THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE

by

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“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

—Genesis 2:24

Before the state, before the Church, God created the oldest institution on this planet— the institution of marriage. It is the oldest and the most universal of all of God’s institutions. Wherever you go in this world today, whatever continent, whatever nation, you will find that men and women are joined together in the bonds of matrimony and are rearing families.

Today I want to talk to you about the importance of marriage at a very critical time in the life of marriage. It is remarkable that in the entire history of the human race, what has happened in just the last few years—a millisecond in the history of mankind—is a massive effort to destroy that institution. Even more remarkable is this effort is making ominously large strides forward.

But as far as the biblical record is concerned, God created one man for one woman. So it was in the beginning. It is really awesome to think, gentlemen, that God took a part of a man and tailor-made woman for him. We were made for each other by divine design. So it was seen in the Old Testament, and also the New.

Christ performed His first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. When Christ was asked about the departures in the Old Testament concerning some who had taken numbers of wives, He said that was because of the hardness of their hearts. But it was not so from the beginning, and
He brought them back to the very creation of the human race and what God has done. It is of historical and biblical importance, and basic and essential to our culture.

This nation has been built upon good families. That has also been the strength of every nation. Even Napoleon Bonaparte said that what was needed was good mothers …women in families rearing children, and with that France would be strong. He was a very perceptive man. It is important for culture, it is important for the individuals, it is important for the husbands, and it is important for the wives.

**NO-FAULT ASSAULT ON MARRIAGE**

Marriage has been under a three-fold assault like it has never seen before in the last few decades. There was the no-fault assault, where lawyers (politicians) decided they were just going to make it easier to get a divorce. The result was the skyrocketing divorce rate in America. One recent sociologist said that there are mountains of evidence that show there never was a law passed that brought so much misery and unhappiness to so many people as no-fault divorce. Some of you have probably been through that. It has been, indeed, tragic.

I have talked to many people who have told me, “We just don’t love each other any more. Things have gotten so bad we can’t go on. We just have to get a divorce. After all, didn’t we get married just to be happy?” With that self-centered, self-indulgent view of hedonism, as we find prevalent today, it seems a perfectly logical thing to get divorced. “I am not happy now. If I get a divorce, I am going to be happy in the future.”

Like all of the lies of Satan, time generally proves them to be false. What have the studies shown? There have been more sociological studies on marriage and divorce and families in the last few decades than ever before. They have shown that couples who were at the point of getting a divorce and were about to throw in the towel, five years later, of those who went ahead with the divorce, 22 percent were happy. Of those who decided to stick it out, seek help and counseling and try to fix their marriage (which for most seemed probably hopeless), five years later, 80 percent said they were happy. God’s way is the right way. Unfortunately, only too often we discover that too late.

Studies have shown that married couples, more than divorced or single people, are generally happier and have more wealth; they, on average, have better homes; they feel their lives are more fulfilling; (note this) and they have more fulfilling sex lives than single people—in spite of what is portrayed on many TV programs on the air. No, God’s way is always the right way.

**CHILDREN**

Of course, when asked, “What about the children?” we were told by the no-fault divorce people, “They will bounce back.” They are just sort of like basketballs. They bounce back. What have the studies shown? Sociological studies have shown that the children of divorce do worse in school. They drop out more, they make worse grades, they get into more trouble.
Keep in mind, these are averages, and I am not trying to put a guilt trip on anyone. Some of you may have been divorced when you had no power to do anything about it. You were deserted, abandoned, or whatever, and you are doing the best you can to rear your children. Some of you are doing an outstanding job, but, on average, children drop out of school more, make worse grades, and get into more trouble. They are expelled from school more often, they are more likely to take drugs, they are more likely to drink alcohol more frequently and they commit more crimes while still in school. No, that is not a very high bounce, is it?

Then, in life itself, they don’t do as well either. On average, they commit more crime later. They make less money. They are more unhappy. And though they despise divorce, they are more likely to get one than those that have lived in intact families.

You may remember a longitudinal study that was begun about eighty or ninety years ago in California by Dr. Terman. He examined the lives of fifteen hundred children for their entire lifetimes. It was an eighty-year, longitudinal study. You say, “That must have been a very old doctor.” Yes. He died long before the study was over. Other doctors picked it up. These young people called themselves “Termites,” after his name.

What were the results? Again, some of these fifteen hundred children, came from broken homes; others came from intact homes. The one thing they discovered was that on average, children of broken homes lived four years less. You want to get a divorce? On average, you are hacking four years off the life of your children. Some say, “It’s a personal matter between your mother and me and nothing to do with you.” Yes, it has something very definitely to do with you. It’s going to shorten your life, on average. Indeed, it is very important for children. The basic reason for marriage was that men and women might not only have their own lives fulfilled and strengthened, and might grow in grace together, but also, they would provide a safe and healthy place to rear children in this world.

FEMINIST ASSAULT

There is not only the no-fault assault, but then there was the Feminist assault upon marriage. You remember that, don’t you? The Feminists said that marriage was a jail cell, a prison for women, and so they abandoned it. They said it was a terrible thing for women, and all of their fulfillment in life was going to depend on their not getting married.

