

The Glory of God Revealed in Marriage

Ephesians 5:29-32

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**God created many physical realities with the express purpose
of illustrating great spiritual truths.**

Grasses/flowers – briefness of life:

The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
the wind blows over it and it is gone... (Psalms 103:15-16)

“All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever.” (Isaiah 40:6-8)

God’s care for His creation:

“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! (Luke 12:27-28)

Stars: immensity and power of God

Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. (Isaiah 40:26)

Abraham’s offspring as promised by God:

[God] took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” (Genesis 15:5)

Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:7-9)

I. Marriage is a sacred and mystical union where two become one. (v. 29-31)

“... Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (Matthew 19:6b)

II. God’s greatest purpose for marriage is to illustrate His relationship to His Church. (v. 32)

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27)

1) There are distinct roles for each of us in this relationship.

a. Christ is the husband.

I will betroth you to me forever;

I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
in love and compassion.

I will betroth you in faithfulness,

and you will acknowledge the LORD. (Hosea 2:19-20)

For your Maker is your husband—

the LORD Almighty is his name—

the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;

he is called the God of all the earth. (Isaiah 54:5)

...Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Ephesians 5:23)

b. The Church is His Bride.

As a young man marries a young woman,

so will your Builder marry you;

as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,

so will your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:5)

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom...” (Matthew 25:1-13)

I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (2 Cor. 11:2)

III. Marriage is intended to illustrate spiritual truths.

1) Marriage is intended to reveal the permanence of God's faithfulness to us.

Though the mountains be shaken
and the hills be removed,
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken
nor my covenant of peace be removed,"
says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

"...for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5b)

2) Marriage is intended to reveal God's anguish and anger over spiritual unfaithfulness.

"This is what the LORD says:

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me
and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown.

Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest;
all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,"
declares the LORD.

Hear the word of the LORD, you descendants of Jacob,
all you clans of Israel.

This is what the LORD says:

"What fault did your ancestors find in me,
that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves. (Jeremiah 2:2-5)

"Long ago you broke off your yoke
and tore off your bonds;
you said, 'I will not serve you!'

Indeed, on every high hill
and under every spreading tree
you lay down as a prostitute.

I had planted you like a choice vine
of sound and reliable stock.

How then did you turn against me
into a corrupt, wild vine?

Although you wash yourself with soap
and use an abundance of cleansing powder,
the stain of your guilt is still before me,"

declares the Sovereign LORD.

“How can you say, ‘I am not defiled;
I have not run after the Baals’?

See how you behaved in the valley;
consider what you have done.

You are a swift she-camel
running here and there,
a wild donkey accustomed to the desert,
sniffing the wind in her craving—
in her heat who can restrain her?

Any males that pursue her need not tire themselves;
at mating time they will find her.

Do not run until your feet are bare
and your throat is dry.

But you said, ‘It’s no use!
I love foreign gods,
and I must go after them.’ (Jeremiah 2:20-25)

“If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him and marries another man,
should he return to her again?
Would not the land be completely defiled?
But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers—
would you now return to me?”

declares the LORD.

“Look up to the barren heights and see.
Is there any place where you have not been ravished?
By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers,
sat like a nomad in the desert.

You have defiled the land
with your prostitution and wickedness.
Therefore the showers have been withheld,
and no spring rains have fallen.
Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute;
you refuse to blush with shame.

Have you not just called to me:
‘My Father, my friend from my youth,
will you always be angry?
Will your wrath continue forever?’

This is how you talk,
but you do all the evil you can.” (Jeremiah 3:1-5)

“I thought to myself,
‘I would love to treat you as my own children!’

I wanted nothing more than to give you this beautiful land—
the finest possession in the world.
I looked forward to your calling me ‘Father,’
and I wanted you never to turn from me.
But you have been unfaithful to me, you people of Israel!
You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband.
I, the LORD, have spoken.” (Jeremiah 3:19-20)

3) Marriage is intended to reveal the depths of God’s forgiveness toward us.

Go, proclaim this message toward the north:
“‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the LORD,
‘I will frown on you no longer,
for I am faithful,’ declares the LORD,
‘I will not be angry forever. (Jeremiah 3:12)

“Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:21-22)

IV. God’s marriage to His people is cause for great celebration.

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:
“Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.
Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.”

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)

Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” (Rev. 19:6-9)