

a good creation gets better marriage part 3

Lord, I pray that you would help us as we come to the study of your word. We wanna be shaped and formed, Lord, not by our own understanding, but we wanna have our understanding improved upon. We wanna have our wills broken.

Lord, I pray that you'd be tearing down strongholds, wrong ways of thinking, barriers that are in our hearts. Lord, that you'd overcome any stubbornness and resistance that we have to your will. And Lord, at the same time, you'd be building us up in the faith, that you'd be strengthening and renewing us in the inner man, that your spirit would be doing the renewing work that we love to lead us in the way that we should go, Lord.

And in that way, we are finding both the wounds that come to us from truth, and then also the healing that comes from the truth. We thank you so much for the grace that you've shown us, Lord Jesus. And we pray for your help now, amen.

I invite you to take your Bibles this morning, turn with me to Genesis chapter two. Genesis chapter two, I've entitled this message so creatively, A Good Creation Gets Better Marriage Part Three. A Good Creation Gets Better Marriage Part Three.

And this text, these studies just refresh our hearts to get a crystal clear vision of marriage from God's perspective, as we look at the nature and the purpose and the meaning of marriage, right here from Genesis one and Genesis two. In fact, when our Lord Jesus was challenged, when he was tested, really there was a trap that was set for him by the religious leaders. And he was asked a question about marriage.

It was to Genesis one and Genesis two that he appealed. He went back to the words of Moses. And we'll see that this morning.

And so here in this passage, we don't learn everything that there is to learn about marriage. But what we do get is we get a prototype. Okay, we get a prototype.

A prototype serves as a model. The prototype is the first. And in this case, not only the first, but the first that serves as a design for all that will come later.

And so this model for marriage that we see in Genesis chapter two is authoritative. This is God's prototypical marriage created by God. It's good, there's no sin yet.

This first marriage sets the pattern for the institution. This is the precedent. We can say this is marriage, how it was meant to be.

And the doctrine that we pull from these verses informs our practice, okay? And so I said last week that we tend to misunderstand marriage or live beneath it, principally and personally. Principally, we sometimes fail to uphold God's purpose and design for marriage theologically. And then personally in our marriages, we tend to kind of live beneath what we know.

And so there's a principal struggle and a personal struggle. I wanna read our text this morning, and then we're gonna look at this prototypical marriage in greater depth. Genesis chapter two, beginning in verse 18.

Then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper, fit for him. Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. And while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

And then the man said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Here we have the prototypical marriage. And I just wanna draw out from this passage this morning, seven specifications that we get from this prototypical marriage, okay? Seven specs, if you will, kind of looking at the design here, God's authoritative design of the prototypical marriage.

We're gonna make some observations. We're gonna go then and transfer that into marriage as the whole, the institution. There's really seven principles that we could draw out from this passage.

Seven specifications that arise just very plainly from the passage itself. First of all, we see the priority of the marriage relationship, okay? The priority, that's what we see first. Therefore, verse 24, a man shall leave his father and his mother.

So we see first and foremost here, the priority of the marriage relationship. This relationship is distinct, okay? From all other human relationships. And a husband and a wife come together and they form a new family unit, okay? This family unit is independent.

We say this in our common parlance as leaving and cleaving, okay? The man leaves his father and mother and he holds fast to his wife. Leaving and cleaving. And when that happens, two people come together from different families and they begin a new family, okay? And a new family is formed.

Oftentimes we think of children making a family. We say, oh, we're gonna start a family soon. We're planning to have children.

Children do not make a family, okay? Marriage makes a family. Children in God's providence may or may not be part of the marriage relationship. You still have a family once you have a husband and a wife.

And if children come into the picture under normal circumstances, it's temporary and it's seasonal. So it's normative for children, of course, to grow up and then to move out and to move on. Marriage, you stick around, right? My wife has assured me, even if I grow up someday, I'm not moving out.

So that's the plan. But right now, for Adam and Eve, the gene pool's limited. Obviously they're not leaving a father and a mother.

It's just the two of them. And yet Moses here, under the inspiration of the Spirit, is giving us this concept that Adam and Eve serve as a prototype because verse 24 is instructive. The fact that Adam is made from Eve, therefore, for that reason, a man, this is now in the future, shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife.

