

Sermon Notes

Marriage & Wonder

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

July 12, 2015

Introduction: *Wonder & Marriage*

There is a wonder *about* marriage, and there is also the wonder *of* marriage.

The wonder *about* marriage is not (necessarily) a favorable, accepting, or welcoming type of wonder. It is a dismissive kind of wonder; wondering why something is even there in the first place. This kind of wondering *about* marriage usually makes comments about what difference marriage makes and whether or not we are doing just fine without it.

The wonder *of* marriage is something quite different and should cheerfully mark us. Noting this, it is possible that some of us may have lost the wonder *of* marriage. This wonder is a wonder which is biblical through and through. It was first noted in the poetic song of Adam when seeing Eve (Gen. 2:23)...and this was the first marriage. In case there is any doubt about this, Jesus viewed this as marriage as well (Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:6-8). The marriage of Adam and Eve opened the door to all other marriages in the history of the world. I've heard it said that the story of the Bible can be summarized as a story of "boy meets girl." That first marriage, marriages, and marriage itself is mysterious because it speaks of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32). The Bible begins with a marriage and ends with a marriage (Rev. 19:6-9), and so we should not be wondering about marriage, we should be filled with the wonder *of* marriage.

Marriage in Their Setting & Ours

There are many similarities between the situation and setting in Corinth at that time, and our situation in these days. One particular sin which marked their society—and had even crept into the Corinthian congregation—was sexual sin: *porneia*. Many in their day—as in our own—were catechized to do what they wanted to do and when they wanted to do it. How does Paul address them, in that situation? Is this answer the same for us?

Paul goes right to the subject of marriage. This is Paul's answer to the sexual issues of their day, and this is the Lord's same answer (in part) to the sexual issues of our day. We need to check ourselves here. If we think this answer "too light" or "too weak" or "too soft" we are not thinking biblically about marriage. If we think this too weak of a reply, it's because we are more content wondering *about* marriage than in being filled with the wonder *of* marriage.

Understanding the Passage: *Oh, Another Slogan*

This are some rather odd sounding words if we fail to understand what's going on. Is Paul advocating some kind of severe repressiveness? Some simply close the curtains and conclude that Paul is saying to not ever touch a woman. Others think that Paul is only speaking to those who are not married.

What's going on is that Paul is dealing with another one of their slogans. We've already seen three such slogans in chapter 6 (6:12, 13, & 18). Paul is quoting them. Paul is responding to what they wrote to him: "Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me..."

We ought to understand that not everyone in the Corinthian Church was sold out and slipping down the sexual slide in pursuit of *porneia*. There were some who were saying, "No. We're not going there. For us, it's none at all." Extremes are not uncommon when things are being sorted out. C. S. Lewis mentioned extremes with regard to belief about the devils, and most of us can give examples of other such subjects. In Corinth, there were extremes regarding sexuality.

Paul points to marriage for both extremes. The Lord's design is not one of anything goes and do whatever you think you might want to do; nor is the Lord's design one of complete and total neglect. The balance is found in the Lord's formation of marriage. This was the answer to the wackiness going on in Corinth, and it is the answer for us today. This is the foundation upon which Paul will build the rest of what he has to say later in this chapter.

In Conclusion

There is a battle. There must be a **battle**.

Anytime you find a comedy (a story ending with union or reunion, and especially with marriage), you will find an engaged love, a love which is willing to fight.

Let's not be **retreatists**.

There is quite a bit of fault to be laid at the doors of the church. We were silent for too long, and what gave birth to this silence was our embrace of a privatized faith.

More of the **wonder** in the weeks to come...