As you may recall, several of the leaders and founders of that movement lived long enough to say that the movement was a great failure. Many of these women were rushing, as the biological clock was ticking, to get married and to have children. They found that as important as a spreadsheet might have been in their business, babies loved back and accounting sheets did not. The Feminist movement was a disastrous attack, a failed effort.

HOMOSEXUAL ASSAULT

The most current one is the homosexual assault on marriage. This is more serious than any before it, because here they are trying to destroy the very institution of marriage—they are trying to redefine marriage. Throughout the entire history of the world, marriage has been a union between one man and one woman. The President said in his declaration last week: Marriage is a
union between one man and one woman in America. He hoped it would be that way, and efforts were being made to protect it.

Marriage is in great need of protection. Ten years ago, there was not a single nation in the world that allowed anything other than a union between a man and a woman. There are some people that just can’t be married to other people. You can’t marry your sister or your mother or your daughter. You can’t marry the household pet. There are some things you just can’t do. Always it has been so that marriage is a union between a man and a woman. That is the way God designed it in the beginning.

What has happened? Today there are three countries that allow marriages between two men or two women. The first was the Netherlands, and then Belgium, and now, more recently, Canada.

And in our own country the Supreme Court of Massachusetts recently ruled that the State Legislature there must re-write state law to make same-sex marriage legal and it won’t end there. Already the homosexuals, through their legal arms, have instituted suits on all 37 of the states in America which have passed DOMA laws—the Defense of Marriage Acts. They plan to take them to court. They are using small groups of unelected officials in the courts to overthrow an institution which has existed as long as mankind —and they have been amazingly successful.

What does a homosexual marriage look like? The longest term we have to take a look at it is in the Netherlands. One sociologist made a study and found that the average marriage between two men lasts 1.5 years. Furthermore, during that time, men have eight or more other sexual partners per year in that one and a half years. That would mean that during the time of that “marriage,” this man has had an adulterous relationship with many other men. That is not something they would like to have known, but that is the fact.

In the United States, studies show that 75 percent of heterosexual married couples report being faithful to their vows. Again, from our media you would not suppose that it would be five percent, much less 75 percent!

It is interesting. What is it that the homosexuals want? Is it just that they want to get married? No. A number of their leaders have said that they don’t really want to get married. All of the legal entanglement that that involves is something that would take away their freedom, which is the essence of their whole lives. The idea of “until death do you part,” and monogamous relationships is utterly abominable to them.

Then, what do they want? They have said what they want is to destroy marriage altogether. They don’t want to become like us, as so many naïve people think. What they want to do is make us like them, and open the door to all kinds of sexual chaos. If two men can get married, what about three or five? That is called polyamory, and many loves and group marriage and all such things as this are already in the wings and waiting to be filed in our courts. It would produce absolute cultural chaos in this country. Mother and father, husband and wife would be old-fashioned in a generation. This nation would be unrecognizable. This is the most dangerous attack on marriage the world has ever seen.
WHAT CAN BE DONE?

What can be done? It appears that the courts cannot be counted on to act responsibly. Even the DOMAs, the Defense of Marriage Acts, which are passed by the legislatures—of our fifty states, thirty-seven are already vulnerable. You may recall the decision by the Supreme Court to overturn the case in Texas, where the law there was that sodomy was a crime. That law was passed by the legislature of Texas. It was overturned by the Supreme Court with the stroke of a pen. It is believed that would be true of all of the DOMA acts, so that marriage would not be protected in any state in the union.

What can be done? The experts say the only thing that can be done is a constitutional amendment. There is at hand a hundred proponents and signers in the House of Representative of the Federal Marriage Amendment, which says, in effect: Marriage in the United States of America is a union between a man and a woman. Passing a constitutional amendment is a very difficult thing but not passing this one would be disastrous. I hope that you will pray about it. You will certainly be hearing more about it. We have been working with all kinds of other Christian organizations to do what we can to help pass the Federal Marriage Amendment, and we will yet do more. You need to first pray about it. That is vitally important. I hope you will make marriage in America a regular matter of prayer.

Second, contact your congressman and senators and tell them that you want the Federal Marriage Amendment passed, because marriage is too important to be destroyed in America. We all need to work to strengthen our own marriages, which have been weakened by the various other two assaults I mentioned before—the no-fault, the Feminists, and now the homosexual assault on marriage.

Marriage is vitally important. It was obviously felt to be so by God, who made it the first institution He created, and that with His own hands. We need in our day to defend it as best that we can.

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PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we are grieved at the lengths to which ungodly people will go to attack the basic institutions and virtues and principles upon which this nation was built. We ask, Lord, that you will cause their efforts to come to naught. Help us to be faithful to pray that our Congress may act, that the states may confirm the Federal Marriage Amendment solidifying marriage as a union between a man and a woman. We ask all of this in the powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon delivered by Dr. D. James Kennedy on October 19, 2003, at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.