So a new family is formed, okay? The married couple leaves. And so what does that mean to leave? Well, it means you leave the dependency. You leave the dependency upon parents.

And that new relationship becomes a first priority relationship. Now, we're gonna advocate, adults that are married, you need to honor your parents until the day you die. It's the first commandment with a promise.

It's abiding all the way as long as your parents are on earth. God is pleased with that. And you're gonna care for your parents as they age.

He's pleased with that. But once married, you're not to rely on your parents in the same way you did previously. In fact, you're to be financially, relationally, and emotionally independent.

And so although we advocate for close family relationships and interdependency even after marriage, there's a breaking away from the previous reliance upon parents. And this needs to be facilitated by both parents and by children, okay? So parents in the room, if you have kids growing up, prepare yourself now to one day let go. And children, you need to be prepared to one day leave.

And some of you kids are like, oh man, I've been preparing since I was like six months old. Man, I can't wait to get out of this house. My youngest informed me recently that when she's a mommy, which always implies, of course, unlike her mommy, when she's a mommy someday, her kids are getting 60 million pieces of candy every day.

Okay? She's already preparing in her little heart to leave and cleave one day, to go be her own family unit. So a few considerations as we think about this and you just maybe evaluate even in your own life, ways that you must leave and cleave as parents and as children. You're married, comparing your spouse to a parent or to a parent's standards.

Continually living for your parent's approval or being unduly concerned about parental expectations. Perhaps confiding in a parent over a spouse or looking to a parent's leadership or counsel, even being overly influenced beyond that of your spouse. Or how about feeling a tension between pleasing a parent and a spouse and then struggling with how you're going to resolve that.

Seeing God's masterful design, each marriage becomes a new family unit. It's a little bit scary. It's scary for parents to let go.

I remember the leaving part. That's a little bit scary too. And yet God's design here is not for a patriarch and a matriarch, godly grandparents to rule the roost all the way down through the generations.

Rather for each individual family unit to function under the lordship of Jesus Christ. And it's not a masterful design. I mean, it's one of the reasons why it's so difficult to fix widespread issues in society.

There's no government program that can resolve things that need to happen in a family unit with a husband and a wife. And if God gives them children in the home, no team of social workers, no educators, even the world's best grandparents, no amount of resources can be thrown at societal problems that originate from a breakdown in that close range, marriage by marriage, family unit by family unit relationship. And so we see in God's design, this is a priority relationship.

And this requires faith, okay? Faith for parents to let go and let that couple become a new family and faith on the part of the couple to step out on their own and establish their own home under the lordship of Jesus Christ. We see this as a special priority relationship. It's a building block of society.

When the priority of marriage is honored in a culture, God blesses that culture. It produces strength in society. Number two, second spec that we see are the partners.

The partners in the marriage relationship. Who are the partners? Well, right here, it's very clear. Verse 24, a man and his wife.

A man and his wife, male and female. One adult man and one adult woman. This is the exclusive definition.

This is the authoritative prototype. Any other arrangement, by definition, is not marriage. You can call it marriage, but it is not.

Marriage here is Adam and Eve. And so to be married then, you must be married to someone who is of the opposite sex. Two adults.

The authoritative prototype is one man and one woman. In fact, when Jesus is asked about

marriage, as I said, he appeals to Moses. He's quoted in Mark 10, verse six, saying this, but from the beginning, God made them male and female.

That's Genesis one. Then he quotes chapter two, therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife. These are binary categories.

They are exclusive categories. They are fixed categories. And this man and this woman, these two partners, Moses says, shall come together and become one flesh.

They shall become one flesh. And now the real mystery of our passage begins. One plus one equals one.

This sounds a bit Orwellian here. Becoming one flesh. What is it that's being spoken of here? This is describing this mysterious union that takes place that by implication extends to every area of the relationship.

Jesus would shed some light on this there in that same passage in Mark chapter 10, where he would say that you become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined, let no one, let no man separate. And so now you still have two individuals, and yet they are joined together, okay? So becoming one flesh is not about a husband stifling the uniqueness of his wife as a woman or a woman seeking to get her husband to conform to her ideals of what she wants him to be.

This isn't group think, where we all have to have the same perspective at all times on every issue. But rather it speaks of the bond in marriage that is not to be broken. And so this one flesh relationship then is seen objectively and subjectively.

