

What Is Marriage? by Lloyd Biddle

In 2005, the Supreme Court of the state of Massachusetts re-defined marriage to include relationships between same sex couples and the mayor of San Francisco for a time authorized the marriage of same sex couples. Because of the onslaught of attacks on the biblical construct of marriage, we need to look back to Scripture to re-examine what God defined marriage to be. Let's review Genesis 2:20-25:

The Holy Bible, New King James Version

Genesis 2:20 through Genesis 2:25

20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 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.”

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

In Verse 21 we see that God specifically made a woman for Adam out of his own flesh and brought her to him. When God saw that Adam was in need of a suitable helper (verses 18 and 20), He made a woman for Him and joined them in marriage before Himself to love and care for each other for life. Marriage is a covenant, a binding and solemn commitment, between one man and one woman before God to be joined to each other for life. Marriage is the first institution that God established among men. The marriage of one man to one woman founded the human race.

When Jesus pondered the sacredness of this institution He said these words in Mark 19:4-6: “Haven't you read, He replied, that at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined let man not separate.”

Brothers and sisters, remember something very important. In marriage, God takes the husband and wife, one male and one female, and makes them one person. This mysterious, supernatural and sacred unification is something no mayor or Supreme Court ought try to corrupt. In addition, too many husbands and wives today believe that they

are the ones who put their marriages in place. Since they put the marriage together, the logic goes, they can take the marriage apart. Scripture teaches something completely different.

Husbands and wives consent to marriage, but God puts married people together in a supernatural way. The oneness of a married couple is intensely physical, mental and spiritual. Physically speaking, the body of each married person belongs to their spouse. The husband and the wife are pledged to meet each other's sexual needs and to remain faithful to each other.

Mentally they are joined because they must make unified decisions on everything from finances to child rearing for the benefit of the family. Spiritually they are joined because it is God who has made them "one flesh". In other words, marital oneness is an act of God by the Spirit. The souls of the two are tied together in a supernatural way.

The word "united" used in verse 5 of Matthew 19 means in Greek to glue to, to adhere to, to cling to or to be faithful to. This kind of godly connection can overcome job losses, sickness, heartaches from the children and hurt feelings because it is based on the love, compassion, mercy and truth of God Himself. When a husband and wife marry, God unites them into a flesh and blood relationship that is even superior to that of a parent to child relationship.

In verse Matthew 19:6, Jesus used the word "joined". In the Greek, it means to be yoked together, to be coupled, and to be conjoined. The yoke was a harness used to unite oxen together by the neck and shoulder so that they would work together in plowing a field. The idea is that the husband and wife are designed to live and work together in harmony till death. There should be no pulling against each other, which causes pain for each member. Consider conjoined twins who are attached at the chest, any surgical procedure to separate them risks their lives. In the same manner, the divorce of a married couple brings death to God's union and great spiritual damage to the souls of the divorced. God's design of holy matrimony leaves no room for self-seeking individuals, courts, mayors or any other authorities to tamper with it.

After nearly 18 years of joyful marriage to my wife Debbie, I am still grappling with my understanding of the wonderful, sanctified mystery of oneness that I enjoy with her. I can say with certainty that it is the Spirit of God working in each of us that makes our oneness authentic, enduring, pleasurable and powerful. Praise be to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the unity He has given all of us in marriage. May we protect our marriages and work to protect the sacred position of the institution of marriage in the world we live through the power of the gospel.