

(Genesis) 7 - the First Divine Institution

by S. Lewis Johnson

Marriage is the first divine institution, ordained by God, and is based on divine principles.

Duration: 52:53

Scripture: Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 19:4-6

Topics: "Divine Institution"

Description

In this sermon on Genesis chapter two, the preacher focuses on the first divine institution of marriage. He highlights the significance of Adam's response to the creation of Eve, emphasizing the excitement and poetic speech that Adam expresses. The preacher also discusses the various perspectives on marriage throughout history, including both negative and positive views. Additionally, he explains the symbolic meaning of this story and how it is further developed in the New Testament. The sermon concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus Christ and be born again for a marriage according to God's will.

Transcript

Our scripture reading for today is Genesis chapter 2, verse 18 through verse 25, and so if you have your Bibles, will you turn with me to Genesis 2, verse 18 through verse 25. Moses writes in his continuation of the account of the creation, Then the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make an helper suitable for him.

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept. Then he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which he had taken from the man and brought her to the man. And the man 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.

You notice the relationship in English of the words woman and man, and that rather effectively presents what is found in the Hebrew text. What Adam said was, She shall be called Eshah, because she was

taken out of Esh. That's another word for man, not the word Adam, which we have been having translated Adam or man.

It's a word that speaks of man more in the nobility of his being than Adam, which speaks of man as from the earth. But the interesting thing about it is that there is no relationship, most Hebrew philologists believe, between the word for woman, Eshah, and the word for man, Esh. But Adam, guided by the Holy Spirit and knowing the sound of those two words, evidently, made a play on words by the use of words that sounded alike but which were not related philologically.

For this cause, Moses adds, a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. The subject for the message this morning, the last of the messages on Genesis chapter 2, is the first divine institution.

There is hardly anything that has brought forth the mountains of advice that the ancient institution of marriage has. Some of the counsel of the ancients and the wise includes, marriage to tell the truth is an evil, but a necessary evil. Shelley has added, a system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

There is an anonymous nursery rhyme which you may have heard, needles and pins, needles and pins. When a man marries, his troubles begin. Here's to matrimony, a German scholar has said, the high sea for which no compass has yet been invented.

And then punches Allman Act's advice to those about to marry, don't. If you're looking for a modern word, marriage is like a midnight phone call. You get a ring, then you wake up.

The advice that we're given concerning marriage may be humorous, but it's certainly not the truth. Marriage is the first divine institution. And following the blueprint of divine institution, laid down by the founder, would immensely improve the lot of modern man.

One of the reasons that marriage is under attack today is because marriage, when it does take place, is carried out with the divine principles forgotten. And marriage being a divine institution cannot possibly prosper if it is not prosecuted according to the divine principles. If marriage were prosecuted according to the divine principles, then we would see the beauty and the efficacy of this institution that God himself has ordained.

A glance at our daily papers confirms this. Here in Dallas, constantly we read in the newspapers of the difficulties that take place in the families of the society just about us. It's amazing how many of these difficulties are traceable to the fact that the principles of marriage according to the scriptures are not carried out.

Just recently, a mother charged with first-degree murder in the death of her three-year-old son after an autopsy showed that the death was the result of starvation illustrates what we are speaking about. A little investigation into the past history reveals several marriages, but marriages not carried out according to the divine institution. The difficulty is not with marriage.

The difficulty is with the principles by which marriage is undertaken. One reading the book of Genesis at this point might naturally ask the question, what about the creation of the woman? We have had words about the creation of the heavens. We've had words about the creation of the earth and the things upon

the earth.

We've had a significant part of it devoted to the creation of the man, but did not God say, let us make man in our image? And did he not also say, male and female created he them? And do we not read in the third chapter concerning the fall of man that woman plays a very significant part in the contents of that chapter? So we would want to ask, what about the details of the creation of the woman? And so that is the thing that comes before Moses as we reach chapter 2, verse 18 of the second chapter of the book of Genesis. There are two major subjects that are taken up by Moses in this section, and incidentally, this section is the foundation of almost all of the New Testament teaching concerning the nature of marriage. That's the first subject that Moses takes up, the subject of marriage, and then he has some incidental things which are very significant as they are treated in the New Testament concerning the relation of the sexes within and outside of marriage.