Objectively, it would be the sexual union, and subjectively it would be in the relational oneness of the marriage, okay? Objective and subjective. Coming together in a one flesh union. That is the objective side of becoming one flesh.

You remember this is the very point that Paul makes in 1 Corinthians chapter six, where he's speaking about sexual immorality, and he says the one who sins sexually sins not outside the body but against his own body. He talks about uniting the members of Christ with a prostitute. The idea there is that there is a union in the one flesh union.

And so the sexual act is far more than a physical joining that involves anatomy and physiology and the biology of what takes place. There is a spiritual component to this. And this of course then leads to an additional purpose of marriage, an additional part of the prototype, and that is procreation.

Procreation, we see that this is a priority relationship. We see the partners in this relationship, and then we see procreation. God in Genesis chapter one said, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, rule over it, subdue the creation, have dominion.

The only way that that is gonna take place for Adam and Eve, the two of them, as they're in that garden, is to make more of them. And we see that procreation is normative. There's no specific number given in scripture as to how many children you ought to have.

It is not always possible to have children. Yet in God's design, under normal circumstances, husbands and wives come together, and one of the purposes of marriage is procreation. As we saw, this command to be fruitful and multiply is not a command to have as many children as you can physically possibly produce.

But the recognition here is that procreation takes place in the context by God's design within marriage. Within marriage. If you remember back in Genesis chapter one, animals are also supposed to be fruitful and multiply, but they do so without marriage.

There's no covenant commitment, there's no coming together of two souls. Rather, God has sanctioned the human sexual relationship in the confines of marriage and marriage alone, and so children, then, are designed by God to come into existence in the context of marriage and marriage alone. We see the priority of this relationship.

We see the partners in this relationship. We see that procreation is an element of this. And we see the purity, especially of this initial relationship.

Verse 25, and the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. This is our last look, really, at creation unmarred by the fall. Relationships untainted by sin.

They're both naked and there's no shame. No shame. No shame.

Every dimension of relational intimacy is unhindered and uninhibited. There's no sense of embarrassment. There's no lack of trust.

I mean, it's kind of staggering to imagine a couple enjoying one another at this point without a hint of distrust. Good from top to bottom. I mean, everything in the garden is good.

So we're talking about from the minor things like a bad breath to the deepest heartache, they're just experiencing bliss. A marriage without a disagreement, working together, making memories. I mean, I was thinking Adam and Eve are the only ones who'll ever get to know what a marriage untainted by sin would be like.

We don't know the timeline, but our guess is that it was relatively short-lived, that taste that they had. They never had to forgive one another because there was nothing to forgive. Perfect openness is the perspective here.

Perfect openness. The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. And so for us, we live post-fall.

And so the reality of marriage is that the purity of marriage is threatened in many different ways. And so if you are married, you are to fight for the purity of your marriage. This implicates

all areas of life.

It means you're to fight for the purity of your marriage and your thought life. You're to watch over your heart in terms of feeding discontent or imagining other circumstances. You're to set a guard over your eyes, what you watch, what you look at, what you read.

Anything that would stir up a lust in the heart, certainly pornography, romantic stories, movies, shows, what you gaze upon when you're in public. And your affections, you're to watch over your heart, your desires, lust for others, your behavior, your words, your actions. Paul would tell Timothy that you're to regard sisters in all purity.

That's the standard. It's written in Ephesians 5, "Not even a hint is to be named among you." And so we are to heed the words of Jesus, which is to flee temptation, to cut off your right hand and to gouge out your right eye if needed, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh with regard to its lusts, that you may not gratify its lusts, as Romans 13, 14 says. We're to fight for the purity of marriage.

To drink water from your own cistern, as Solomon would say, to be satisfied in the wife of your youth. There's a war waging against the purity of marriage, men and women. And to those who are unmarried in the room, don't believe the lie that marriage will suddenly remove all temptation and magically relieve your need for self-control.

You need self-control in marriage and you must learn it before marriage. It's true that it is better to marry than to burn with passion, but you're to be preparing and growing in self-control even now, because sexual sin gets down to the deepest part of who we are. In fact, in the scripture, sexual sin and idolatry are partners that go together.

We just read it in our text. Covetousness, idolatry, and sexual sin are lumped together. Throughout the Old Testament, the practice of sexual sin and idolatry go together.

