

# Church Live Re-Visited: Session Seven - Part 2

by Ron Bailey

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*The sermon explores the biblical understanding of marriage, emphasizing family, covenant, and mutual belonging over ownership.*

**Duration:** 24:37

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:23-24, Proverbs 18:22, Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9, 1 Corinthians 7:2-4, 1 Corinthians 7:9, Ephesians 5:31, Colossians 3:19, Hebrews 13:4

**Topics:** "Marriage And Family", "Gods Will"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the significance of the phrase 'bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh' in Genesis chapter 2, highlighting how it symbolizes family and belonging rather than ownership. It explores the mutuality of marriage as intended by God, emphasizing the shared sense of belonging between a husband and wife. The sermon also touches on the historical and cultural aspects of marriage, discussing the concept of sexual immorality and the importance of understanding one's own will before seeking God's will.

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## Transcript

Let me say something then, a little bit, from one of the questions that's just come out about some other aspects of history that affect things. For example, I might have squeezed this into the last bit. For example, this famous little saying that comes in Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2. Now this is a verse which puzzled me for years and years and years.

And I think I begin to see some light on it. This is verse 23. And Adam said, this is now, this is when he sees the woman she brought to him.

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 men. And then you've got another sentence which begins in verse 24.

And I don't know who said this sentence. I don't know whether Adam said it or whether Moses said it. But it's part of the Bible revelation anyway.

But certainly Adam said verse 23. This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of men.

Now what does Adam mean when he says this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh? It would have been true literally, if you follow the story here, to say that this is bone of my bone. But he couldn't really say she was flesh of my flesh, could he? Because there was none of Adam's flesh that went to create Eve. There was just Adam's bone.

So what does this phrase mean? Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. Well in fact it's an idiom. That's to say it's a particular way of talking in a language which conveys an idea.

And this idea actually just simply means family. And I've got a little list here of about six or seven references in the Old Testament where you'll hear this little phrase. This is from the story of Laban and Jacob.

When Jacob went to live with Laban and they were kind of negotiating their wages in a particularly cunning way but we won't go into that. And then you've got this in Genesis chapter 29 and verse 14. I'll read it.

Ultimately I'll get these notes on the website so you can see them. And Laban said to him, Mr. Jacob, surely you are my bone and my flesh. And he stayed with him for a month.

Can you hear this little phrase? You are my bone and my flesh. Now what is Laban saying? He is saying you're family. I'm not going to treat you as a servant, as someone who has just kind of wandered in and got a job and I'm not going to pay you like I would pay somebody else who has just come to do the job of looking after the sheep.

Because you are family. That's what he's really saying. Now you've got this thing here in... I won't read all of them.

But this is one when... This is in Judges chapter 9 and verse 2 if you're taking notes. I pray you in the ears of all the men of Shechem, which is better for you. This is a man named Jerob Baal who was wanting to be the king.

He was the first king of Israel although it was illegal. And he's trying to get people to come and join him. And he makes this statement and he says, what's better that you have these 70 people reigning over you or one reigning over you? Remember also, he says, that I am your bone and your flesh.

This is Jerob Baal saying I'm family. Then here's another one. When all the tribes of Israel... It's 2 Samuel chapter 5 and verse 1. All the tribes of Israel came to David, to Hebron and spoke saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

And it goes on and on. And this is a very familiar little phrase actually that's used in the Bible. Bone and flesh is a way of saying family.

Let's kind of put that back into this and see if we can understand it. Adam said, this is now my family. This belongs to me.

This is not... I know I'm putting a lot of words in here but I'm trying to make the point. This is not a stranger. This is not just an association.

It's not just a friend. This is family. This is family.

And I think that this may well be the significance when it goes on to say this. Therefore, verse 24, shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh. They become one new unit.

And there are two parts to this becoming one unit. The first part is they have to separate from any other units. They have to leave before they cleave.

Now this is why I think that this is God inspiring Moses to add this word and it isn't actually part of what Adam said. Because Adam of course hadn't got any father or mother to leave. So certainly Adam wouldn't have said this.

This is Moses' comment on what happened speaking by the spirit of God. So he says this, that they shall become one flesh. They become one unit.

And it's interesting that the idea of covenant or a contract is never used in the Bible of people who are already related. You never have any reference for example of a covenant between a man and his son or between a man and his brother because they are already linked. What a covenant does is a covenant creates a way of joining people together who aren't naturally joined together by blood and birth.

That's what a covenant does. A covenant is a way of adding something and making them absolutely part of that even though they weren't part of the same bloodline. Now the other thing I want to say before I move on because this has to do with history and this is why marriage can be such an issue.

We have a pattern in the UK that follows the Anglican way of doing marriages and the Anglican church is the state church and they have a right to conduct weddings in an entirely different way to anybody else. Everybody else has to do it one way including the Catholics and the Jehovah's Witness and the Jews and Muslims and they all have to do it one way for it to be a legal marriage in England and people in the Church of England do it another way because they are the state church. They're not big differences but they can be kind of significant.