This story is rich in its symbolic meaning, and our Lord and the apostles developed this in some more detail in the New Testament, but essentially it is all here before us in the book of Genesis, chapter 2, verse 18 through verse 25. Now it might seem strange to us that Moses, in describing the occasion of the creation of the woman, should link this with the naming of the animals. But one of the reasons for this, no doubt, is that Adam was to be shown his responsibilities toward the animal creation.

He was to be the king of the animal world. He was told that he was to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. So since naming of the animals is an act that pertains to his sovereignty over them, it would be natural for this to come up in the account.

So evidently the Lord brought the animals before Adam for the process of his naming them in order to show him his responsibility as king over the creation. But in the light of the context, it seems clear, too, that one of the major reasons that the naming of the animals is associated with the creation of the woman is in order that Moses might be shown that it is not among the animals that he is to find his counterpart, his helper, his helper who is meet or suitable for him. It was to show him that they were not qualified to meet his needs mentally, spiritually.

And so the creation of the woman is in that context for that particular reason. In the 18th verse the Lord speaks of the need of Adam. He says, Then the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a helper suitable for him. This incidentally is the first time that God ever says that anything is not good. We are not to think that there is any contradiction between this statement and the statement of chapter 1, verse 31, where we read, And God saw all that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

He does not suggest that creating work which he accomplished in the creation of Adam is not good. But when he means, when he says it is not good for the man to be alone, he means that man is incomplete without his helper. So the helper suitable for him is the thing that he is speaking about.

And incidentally, when he says a helper suitable for him, or corresponding to him, we are not to think of inequality. We will say more about that later, but he is referring to the correspondence that exists between the woman and the man. And it would seem to me that this is one of the most beautiful expressions of the dignity of the woman, a helper, corresponding to him, or suitable for him.

I do not think you could find a more beautiful statement of the dignity of woman than that statement right there. Now having said that, we have the naming of the animals brought forth before us. It has been the contention of some of the modern commentators over the book of Genesis, and I speak primarily of the unbelieving ones, that what was taking place was that God was really creating animals, one after the other, looking for a helper suitable for Adam.

But Adam was not finding them suitable for him until finally he created the woman. The impression that these commentators give, and many of them express specifically, is that God was unsuccessful in his attempts to meet Adam's needs until he created Eve. But that is not of course the meaning of the account, and surely we are not to understand this as it has sometimes been understood, as Adam standing or sitting upon a rock and God causing all of the animals to pass before him, and Adam saying, well, that's a lion, that's a bear, that's a fox, and so on.

Mark Twain has a passage in which he speaks of something rather similar. Adam comes home one night, according to Mark Twain, and Eve said to him, what did you call that big animal out there? He said, well, I called it an elephant. She said, why did you call it an elephant? He said, well, it looked like an elephant.

But we are not to think of that as the method by which Adam named the animals. To give the name to someone was to understand the essential character of that being. We do not understand the language that Adam was speaking.

We have no indication that he spoke Hebrew. So we do not have any indication from science, the science of philology or the study of the scriptures that would indicate to us the precise name that Adam gave to the animals. But when he gave names to them, it was because he understood the nature and character of those animals.

It was an expression of his sovereignty. It was an expression also of his perception. There is hardly any doubt that Adam was probably the most intelligent man outside of our Lord Jesus Christ who has ever lived upon the face of the earth.

Luther said, not only was he the most intelligent, but his physical capacities were the most complete and the finest. He said his eyes were sharper than the eyes of a lynx, sharper than the eyes of an eagle, and he was stronger than the lion or the bear, and he commanded them and handled them like they were trained dogs. Well, that's probably true.

Adam was a magnificent being and he had tremendous perception. We are not to think of Adam as a kind of caveman and of ourselves as being very intelligent because of the things that we have learned. Be assured of this, that this man who was created in the image of God before the fall possessed an insight into things created in the image of God that probably no one has since his day possessed.