And so God wants holiness among his people. He wants purity among his people. Purity in the innermost places of who we are.

And so you are to be set apart, set apart in your private life, set apart in your devotion. If you're married, your marriage is to be a pure place, a marriage bed undefiled. Pray for your spouse's purity.

Seek purity yourself. Seek purity alongside one another in the church. This is not an issue that just plagues a couple of people.

This is an issue that we struggle with as humans. It's written about over and over in scripture. In fact, Jesus, when he was brought up that question by religious leaders and he was answering them, the question, the technicality was about divorce.

He got right to the heart of the issue and he said, the reason why you guys are looking for a

certificate of divorce is because your heart is adulterous and you want out of your marriage relationship and so I'm gonna call it what it is. And so all of this is culminating and it brings us to our next spec regarding the prototypical marriage and it would be the issue of permanence, the permanence of marriage. So God's plan is that marriage lasts for a lifetime.

One partner coming together with another partner in a one flesh relationship for a lifetime. Jesus would say, the two shall become one flesh so they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

And so it's interesting because marriage then immediately is restrictive. Marriage is restrictive. I'm not gonna ask for a show of hands if you've ever felt restricted by being married or stuck.

See that one yes at the altar is simultaneously several billion no's, is it not? I mean, you're saying yes to one and you're pledging love and faithful commitment, you are by extension saying no to all others. The lie of course is the promise that there's greater fulfillment outside of remaining in such a commitment and yet the truth is that it's a gift from God to enjoy the relational benefits that are to increase over time. See the preservation of one relationship over time is to age like a fine wine.

You understand the more delicate notes. The fellowship becomes richer and the partnership is to become richer and the effectiveness of ministering to others is to become more effective, a deeper understanding, a deeper spiritual usefulness to each other. And a deeper trust forged through the fires of failure and commitment, not the youthful love of infatuation, but the mature love of having sinned and sought forgiveness and remained committed.

And so, so often when the lies believe that real satisfaction comes from multiple partners and minimal commitment, people trade away what can be gained only through the blood, sweat and tears of monogamy, of commitment over the long haul by God's grace. And so for better or for worse has often evaporated. For better, yes, but for worse, I mean the idea that I'm gonna pledge my love to you and commit and it's not on the qualification of my own personal happiness.

I mean, I was singing about the most common sighted reason for divorce is irreconcilable differences. I'm saying, man, we have a bunch of those. Do we not? I mean, how many irreconcilable differences do we have in our marriage? And we even try to work on them.

But the point here is that in the coming together of a one flesh relationship, there's to be a commitment from the beginning to recognize before the Lord that this marriage is designed to last. One other says the idea of a couple staying together for the sake of the children is sometimes ridiculed. And so many of you have heard that, you know, they're just staying together for the children.

He goes on and says, rather it should be extended so that the couple accepts a strong moral obligation to stay together, not just for the children, if any, but for the sake of neighbors in a

wider society. What's his point? Well, he's saying that divorce does not just cost the individuals in the marriage, it costs the children if there are any, it costs the extended family, the parents, the siblings, the cousins, it costs the neighbors, it costs the church body, it costs the reputation of Christ. There's even economic and societal costs associated with it.

And so this is something that we're to understand in our marriages that there's much more at stake than just the personal happiness of each partner. And even the purpose for staying married or seeking a good marriage extends far beyond you and your marriage. Since you and I have been talking about this a lot over the last number of months, just the impact that just our marriage has, not just on each other, but on our children, on the people in the body of Christ, on our family members, that there's much more at stake here than just us.

And so the picture here is marriage that would last. And I would say a note to those who have been divorced, although divorce is tragic and you will carry scars with you, it does not leave you forever marked as a second-rate citizen in the kingdom. Even if it was mostly your fault, there is the opportunity for restoration, of course, to Christ, forgiveness that is full and free, and even usefulness in continued ministry.

But if marriage is to be a permanent relationship, then we need to think about how that's walked out in our daily life, okay? Every marriage that ends and dissolves was on a pathway to that disillusionment. And so that permanence, that commitment needs to be walked out then in everyday life. Can you think of it this way? Married couples are to fight to protect the one flesh relationship to one another with Christ as supreme.

