

“A HUSBAND’S ROLE: THE GREAT MYSTERY”

Isaiah 54:1-8; Ephesians 5:32

What does the story of the two husbands suggest? A husband can only give the love he himself has already received from Christ.

I. THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE IDENTIFIED: CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

A. Christ and His Church is the Grand Reality of Marriage

All the pieces in our passage beginning at v. 22, move toward their climax in verse 32. *Book of Common Prayer*: “...signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church...”

B. The Mystery is Not Any Lesser Purpose

Gen 2:18; *ezer* -- without Eve Adam could not rule or reproduce. Companionship an added blessing, but not unique to the marriage relationship. Absolutely one-of-a-kind = monogamous, sexual, procreative relationship.

What does Genesis mean by “good” or “not good”? Defined by context; e.g., 1:4, 10. Without male and female God’s purpose for man would not be accomplished. Alone but no hint that he is lonely. Text does not imply that being single is “bad.” Even Sproul needs corrective; the greatest happiness and the most pain only for marrieds? Isaiah 54:4-5. “Better half” is misleading. Verse 31: $1 + 1 = 1$, not $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$.

Three purposes of marriage (*Book of Common Prayer*): 1) procreation; 2) remedy against sin; 3) mutual society, help, and comfort. WCF 24.2 makes #3 the new #1. Reactionary? “Mutual help” still doesn’t necessarily imply marital expectations today. But all three come together in the gospel mandate. Better than having babies: spiritual parent (Gal 4:19); better than human companionship: co-laborer with Christ (1 Cor 3:9); help to holiness.

Why is order important? Have right expectations. Don’t expect spouse to meet all your “emotional needs.” Be thankful; content.

C. The Mystical Union Ties This Together

Marriage (illustrated by the one flesh relationship) illustrates the union of Christ and His church. Col 3:1. Something far grander and more profound than most people realize is going on. Christ is made King over all things for the sake of His bride (Eph 1:20-23); Because Christ is supremely worth knowing, we evangelize; because we are complete in Christ, we do not look to someone else to complete us; because Christ calls us to holiness, we need prevention against immorality. Husbands must know this higher calling. Not too much to ask of a Christian man who is filled with the Spirit of God. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, but no taxes to pay!

II. THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE INTERPRETED: TWO AND YET ONE IN CHRIST

A. The Great Mystery is Beyond the Merely Human

Mystery: must be revealed by God’s sovereign initiative (1:9; cf. 3:3-4). Latin Vulgate: *sacramentum*; “secret” (LXX Dan 2:18) not “sacrament.” What does “this” refer to? Not physical union of verse 31, which illustrates the spiritual union already in v. 29-30. Why he adds, “*But* I am speaking of Christ and His church.” The contribution of verse 32 is the word “mystery.”

B. The Mystical Union is Indeed a Great Mystery!

How the two – Christ’s bride and Himself -- can become one. How the church can be distinct from Christ – the object of His love – yet so intertwined with Him that He is our breath, our life, our soul. How He can be so far above us and beyond us, but lives in our mind more than our own thoughts. How I can be most like myself by being most like Christ. Verse 30. Hamlet.

Conclusion