And in addition, he had the daily fellowship with the Lord God which was the part of his growth in the knowledge of things that made him what he was, the monarch of the whole creation. It is, in my mind at least, no, there is no question but that he was the most intellectual of all of the men who have ever existed upon the face of the earth apart from our Lord Jesus Christ himself. He was a magnificent human creature.

So when we read that he gave names to the animals, we are to understand him as understanding all about those animals. But now after Adam gives names to all of the animals, we read in the last part of

verse twenty, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. You can picture Adam in the presence of animals and of course they evidently came before him in pairs.

And so each of them had his mate. They also were to be fruitful and multiply and as they cavorted the animals with their mates, there may have been created within Adam's heart the desire for a mate. At any rate, it may well have been the Lord's purpose to do that in bringing the animals before Adam.

And seeing that they had no, that he had no mate, there was created within him the desire for one. And it seems to me that that is the force of that last clause of verse twenty. But for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

This incidentally is an implicit statement to the effect that evolution again is not the scriptural teaching. Because if it were true that Adam was simply a more refined animal being, then there would, it would have seemed, been found some animal with which he should have some kinship. But none was like him.

None could provide fellowship and companionship for him. The animals and men, it is true, had their origin in dust. But in the case of man, there was a part of him that was given directly by God.

God breathed into him the breath of life, Neshama Hayim. And this marked him out as distinct from the animals. And consequently there was no helper corresponding to him.

So it is clear then that evolution is not suggested here, but rather the opposite. A devolution from this great character, the first man, wise, intelligent, commanding, sovereign, with full, full of tremendous power and tremendous God-given insight, which man lost when the fall came. And now no helper corresponding to him.

Your desire to read of the creation of the woman is satisfied in the words that follow. Here we read in verse twenty-one, So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept. Then he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place.

And the Lord God builded it into a woman, builded into a woman the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. This incidentally, speaking of evolution, is the despair of theistic evolutionists who have thought that God created material, but then allowed through the process of evolution the status of human beings to develop. But there can be no evolutionary explanation of the origin of Eve if we are true to the biblical record.

Even if we can bring ourselves to believe that man evolved from an ape-like ancestor, and that this is what scripture means when it says that Adam was formed from the dust of the ground, there seems to be no way at all to account for the unique origin of Eve out of the side of Adam. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him. I wonder what that means.

Was that an ecstasy? Was that a trance? Was this some form of divine anesthesia? Incidentally, it is said, I don't know how true this is, that Sir James Simpson, the famous Edinburgh physician in 1847, began the use of chloroform in anesthesia because he had meditated upon this particular passage and his own desires for research were strengthened by what he read here. Whether that is true or not, I do not know. But isn't it interesting that in the account of the creation of Eve, we have so much that is passed over with just a brief statement.

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. I have no doubt that this was probably the most amazing piece of surgery that was ever performed, and if anyone was able to see this, he would not only have given God a degree of diplomate of the American Board of Surgery, but would have turned over the whole thing to him. And isn't it remarkable, too, how all of the details of this are glossed over with simply the expression, he caused a deep sleep to fall upon him? Because you see, this was a bloody act.

However God did this, he reached into the side of Adam, having opened up his side with all that that involved, took out not only that piece of bone, but also the flesh of it, for Adam in a moment will say, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. So it was a very bloody kind of operation. If a surgeon were here, he would describe it in entirely different words.

He would say there was pre-op preparation of the subject, and then the surgeon took into his hand a scalpel, or perhaps if he were up with the latest research, he would say that he took out his instrument by which he would, using the laser beam, would perform this operation. I understand that surgeons do that now. I hope they don't have to do that on me, but nevertheless they do.

They just shine a laser beam on the flesh and it just opens up. Beautiful, isn't that? That really is something to think about. And then you can imagine that a man describing this might have said that what took place then was a rib resection, to use a scientific term of the surgeons, and the psala was removed.

And it was closed, the wound was closed up and sutured, and the patient was removed to intensive care, and afterwards it was pronounced a successful operation with no post-operative discomfort whatsoever. But the Bible simply says God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. I rather think that the reason for this is that we would be completely thrown aside if we read all of these things in the Word of God, because it seems to me from reading Holy Scripture that the triune God is a God of taste, a God of refinement.