So what does that look like? Well, at one level, you're seeking relational closeness, not two separate lives, but growing together, intellectually, spiritually, physically, financially with your goals and your dreams and your relationships, serving in ministry, bearing burdens together, friendships together, not two distinct, separated individuals, but coming together with a shared sense of purpose, under the allegiance to Jesus that is to be rivaled by no others. And so from a human standpoint, there is to be no other human relationship that threatens the one flesh relationship. No other friendships, not your parents, not your children, not work or other interests.

And as I think about all of those different threats that could potentially exist, tell you what the greatest relational threat to oneness is in your marriage, it's your own sinfulness, it's your own sinfulness. I mean, I hope you believe that. The greatest threat to my marriage is me.

The greatest threat to oneness in my marriage is my own sin. And so we could say sin and selfishness are the primary culprits that work against oneness in marriage. I think you could add carelessness to that as well.

And so you're to fight to protect what is under constant assault due to your own sinful flesh and then living in a sinful world. Let me just consider this for a moment. This is just a brief smattering.

It's not exhaustive at all. Just think in a given week, in one week, how many issues threaten a one flesh relationship that ultimately could lead to the divorce of a marriage? How about judgmental attitudes towards your spouse that works against the one flesh relationship? Judgmental attitudes, ever have any of those? How about a harsh word or a word spoken in anger or maybe an offense that comes and is harbored and clung to rather than forgiven, it's replayed. Or how about this one? Every difficult conversation that is avoided out of selfishness.

Every sarcastic barb. Every lustful thought that taints the purity of the relationship. Every opportunity to love and serve that you forsake out of selfishness.

Every dense contented thought that you nurse or you feed. Every area of hidden sin. Every unloving suspicion or defensive reaction.

Every unresolved issue that remains unaddressed. And you start to realize that marriage is broken down, the one flesh relationship is broken down bit by bit, little by little over time. So the first focus in preserving the permanence of marriage is to deal with the ways that you personally harm your marriage relationship.

And then coming alongside your spouse and helping them address their issues. It's like Solomon said of the sluggard in Proverbs 24, I passed by the field of a slugger by the vineyard of a man lacking sense and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns. And the ground was covered with nettles and its stone wall was broken down.

Then I saw and considered it, I looked and received instruction. What did Solomon learn from that broken down vineyard? It was covered in thorns and the wall was in disarray. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want like an armed man.

Solomon would say it's the little foxes that destroy the vineyard. That is to say to coast, to lack vigilance, to neglect, to assume, to be lazy in the marriage relationship, to give up the hard work of repenting of sin and pursuing reconciliation. And if I could just urge you, those in the room who are married, protect and guard the one flesh relationship and do so jealously and make war on the sin that separates and make war on the external threats to your marriage and make war on the internal threats to your marriage and cover all of this in the forgiveness of Christ as you seek to forgive as the Lord forgave you.

We have to forgive one another. And so the picture here of this marriage so far has been so rich for us. There's another detail in the text that I wanna draw out here as it relates specifically to the men.

Verse 24, therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife. His wife, personal possessive pronoun, it's singular. She belongs to him.

She's not anyone else's wife. He doesn't have more than one wife. It's his wife and his alone.

She belongs to him. And of course, 1 Corinthians 7 teaches that he belongs to her. But look at what Moses says, cling to her, hold fast.

The idea is to grab a hold of and not let go. Men and women each have responsibility for the quality of their marriage, but it is clear here and in many other passages, the man is the pursuer. Okay, the man is the one that goes and he grabs onto her.

God made the woman, the wife, to be the responder. And so the husband here is to lead in protecting the relationship. He's to lead in pursuing closeness in the relationship.

This of course does not absolve a wife of her culpability or responsibility in the relationship, but it means that the man has the ultimate responsibility to take the proactive role. And so if you'd say in your marriage, you know what, my wife is distant or strained or aloof or disengaged or unforgiving or closed off, you are to pursue her. You are to draw near to her and draw her near to you, not just sexually, but relationally, to learn her and to care for her and to figuratively lay your hands on her and to bring her close and to not let go.

So we see here so much that is just good reminders from this prototypical marriage, this authoritative prototype in God's original design. And it brings us to our sixth specification, which is the purpose of marriage, the purpose of marriage. You know, marriage serves so many purposes in the wisdom of God.