But at the end of the Anglican service you have this famous phrase where the man kind of stands up and maybe puts his hand up and he makes a sign of a cross or something like this and he says something like I declare you man and wife what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. And he makes this statement and it's actually a relic of Roman Catholicism. He makes a statement which gives you the idea that he actually has the power to make two people one because he's gone through a particular service or a particular pattern.

Now the Roman Catholic Church has seven sacraments and other than baptism which in an emergency anybody can do the other sacraments all have to be conducted by a duly ordained priest. That means a priest who has had hands laid on him by a bishop that means the bishops had hands laid on him by the archbishop the archbishop has had hands laid on him by the pope and the popes had hands laid on him by the pope before him and the pope before him all the way back to Peter and this is called the imposition of hands or apostolic succession. So they believe that every Roman Catholic priest has special power that's come all the way down from Peter and they have special power to do what I would call magical things.

They have power to do things that the little phrase is *ex opere operato* which actually means just doing it actually creates it. So for example when they have communion and they pray over the cup and the bread if

a Roman Catholic priest does that using the right words instituted by the Roman Catholic Church an immediate miracle or piece of magic takes place and the blood, the wine in the cup becomes actual blood and the bread actually becomes actual body. And they believe that the Roman Catholic priest had the power to join together two people and make them one.

This had tremendous implications in the way that the Roman Catholic Church controlled its people because only they had the power to marry two people and if people had sexual relations outside marriage they were going to hell. So they have control and then they built in other conditions like all the children from this marriage must be brought up as Catholics. So it was really a means of control and the Protestants they ditched all these sacraments in this way and they said basically that anyone can baptize but they hung on to this idea that a wedding is something that a special person does a priest or a pastor or something like this.

Actually you don't need those things for it to be a proper wedding. What you do need, I think there are certain ingredients there need to be four ingredients for the marriage to be recognised as a typical marriage in the way that they've operated in the world generally. I've got some C's and I've invented a C. The first C I'm going to talk about is Qualified which if you're very sharp you'll notice isn't a C but I can't find a C for Eligibility.

One of the things that happens in a marriage service whether it's in the registry office or in an Anglican church is that there has to be a statement that they know of no impediment why I so and so may not be joined in matrimony to you etc. and then the wife has to say exactly the same thing. So they have to declare that there's no impediment in other words that they are qualified they have the necessary qualifications to become married they are not already married to somebody else technically in the UK bigamy is illegal.

Then the second thing is that you have so you've got qualification, you've got consent in other words this must not be something that has been forced upon these people. It has to be a willing thing and in the Anglican service which I actually like a lot you've got this wonderful statement wilt thou take so and so to be thy lawful wedded wife and the man says not I do which is what all the jokes say the man actually says I will because the question is not do you but will you the question is will you make this decision now to do this thing and the man says yes I will and the woman says yes I will. So you've got this consent.

Then the third thing you've got is the actual contract and the contract in our English weddings goes something like this I can remember my own it was something like this I Ronald Bailey take thee Margaret Wilson to be my lawful wedded wife and then there's a whole bunch of other things that we Christians add on to it like to have and to hold and from this day forward better for richer, none of those are part of the official wedding contract in law in the UK the only part is I Ronald Bailey take thee Margaret Wilson to be my lawful wedded wife and technically at that point you could all cheer because the wedding the actual official part of the wedding is done and then fourthly there would be the consummation there would be the sexual union which was a confirmation that this contract had

taken place so although there's not a record of a single wedding in the Bible that we can actually trace through and say this is what they did at weddings in fact we know that everyone in the near Middle East in this era had these basic ingredients that they had to be eligible to be married there would be other kinds of eligibilities as well kind of age would be affected in some things they have to give their consent, they have to make this contract and ultimately it would be the marriage would be consummated now the Roman

Catholic Church says that without the consummation the marriage has not taken place and in certain circumstances they would then say if that didn't happen and everything kind of went wrong and the two people wanted to separate they would say well you can separate and we

scrub this one this wasn't a marriage at all because it never went through to the stage of consummation but as I say Protestants kind of dispensed with all those kind of things, now that's just the background as to why we there's no such thing as uninterpreted history every piece of history you tell me you tell it me from your perspective, your point of view and when I pass it on I'll tell it from my perspective and my point of view so always when you look at the Bible there are always other factors which are influencing your interpretation and the important thing is whenever possible to identify them because if you identify them you've got a chance of compensating for them, am I making this clear? if you don't identify them you will still be affected subjectively by those things, you

will still be influenced but you'll think you're being absolutely objective so it's really important to identify what you think before you start Muller the man who founded the orphanages used to say that the first step to finding the will of God in prayer was to identify your own will it's an interesting statement he said it was impossible to ascertain the will of God objectively until you knew what your own will was so you found out you discovered what your own will was then you prayed to God about that and you looked to God for the grace to put that on one side or to be mindful of it and then you sought God, you didn't pretend that you're objective there's no such thing as objectivity and the people who claim to be objective are the people who are actually the most subjective but the