And I think that is something incidentally that should characterize the saints too. They should be men and women of taste and refinement. That is what we have here.

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. Then he took one of the flesh at that place, and then he built this into a woman. That word fashioned is the word that really means build.

So he built the rib into a woman. Now, this has been ridiculed widely, that God should make a woman out of the rib and the flesh taken from the man. But there is a beautiful fitness in this.

One needs to know some theology to understand the Bible. You cannot understand the Bible if you do not know theology. And you cannot understand the book of Genesis fully if you do not understand the rest of the Bible.

Why was it necessary for God to do this? Well, it was necessary. Of course, he probably could have done it other ways, but he did it this way because it is the wise and intelligent way to do it. And furthermore, he took Eve out of Adam because it was essential that Eve be of the human race.

It was essential that she should be of Adam, because the whole story of the Bible is the story of the headship of Adam and the headship of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when Adam the first fell into sin, the sin of Adam the first is imputed to the whole of the race. It is essential that Eve be of Adam and of the race.

And so in this beautiful way, God preserves the unity of the human race by taking Eve out of Adam and out of his flesh and bone he has constructed the hell meat. It is a beautiful expression also of the dignity of the woman, that she was taken out of the man's side. Chrysostom, one of the earliest of the church fathers, has a statement that I almost always use in marriage ceremonies performed by me.

Last night I used it again right here in this very auditorium. Chrysostom said, Let us remember that God did not take the woman from man's feet to be trampled upon and enslaved, nor from his head that she should dominate him, but from his side to be his companion, from beneath his arm to receive his protection, and from near his heart to have his love and affection. Ridicule this if you like, but if you understand the word of God, then you understand some of the reasons and some of the beauty and dignity of the account of the creation of the woman.

She is an help suitable for him and the way in which she was created and the place from which she was taken all symbolically illustrate the relationship that that woman has to that man and the responsibilities that he also has to her. So his headship over Eve is to be like the headship of Jesus Christ to the church. Now we have lots of jokes that we make about women, and some of them I must confess are very funny, even though they are not very true.

For example, being a husband is like any other job. It helps a lot if you like the boss. Views expressed by husbands are not necessarily those of the management, we say.

We've all heard the one about, well, my wife and I have reached an agreement. I make all the major decisions and my wife makes all the minor ones. The only difficulty is that there are no major ones to be made.

Or a variation of that, my wife and I have decided that I make all the major decisions and she makes all the minor ones. I make the ones that have to do with East-West trade, with crime in the street, with welfare, with taxes, and various other things. But she makes those minor ones of what home we buy, what car we drive, how much money we spend, how to raise the children, and minor things like that.

Now, all of that, of course, is funny to us, and we all laugh at it, but it is far, far and away from the teaching of the Word of God. The Lord Jesus is not really a boss in the sense that we use the term boss. True, he is sovereign and he is head, but what a different kind of boss than the boss that we know.

He is sovereign and he is head, but he is a loving sovereign and a loving head who cares for the body. And consequently, the relationship between the woman and the man is pictured by the highest form of relationship, the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the true church. And the relationship of the woman to the man is the relationship that the church bears to Jesus Christ.

Submission, a submission that arises out of love for him. And his relationship to her is the relationship of sovereignty, but the sovereignty of one who has not only cared for his bride, but is willing to do what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for his bride in measure. He's willing even to be crucified for her if necessary.

That's the kind of relationship that the Bible sets forth. It's not the kind of boss relationship that we think of when we think of our boss in the business with which we are associated. The scriptures say that God took the rib and he fashioned the rib into a woman.

Literally, he built the rib into a woman. I do not think that any of us would, in looking at this, want to disagree with the picture that is given. The picture that is given is the picture of God as a craftsman, and of

course the greatest of all craftsmen.

And in the building of the woman, we have a beautiful picture of God's own special work, the making of, and I think all the men in the room will agree, the calmest of all of his creation. There is no question in my mind but that the woman is more beautiful than the man. She is his comely creation.