And we've looked at many of these over the last couple of weeks. We've seen that there's the procreational good. It's how the human species multiplies and it provides homes for children.

We saw that there's a relational good associated with marriage that the wife comes alongside the husband as a helper. And in that dynamic, there's a benefit to one another of the relational goods. And it serves a public and an institutional good to say that sexual relations are confined to committed relationships.

There's a benefit to society. We saw that it provides the primary context for discipleship. The discipleship is to take place in the home.

That is, Adam and Eve exercise dominion over the garden. Adam's in charge to work it and to keep it. That there's the perspective of the couple working together under the purposes of God, both in their home and as ministry flows out of the home into the community.

And so we saw that marriage is much bigger than the couple itself. Marriage is much bigger than the couple itself. We saw if we're gonna get marriage right, then we have to think about marriage as existing for more than just its own benefit.

Christopher Ashe writes, I'm afraid Christian families today often live for themselves. Christian families often live for themselves. They think the church exists to serve them.

They buy books that make spiritual disciplines important because they will strengthen the

family, that tell them to go to church because going to church will make the family happier. But this gets it all backwards. We end up making church, prayer, and the Christian life a means to the end of strengthening the family.

See, part of getting marriage right is to understand that the purpose of God in marriage is bigger than the marriage itself. And so if you wanna have a good marriage, you need to view your marriage as being in God's service, in God's service, to serve His purpose. Your family, whatever station of life you're at in family life, it is to serve the purposes of God.

And so when someone asks you, why do you fight for the purity of your marriage? Why do you fight for oneness in your marriage? Why do you protect the priority of the marriage itself? It is because this serves the purposes of God. This is for the glory of God. And I just wanna encourage you pastorally that many, many issues in marriage, okay, functional, practical, relational issues in marriage get resolved when this issue is right.

I'm speaking that not only from experience in counseling others, I'm talking about that in my own marriage. It's like dynamite to go approach an issue of life as a couple and to have in our perspective, the goal right now is not me personally getting what I want or my own personal happiness or fulfillment, but rather how do we together serve under the banner of Christ? And suddenly, many of those functional, practical and relational issues become clear in terms of how we're gonna address them. See, the most satisfying marriage is one that involves two people united in their service of the King.

And so they're shoulder to shoulder serving, hand in hand, face to face, living for a purpose bigger than themselves. Brings us to our final point this morning. All of these priorities that we've seen for marriage and even its permanence, wanna end with the passing nature of marriage.

Marriage is passing. Marriage is passing. Every marriage comes to an end at some point.

Marriage between two individuals is not absolutely permanent. Rather, it's a relationship that is lifelong. That means that it is to terminate upon death.

It doesn't continue into the life to come. So that is why in our wedding vows, we say things like, till death do us part, or so long as this life shall last. Means it's permanent in terms of its commitment that we don't leave the relationship for someone else.

We don't leave the relationship with a piece of paper that now frees us and ends things formally or legally. The commitment is permanent, but the relationship itself is only for this lifetime. Means that there's no marriage in heaven.

Which I can just say is a little bit sad. I mean, I think I probably don't understand heaven right, but it's a little bit sad. Susie and I were newlyweds, and we'd kind of encountered that, wait a second, we're so happy, and is this not gonna be in heaven? And so I said, honey, listen, I'm gonna do some study in depth, and I'm gonna make sure that I understand whether or not

marriage lasts in heaven or not.

And so we were newlyweds, and we'd gotten into an argument about something, and it was, I mean, it was like a good one, where you're worked up, you're struggling, you're lacking self-control with your words, and we're nearing the end of this argument, and I just looked at her, and I said, oh, by the way, there's no marriage in heaven. And she immediately burst into tears, and that's good shepherding right there, guys. That's, I made the point.

No, it's a little bit sad to think of the joys associated with the one-flesh relationship. You're still gonna be friends in heaven, and I think even maybe the best way of understanding that is that when you get to heaven, it's not as if you've lost all of the relational fellowship that you knew on earth, and suddenly we're all starting with a blank slate. And so you're gonna have the relational time that you've spent on earth, but it is important to recognize that marriage has a usefulness for this time period, and this time period alone.

