

## Marriage FC

### Jabez Rutt; Friendly Companion 2007.

The doctrine of marriage.

Apart from a friendship with Jesus Christ the closest friendship we can know on this earth is that between a husband and wife. Therefore we need to be of one mind in the things of God. The scriptures teach us, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Am 3:3 av) This is true of any friendship not just marriage. Also the Holy Spirit instructs us, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1Co 6:15-20 av)

We have the beautiful narrative in scripture of how Isaac and Rebekah were brought together as man and wife in Genesis chapter 24. One verse stands out in that chapter as I write to you and that is verse 58. "And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." My dear young friends let us look at this in a spiritual way, Isaac as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, Wilt thou go with this man? Leave everything here below to follow the Lord Jesus. It is not an easy path. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Mt 16:24-25 av) If by grace we follow the Lord Jesus we have to leave all worldly friends and the life that we did live, we lose, but find a new and living way in Jesus Christ. We have the exhortation given us by the Holy Spirit, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2Co 6:14-18 av)

We are instructed in Holy Scripture that marriage was instituted by God to show forth the sacred spiritual union between Christ and the church. The whole of Solomon's Song is a spiritual dialogue between Christ and the church. The Lord Jesus Christ is referred to by the church as her beloved, the church is referred to by Christ as his sister or my spouse. In Ephesians the Holy Spirit clearly teaches us that marriage is a holy institution representing the sacred intimate union between Christ and His church. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband." (Eph 5:22-33 av) In Psalm 45 the believer is called the king's daughter and just as the man and woman leave their parents to start their own family so the believer leaves all for Christ's sake. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him." (Ps 45:10-11 av)

Let us look at the institution of marriage in the garden of Eden, before Adam fell into sin and thereby ruined all his posterity. Remember Adam was created first and then we read. "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 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, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (Ge 2:18-25 av)

The Holy Spirit has instructed us why the woman is to be subject unto her husband and also to the man in the church. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (1Ti 2:9-15 av)

This truth is reinforced by the Holy Spirit in Peter's first epistle. "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." (1Pe 3:1-7 av)

The sacred institution of marriage is between one man and one woman, this was the original institution. When man fell into sin his behaviour deteriorated in every way and no more so than in the marriage relationship. Men began to have more than one wife and God was offended by man's behaviour. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Ge 6:1-3 av) God shortened man's life because of this sin. Up until this time many men lived eight or nine hundred years, Methusela 969 years. Gen. 5 v 27.

In the holy law of God the sanctity of the marriage state is enshrined in the ten commandments. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Ex 20:14 av) The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul confirms this in Romans, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Ro 7:1-3 av)

Even the godly patriarchs sinned in this way by taking more than one wife and were followed in the same sin by the kings of Israel and Judah. But if we look at the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ he takes us back to the original institution in the garden of Eden. He tells us that under the law even Moses allowed a bill of divorcement, let us look at the scripture. "And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 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 they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mr 10:2-12 av)

Nothing could clearer here in that the Lord Jesus takes us back to original institution and reasserts it. Hence in the New Testament polygamy (more than one wife) is not allowed but a monogamous (only one wife) relationship is the only one known under New Testament teaching. This is reinforced by the Holy Spirit in the epistles of the New Testament. "A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" (1Ti 3:2 av) "**Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife**, ruling their children and their own houses well." (1Ti 3:12 av) "If any be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." (Tit 1:6 av) These scriptures establish that this is correct New Testament practice for the Christian church.

If we look at the case of the woman of Samaria, who the Lord Jesus met by Jacob's well. "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." (Joh 4:16-19 av) It is very clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did not recognise living together as being married. My dear young friends may the Lord keep you from this sinful practice of living together when not married. The Holy Scriptures do not recognise what are sometimes called common law marriages. There must be a formal commitment with vows taken before Almighty God, until death us do part.

Much is made of what is often called the exceptive clause in the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Mt 5:31-32 av) It is often wrongly argued that this scripture gives an exception to the law, and that a person whose husband or wife has a sexual relationship with another person is free to marry another person. In fact just the opposite is stated, he merely states that such persons are free to live separately, but not remarry.

The apostle by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit states very very clearly that if a person has to separate for Christ's sake, meaning, being married to a heathen man or woman, then afterwards they were converted to Christ, "And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife." (1Co 7:10-11 av) With great clarity the scriptures teach us that the Lord God only recognises one man with one wife and the only thing that dissolves the marriage bond is death.

The following words are used in Holy Scripture regarding sexual relationships, fornication and adultery. The word fornication is sometimes used in a broad way meaning any form of uncleanness, such as same sex relationships. But the generally accepted meaning is, a sexual relationship between a single man and woman, they are fornicators. This is sinful in the sight of God. Physical sexual relationships should only be between one man and one woman within the marriage bond. The word adultery means a married man or woman who has a physical sexual relationship with someone other than their husband or wife. This is sinful in the sight of God. "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Heb 13:4 av) This scripture means that marriage is honourable in the sight of God, 'and the bed undefiled', means it is perfectly normal and clean for the husband and wife to sleep together, this is what God intended for their mutual good and for the procreation of children. The natural fruit of the marriage bond is a child and the father and mother to raise their children within this sacred union, ordained by God. "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." (Ps 127:3-5 av) Also, "Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table." (Ps 128:3 av) Notice the solemn admonition of Almighty God, 'Whoremonger and adulterers God will judge.' A whore, in scripture means a harlot or the modern term is, prostitute. A whoremonger is a woman who has a physical sexual relationship with many different men.

We are given instruction regarding the marriage relationship in Holy Scripture concerning the duty of mothers to guide the house and look after the family. "The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." (Tit 2:3-6 av) The usual practice has been for fathers to go out to work and mothers to look after the family. This is because we were a Christian country and our practices and traditions were based on Holy Scripture, such as the one just quoted. We see how bad it is for family life when mothers go out to work, it is bad for the children, it is bad for the father. In Christian teaching the wife and mother is given a very central role in the life of the family and it will damage the family unit if go against the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. We are often told that we live in different days; both father and mother have to work to pay the mortgage. My parents were far poorer than me, yet my mother never worked outside the home. Their parents were even poorer than they were, yet my grandmothers did not work, they trusted in the Lord to supply all their needs and tried to live according to the teachings of Scripture and the Lord honoured their faith.

My dear young friends only enter into marriage if you are absolutely sure, it is for life. And be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.