And it is true. He has built that rib into a woman. I won't say it, but I know what you men are thinking, and it's true.

It's true. The woman is the most comely of all God's creation, and how thankful we are for them. And then we read, and God brought her to the man.

What a beautiful expression that is. Last night I stood right here in front of this pulpit, and at the proper time in the wedding ceremony, a beautiful young bride walked down that aisle, and on her right hand or on his left arm, on her right hand, was her father. And what took place was just an illustration of what took place in the garden.

For the father walked down the aisle and brought her, that beautiful bride, to her groom, who was standing here in the front. You can see that even our marriage ceremonies are designed to represent what took place in the Garden of Eden. God brought her to the man, and so just like a father takes a bride and gives her to the groom, so the Lord Jesus fashioned Eve and gave Eve to Adam.

It's a very striking thing, too, to reflect upon the typical picture that is presented here. We don't want to go overboard in the typical pictures of the Bible, but you cannot understand the Bible if you do not understand the facts of typology. Our Lord, the apostles, used them fully and widely in the New Testament, and surely anyone reading the book of Genesis must draw an analogy between Adam's deep sleep and the death of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He must draw an analogy between Eve formed out of the bones and flesh of the first Adam, given for her, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the church formed by virtue of the giving of his body and the shedding of his blood for the redemption of his bride. And in the bringing of Eve to the first Adam, we have a beautiful picture of God sovereignly bringing to our Lord Jesus Christ the last Adam and the greatest of all the husbands, his bride, the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a magnificent picture this is, then, of New Testament teaching in its fullness.

In the Old Testament, it is just the adumbration of the new, the shadowing forth of it, but it beautifully teaches what we know follows in Holy Scripture. Now, Adam's response is typical, and the man said--I know what we want to say--and the man said, Wow! But now really, really, he said something like that. You thought that I was just talking, but really he said something like that.

For the Hebrew word translated now is a word that has the force here of at last. We've had all of these animals. It's almost as if he sent all of these animals passing by, and this naming work, that's been a bore.

But this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. There is animation. There is excitement in the words of the first man.

And you can see that he's carried up and lifted up by what has happened to him because he breaks out into poetic speech. For that's the force of the expression in verse 23. This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called Eshah because she was taken out of Esh. And the kinship of the being that he sees in this being who is before him is expressed by the kinship and sound of Eshah and Esh. Now Moses at this point makes a comment in verse 24.

He says, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother. It's evident, and most commentators agree, that Adam did not speak these words. He does not know yet of fatherhood and motherhood, and it's highly unlikely that he should have spoken these words.

These are added, it would seem, by Moses. There are other exegetical reasons for this, and I did make some reference to them, I think, in the notes that I wrote for you. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

One of the striking things about this is that in the New Testament, I wish I had time to look, we don't have time to look at Matthew chapter 19, but if you'll look at that passage and ponder it for a moment, you will see that in the New Testament those words are said to be spoken by God, whereas here they are spoken by Moses. In other words, the Lord Jesus, who uses this passage in his words concerning marriage and divorce, attributes verse 24 to God. Now the words are to be attributed to Moses, but the Lord says they were spoken by God.

It is evident that for the Lord Jesus, the things that are spoken in the Word of God are not simply the words of men, they are the words of God. So when we read the scriptures we should read them that way. We should not say simply that Moses said this, but Moses and instrumentality of the Spirit of God said this.

These words are spoken by God. When in his confessions Augustine has God saying, what my scripture says, I say, he's speaking the truth of the Word of God. What the scripture says, God says.

And we should bear that in mind when we look at the Word of God. It is the Word of God. And even though upon occasion it may be said to be the Word of Moses or the Word of Isaiah, it's always in a secondary sense.

They are the agents or instrumentalities by which the Word comes to us. But it is in its ultimate origin the Word of God. God speaks through a man.

It is not God speaking and man speaking, but it is God speaking through a man's speaking that the scriptures teach. Now the passage concludes with a reference to the fact that before the fall of man there was no corruption of the use of the sexual organs and hence no shame because of that. The man and the wife were both naked and they were not ashamed.

