Celebration of Marriage: Marriage as God's Gift

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" *(Genesis 2:18, ESV).*

God originally introduces marriage as a gift to meet Adam's needs.

1. God Meets Our Need for Companionship

- Living together
- Caring for each other
- Protecting each other

"It's not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18, ESV). Through the creation of Eve, God perfectly provides for Adam's need for companionship. As they live together, serve and protect each other, God provides for this need He has wisely built into them both.

"Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" *(1 Corinthians 13:6-7, ESV).*

2. God Meets Our Need for Cooperation

- In bearing one another's burdens
- In raising children
- In managing the family and home

Marriage provides a cooperative team to complete the work of leading a family. God's design includes husband and wife cooperating together in taking care of one another, bearing and raising children and managing all the aspects of family life.

3. God Meets Our Need for Growth

- Through the correction of our spouse
- Through the support of our spouse
- Through the prayers of our spouse

God expects His people to grow. "*For this is the will of God, your satisfaction: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God"* *(1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, ESV).* Marriage provides a great place for growth. Through loving

correction, support and fervent prayer, spouses can be a great means of sanctification for each other, even as they love each other in the state they are in.

"*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word*" *(Ephesians 5:25-26, ESV).*

"*That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be be loved*" *(Matthew Henry).*

Celebration of Marriage: Marriage as God's Pattern

"*He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord*" *(Proverbs 18:22, ESV).*

The future wedding supper of the Lamb reminds us of the many blessings of marriage now.

1. Marriage Shows Us the Value of God's Promises

Through marriage, we learn the value of being in a relationship with someone who always keeps their promises. In marriage, we feel safe and secure when our spouse keeps their promises. God always keeps his promises and through marriage we taste the value of being in a relationship with the trustworthy God.

"*I will never leave you, nor forsake you*" *(Hebrews 13:5, ESV).*

2. Marriage Shows Us God's Love

Marriage clearly demonstrates the wonderful gift love is. All married people know that when love is missing in a marriage, things are hard. But when love abounds, things are good.

In the same way a healthy marriage requires sacrificial love, God loves his people sacrificially. Those who know what it is to be loved by a spouse have a small taste of what it is to be loved by God.

"*We love because God first loved us*" *(1 John 4:19, ESV).*

3. Marriage Shows Us God's Reward

The Bible uses marriage to describe the future relationship Jesus Christ will enjoy with his people. Of all the different types of relationships, God chooses marriage to describe His eternal relationship with His covenant people.

Like a wedding celebration, God will one day intimately unite with his people. All the beauty of a marriage will be heightened and exaggerated in Christ's future marriage to His church. That is a great reason to celebrate.

Celebration of Marriage: Marriage as God's Blessing

"And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'" (Revelation 19:9, ESV).

1. Celebrating the Bridegroom

John describes Jesus, the bridegroom, as "the Lamb." This name reminds of His sacrificial work—giving himself up to pay for the sins of his bride (the church). The bridegroom has made every preparation for this celebration.

1. The bridegroom is celebrated in that all He has given to His bride—including His very life—redeeming, saving and sanctifying her.
2. The bridegroom is celebrated in His great love for His bride.
3. The bridegroom is celebrated in upholding His bride through her many earthly trials, bringing them to an end, and finally purifying her—making her a worthy bride for Himself.

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:30, ESV).

Husbands are to be sacrificing leaders who provide for their wives. Like Christ, good husbands sacrifice love and minister to their wives faithfully.

"Every marriage, everywhere in the world, is a picture of Christ and the church. Because of sin and rebellion, many of these pictures are slanderous lies concerning Christ. But a husband can never stop talking about Christ and the church. If he is obedient to God, he is preaching the truth; if he does not love his wife, he is speaking apostasy and lies—but he is always talking. If he deserts his wife, he is saying that this is the way Christ deserts His bride—a lie. If he is harsh with his wife and strikes her, he is saying that Christ is harsh with the church—another lie. If he sleeps with another woman, he is an adulterer, and a blasphemer as well. How could Christ love someone other than His own Bride? It is astonishing how, for a few moments of pleasure, faithless men can bring themselves to slander the faithfulness of Christ in such a way" (Douglas Wilson, Reforming Marriage, 25).

2. Celebrating the Bride

John records that those who are invited to this future marriage supper are blessed. The bride is blessed in several ways.

- The bride is blessed in that she was invited to this marriage supper and she accepted this wonderful invitation.
- The bride is blessed in that she has waited patiently and kept herself ready and waiting for her marriage.
- *"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42).*
- The bride is blessed in that she had faith for salvation.
- The bride is blessed in that she has put on the pure, white wedding garment of sanctification.

Wives are to be pure, faithful companions to their husbands. As the church in this passage diligently prepares, so also wives should prepare to serve their husbands with purity and faithfulness.

3. Celebrating the Blessedness of Marriage

- Our marriages are a picture of our future eternal relationship with Christ. As marriage is meant to be the richest of all earthly relationships, so also our relationship with Christ will be the richest of all eternal ones.

- Marriage is a blessed state because of the great value of the bride and groom and the permanence of their commitment to each other. Today's marriages reflect this beauty when a man and a woman maintain their commitment before God and lovingly serve one another all their lives.

- Those married to Jesus will be infinitely happy. The best marriages on earth are sources of great happiness, delight and companionship. And this is the great blessing of our passage.

"*My beloved is mine and I am his" (Song 2:16, ESV).*

The more our marriages reflect the future blessedness of the marriage of Jesus Christ and His people, the more worthy they are of celebrating.