And one day in heaven, there will no longer be a need for children, or families for that matter, because we're gonna be one family, one household of God, united together with God and with one another. And so this reminder that marriage is passing protects us from making more of marriage than we ought. Recognize that in the end, it is only a human relationship, and it has a temporary purpose for your short stay on earth.

And sometimes we lose sight of this, do we not? Marriage becomes more than God intended it. And your spouse is a lousy God. Marriage is not your savior.

You cannot put your ultimate trust in your spouse. You cannot find your identity in your spouse. You cannot count on your spouse to bring peace to your soul, or even your ultimate safety, or security, or provision.

See, God alone fulfills those longings. He alone is to be our sense of trust and satisfaction. But it does bring up the question, if marriage is so good, why do we have it now? And why don't we have it later? I think there's a number of good and wonderful things that we enjoy now that we're not gonna have in heaven.

I mean, right, there is no sunshine in heaven. Why? Because Jesus is unveiled, and he's bright enough. So we don't need the sun anymore.

I love partaking of the Lord's Supper with all of you. Guess what? No communion in heaven. Why? Because Jesus is there at the table, and we're enjoying the meal together.

The appetizer is over. And so for marriage, the reason why marriage is not in heaven is because the thing it's served to prepare us for is here. See, marriage is typological.

And it serves our understanding of God's relationship to us, and of what's coming for us. Paul said that we are members of the body of Christ. That means that we're united to Christ.

And he would go on and say, in Ephesians 5.32, the mystery is profound. He's talking about Christ and the church. This very text is being quoted in Ephesians 5. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother, and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

And so what we're gonna understand then is that God's love for his church, for his people, Christ's love for his people, is in some way like that. Now you understand that's why this is a priority relationship. That's why it's an exclusive relationship.

It's Christ and his people. We see that Christ is the one who pursues. Christ is the one who unites himself to his bride.

He's the one who holds his bride fast. And he joins himself to us inseparably. Where you can say, I am his, and he is mine.

And like the other faithful husband, he pursues us, even when we're unfaithful. Christ loves his church, he loves his people. Not about you, but I was just astounded to reflect on that this week.

Here to take just a blip of the best moments of relational love on earth. The best moments of a feeling of closeness and enjoying the fruit of fellowship and intimacy and care for one another. That's to teach us about the pledged, covenantal, committed love of Christ to us as a people.

See, the very first marriage here in the garden foreshadows the climactic marriage of the Lord of his people. I want you to turn with me to Revelation. We'll see how this prototype served not only as the prototype to instruct all of the individual human marriages on this earth, but it was a prototype that was typological of something even greater than that.

Revelation chapter 19, verse six. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord, that's what that means. Hallelujah, praise the Lord. For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

God's on the throne, he's reigning in glory now. We're filled with joy. Verse seven, let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory.

For the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, write this, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, these are the true words of God. Marriage teaches us, does it not? About the ultimate bridegroom, which is Christ here receiving his bride with rejoicing and celebration and delight at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

I wanna read from a song about enjoying the love of Christ as we look toward that day. My Redeemer's love is deeper than the depths of sin and hell. He was enthroned in glory, he came to bring us to himself.

My Redeemer's love is wider than the breach my sins had made. He reached down into my darkness, he alone has power to save. My Redeemer's love is stronger than my fiercest enemies.

He will hold me in the tempest. Through the flood, he carries me. My Redeemer's love will lead me through the deepest valley here.

He will shepherd me and guide me. He will ever keep me near. My Redeemer's love grows sweeter as eternity draws near.

I'll enjoy his love forever at his throne for endless years. My Redeemer's love will fill me on the day I see his face. I will love him back forever and forever sing his praise.

My encouragement, church, is to pursue marriage for all that it is worth and nothing more. You pray with me. Lord in heaven, these are lofty truths that are so challenging to grasp and yet so deeply edifying for our souls.

Father, I pray that you would sanctify us and strengthen us as your people. Lord, to embrace your design in every arena of life. Lord, I pray that you would bless our church.

Bless the marriages of our church and the families in our church. Bless the singles in our church. Father, I pray you give us contentment in any station of life that you've called us to.

And Lord, that you would teach us to live for your glory and your honor and your reputation, Lord, in all of our human relationships, knowing that that's where the ultimate joy comes from, Lord, in serving you and serving others. Thank you for these lessons. We love you in Jesus' name, amen.