Their bodies were just as open and plain as the various other aspects of God's creation were. But soon things shall change. Let me sum up what I'm trying to say here then as we look at this passage.

In summary, some of the emphases of the passage are these. Priority. Priority of the man, just like the parents to the children, is taught in this age.

The woman is taken from the man. And while all men are through women, it is because Eve is taken from Adam that the Apostle Paul in the New Testament makes it plain that the man is to have the headship for this age. Now today we are living in rather strange days, I think, and all traceable to the fact that we do not study the Word of God as we should.

There is hardly a person in this room, I know, who is not acquainted with the fact that we are living in days of a strong feminist movement. Many of the aims of the movement, no doubt, are good, but many of them are not. But like so many things, the influence has been felt in Evangelicalism.

And there are some Evangelical women and some Evangelical men who contend that the Church of Jesus Christ should transform itself in order to agree with the claims of these feminist thinking people. One of the basic contentions that they make is this. Submission involves inequality.

There can be no true submission with equality. Submission necessarily means inequality. That's one of the basic planks of this movement.

Oh, how people would be helped if they would just study theology. Let me read a passage for you. You can turn there if you like.

It's in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And let's ask ourselves, is it possible for us to have submission and equality? Does submission necessarily involve inequality? Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3. But I want you to understand, Paul says, that Christ is the head of every man. Well, there is headship and there is inequality, is it not so? And the man is the head of the woman.

Well, that of course is what we are debating, so we'll pass that by. And God is the head of Christ. Now, there is submission, but is there an equality here? Why, if we are Christians, if we truly believe in the triune God, one God who subsists in three persons who are co-equal in the possession of the attributes that belong to deity, we cannot agree that God is greater than Christ in his essential being.

We must say that our Lord Jesus, as the mediator, for a specific time, surrendered the voluntary use of his divine attributes. Not his attributes, but the use of his attributes for a time as the mediatorial work is carried out. He assumed the place of submission, though he possessed, by virtue of his being, equality.

Submission is not contrary to equality. Equality may exist in a status of submission. When we say, therefore, that the man is to have the headship over the woman and the woman is to be in submission to the man, we are not saying that the woman is inferior to the man.

All women know that's not true, and most of us men know that's not true. We don't need any illustrations of that. I won't ask you what your high school grades were and what your wives were.

I won't ask you what your college grades were and what your wives were. We don't have to be told that women are equal with us. But in God's economy, headship is given by divine prerogative to the man, and the place of submission, a beautiful place, is given to the woman.

And so she acts as the church is to act to Christ, to be in submission to her head. Why should a woman obey her husband? Well, then, first of all, we would say it's the order of authority of the universe. There is God in--during this mediatorial age, there is God, there is Christ, there is man, there is the woman, there are the children.

There is an order in the universe. It is also true that women--hesitate to say this, I say it with no feeling of wanting to attack women--but it is also true that women are more liable to deception spiritually than men. Generally speaking, because there are some women who have great powers of spiritual perception, and there are some men who are dolts.

That's right. Dumped spiritually, even within the body of Christ. It's sad, but it's true.

But we're speaking generally, and so you won't think that I'm a male chauvinist pig any longer. I want to read the comment of a woman. Women are more often led into spiritual error than men.

Perhaps it is caused by her intuitive, emotional thinking. Intuitive thinking is God's gift and not to be despised, but it needs the balance of a man's reason. I should add, too, that a woman does not have to be led into error.

That's the reason God commanded her not to usurp authority over the protected from false doctrine. It is rather interesting to me that, as an amateur theologian, that there has never been a widely known woman theologian. One or two have sought to hold that position, but there have, up to this time, have always been liberal and have generally taught truths contrary to the word of God.

When the woman takes spiritual leadership in the home, it always leads to tragedy. Sarah is a beautiful illustration of that, which we shall take up later on. But she, anxious to see God's promises fulfilled, finally said to Abraham, Abraham, take Hagar as your wife and have some children in order that the promises of God might be fulfilled.

