - role-driven
4. **Christian** - metaphor-driven, relationship

Not a mystery to us

## 2. Solving the mystery

### (1) The culture's way

1. Contractual
2. Expect vows to be poetic, not literal

### (2) The Bible's way

1. Your marriage either testifies or falsifies

## II. The groom of marriage (v32b)

### 1. Take initiative like Jesus

#### (1) Initiative means pursuit

Philippians 2:5-7 - Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

1. Pursue your wife - study her, date her, engage w/ her heart
2. Pursue Jesus thru prayer, church & Bible

#### (2) Initiative means going first

Romans 5:8 - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1. Without reciprocity
2. Intimacy (not sex), time, change

### 2. Take responsibility like Jesus

#### (1) Responsibility for others

1. Do they have what they need? Are they flourishing?
2. How have you contributed to their sin

#### (2) Responsibility for yourself

1. Sin / Repentance

## III. The bride of marriage (v32c)

1. He is a metaphor, not a savior

- (1) He is not actually Jesus
- (2) He can't save your marriage, only Jesus can
- (3) He can't change your heart, only Jesus can
- (4) He can't transform your thinking, only Jesus can
- (5) So pursue Jesus, trust Jesus, look to Jesus

2. He is your groom, not your boss

(1) Nowhere in the Bible does it describe a relationship akin to employee/employer.

(24/19) 1. He's not the boss of you.

J.A.P.M. → 60% of women in a relationship described as equitable are still discontent or unhappy w/ their marriage

2. You need to confront so more like Jesus



# Conclusion

## 1. Change the Narrative

- (1) Stop asking "Is my marriage working?" (subtle message)
- (2) Start asking "How's the metaphor?"

## 2. Remembering Vows

- (1) God made a vow, beginning w/ Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

Hebrews 9:15 - Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

- (2) He died to keep that vow ... He never annulled it, changed it, or broke it ... despite our continued lack of reciprocity.

(3) And at our death → we won't need metaphor

- (4) Will you be an image bearer in your marriage? Will you remember your vows?

I take you, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part.

1. Yeah, Allen, but you don't know
2. Don't trust the season, or the pain, or even them ... trust Him
3. The God who cares about His vows, so you should care about yours.