people who know they're not being objective actually have got a far better chance of being objective because they know they're subjective do you follow that? let me go on a little bit I want to talk about not the details in the middle of 1 Corinthians chapter 7 I want to talk about the beginning of it because I think there are some aspects here that it really would be a tragedy if we just rushed past them so 1 Corinthians chapter 7 Paul begins like this and when I say Paul I mean Paul speaking by direct revelation of the spirit of God and recording this now concerning the things of which you wrote unto me this is also important this is another part that we need to filter in, factor in to interpreting this because there are 6 or 7 times in the rest of 1 Corinthians now where Paul uses this

little phrase concerning, concerning, concerning and the first one he says concerning the things that you wrote to me in other words it looks as though in the first 6 chapters of Corinthians Paul has been dealing with things that he knew about possibly Chloe's message had told him about these things he knew about them now he's actually coming to deal with specific questions that they have asked in a letter that he has received now can you see why we're going to struggle from this point we don't know what the questions were what we've got here are the answers we don't know what the questions are so what we're trying to do is we're trying to use every clue that we can find from the scriptures to find out what the question was so that we've got an answer which is consistent with it I'm sorry

if this is not dogmatic enough for you I can be dogmatic on things that I know I'm sure about but there are some things that we just have to say like Paul said in 1 Corinthians a little bit later on we know in part and we prophesy in part and there are some things that we cannot be absolutely dogmatic about but this is the first of these specific things that they've mentioned in their letter that Paul has to write now we don't know what they said we can maybe read back into it and try and work out what they might have said but this is how it begins now concerning the things where have you wrote to me it's good for a man not to touch a woman that doesn't mean literally touch he's talking about touching a woman in the sense of marriage

because certainly that would have been in the question

then he says this nevertheless to avoid now my old English bible here has got the word fornication and if you look at a dictionary not a bible dictionary just an ordinary dictionary a dictionary will define fornication as pre-marital sex as to say sex before there is any marriage relationship and it will distinguish the dictionary will between fornication and adultery because fornication is pre-marital sexual activity and adultery is extra-marital sexual activity that's the dictionary so one is before the marriage has taken place one is an additional to the marriage because the marriage relationship is still holding at this point so the first one from the dictionary is fornication the second one is adultery there are indications if you read the bible that the word that we have translated

in my old English bible fornication would better be translated sexual immorality as to say it's a more general term it's a bigger term that includes pre-marital sexual activity and it includes lots of other things as well it includes homosexuality, it includes all kinds of other things so nevertheless to avoid sexual immorality let every man have his own wife and let every man have her own husband I want to just concentrate a little bit on what I'm going to call in this little section the mutuality of marriage as God intends it to be in Old Testament times and in the East generally the idea of marriage was very much that a woman changed owners that she had been owned by her father or her older brother if her father was dead or her uncles or whatever and now she becomes the possession of

the man to whom she's joined in marriage I think it's really key that when Paul begins this topic this is how he expresses it he says let every man have his own wife let every woman have her own husband and there's an interesting thing here neither the Hebrew language nor the Greek language actually has a word for husband or wife neither Hebrew nor Greek has a word for husband or wife so you say but it's in my Bible so what have they done with it? what they do is they put a personal pronoun in front of it so that if you translated it literally it would say something like this to avoid sexual immorality let every man have his own woman and let every woman have her own man now I hope that doesn't sound kind of too crude to me it's a very powerful statement that a marriage in God's eyes is

not just a man becoming the owner of a woman it's not a man who has got the woman and from now on she has to do absolutely everything he says there's a real mutuality here there's a shared sense of this one belongs to me and it's not having your own woman and your own man in the sense of possessiveness and ownership but more in the sense of belonging more in the sense of belonging I don't know whether you watch Fiddler on the Roof it's my favourite film because of Abigail we watch it most weeks that's my handicapped daughter who loves certain films and there's a certain point in this when they're about to celebrate the sabbath meal and there's a stranger who's come in and the stranger's come for a meal and he's being introduced to the family and he has five daughters I think I think

that's the case, Tevye and he's introducing them and he says I have five daughters and the stranger said five daughters and Tevye the man of the household said yes and then he introduced them and he said this is mine and then his wife said and this is mine now he isn't making a statement of ownership he isn't saying I can do anything I like with them this is his family embrace they belong to me and the point I want to make from this simple verse is that a married relationship is two people belonging to one another not being owned by one another but belonging to one another do you understand what I'm trying to say?

I want to get this sense of the affection and the care in this not of legal rights because you'll see what happens to rights in just a moment and to me it is amazing what happens to rights here ok I'll pause while the operator changes the reel

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