The result of that union was Ishmael and trouble for Israel down through the centuries. Oh, if she had only listened to her head. If she had only responded to the word of God.

If women would only respond to the word of God and be in the home what God intended, then he would stand with them in the fulfillment of his promises to them. I read a story this week of a woman who led another woman to the Lord, and she showed her the biblical principle of submission. So she went home to her husband and she said, okay, you're my lord and master, you big fat slob.

What do you want me to do? Now, some men are just that, and it is difficult for a woman to be in submission to them. I can understand that. I heard of a woman whose husband really embarrassed her the other day in a restaurant.

When he drank his soup, six couples got up and started to dance. Well, if you have a husband like that, it does, there is great need for divine enablement. To be in submission to such a person is difficult, I agree.

But it is to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church. And it is very helpful to remember, ladies, that your position is the position of the Church toward the Lord Jesus. But you men sitting in the audience, after all you have a much more difficult command from God to obey, and that is that you should love your wife as Christ loved the Church.

And I assure you that if you love your wife as Christ loved the Church, you will not have for very long great difficulties with submission of your wife. I want to just mention a few things and then we will close. It is evident from this passage that the sex is then a complementary.

They are heirs together of the grace of life, as Peter put it. Each have their particular place within the plan of God. The union that exists between them is to be a monogamous union.

It is the Lord who says, for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, not wives, wife. Further, this, incidentally, you have to leave before you can cleave. And so consequently, mother's apron strings need to be cut when you cleave.

But you can see also that intercourse is not to take place before marriage. A man shall leave before he cleaves. He doesn't stay and then become promiscuous in his relationships with women.

He leaves and then cleaves. It is to be a heterosexual union. He cleaves to his wife, not to some other man.

This is the scriptural pattern. It is a God-sealed union. The Lord Jesus says, that which God has united let not man put asunder.

There is no leaving and cleaving and cleaving and cleaving and cleaving as exists in our society today. And it is a union of perfect openness, as is expressed there. What a different situation we have today.

God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions, the Old Testament says. And so rather than holy matrimony, we have polygamy, easy divorce, concubinage, adultery, promiscuity, polyandry, and various other kinds of evils. We live in an era of moral pygmies, hug-string slogans of new morality, free love, free sex.

And the result is, of course, predictable guilt, cheapened personhoods, part of ourselves given away to the herd about us, unwanted pregnancies, disease, ultimately the death of children, and finally divine judgment. The Word of God speaks plainly and clearly. Let marriage be held in honor among all.

Let the marriage bed be undefiled, for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. May I say just one last word? The aim of marriage was to fulfill the cultural mandate, among other things. Be fruitful in multiply and fill the earth.

The purposes now are quite different. There are people today who marry out of lower motivations than the biblical one. We have, for example, people seeking happiness just for the two of us.

We want to live out our love for each other. And then there are some who marry for money or just because it's a shrewd business proposition. But marriage is designed to fulfill the plan and program of God for the human race.

And if your marriage is based upon something less than that, it's not based upon the best. Marriage is the only bliss of paradise that has survived the fall, but it can only survive itself if it is carried out according to the divine principles. It is a divine institution to be carried out by the divine principles.

May God help us to do that. You're here and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's obvious you do not have the capacity for a marriage according to the will of God.

You need to be born again through the work that the Lord Jesus did when he went into that deep sleep of Calvary's cross, crying out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And has made it possible through the shedding of his blood and the breaking of his bones in the sense of his death for men to have redemption, for the bread to be formed, for the church to be formed through the power of the Holy Spirit and brought to him. May God so work to that end in your life. May you come to Christ.

The invitation is open to you, whoever you are, if you recognize your sin and see Christ as the Savior through the work that he accomplished. Let's stand for the benediction. Father, we are so grateful to thee for these words from Holy Scripture that so beautifully express in these vivid pictures the truths that govern the lives of all of us today.

We give thee thanks for the Lord Jesus, our great groom. And we pray, O God, that our relationships to our wives and husbands may reflect truly the glory of the redemptive program of our great God. May grace, mercy, and peace abide with us for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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