

Sacrifices Pleasing to God: Marriage (Hebrews 13:4)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (2/11/2018)

Introduction

1. The exhortations of 13:1–17 are not random closing comments but are designed to provide the reader guidance in his obedience as Christ’s priest-king in offering to God acceptable sacrifices in His new covenant temple, the church.
2. The enemy wants nothing more than for believers to be distracted from this singular way of demonstrating Christ to the world.
3. The service of worship exercised by priest-kings is not a voluntary endeavor. There is a price to pay, and God exacts that price when and as He will because He is sovereign over all things. That price is plainly revealed and the cost is *suffering* (2 Timothy 2:11–13; Hebrews 5:7, 8; Philippians 3:10).
4. Today we begin the next section dealing with two great evils that block our ability to love others and show Christ-like compassion to those in need—*moral uncleanness* (v. 4) and *covetousness* (vv. 5, 6).

I. The Purpose of Marriage

- A. Strong marriages and healthy families are God’s foundation stones of human culture and society.
 1. Genesis 2:18 states the importance of marriage with two words: *good (tobe)* and *helper (ezer)*.
 - a. Genesis one uses the term good to describe God’s pleasure in all that He created (*seven* times, indicating perfection and completeness), however in Genesis 2:18 it is used with the negative, implying that Adam’s singular existence was not good—not for his happiness, welfare, or benefit. Adam needed a companion to complete and fulfill him.
 - b. God’s remedy was to make a helper for him, a woman—“*bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh*” (v. 23). Here is a partnership designed to bring true welfare into human society. Destroy marriage, and society cannot survive.
 2. The principle of marriage is laid down by God for all time (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6).
- B. The *church* cannot exist in the world without strong marriages and families (Ephesian 5:25–33). Paul gives this plain instruction for husbands and wives because of it is an essential to the welfare of the church and it typifies the great and glorious marriage of Christ and His people (Revelation 19:6–8).

II. The Assault on Marriage

The enemy must destroy marriage and family if he is to destroy love and compassion, the sacrificial service of worship that is due to God by His king-priests.

- A. One Hebrew term that is translated *curse* relates to being *trifling* or *light*—to *dishonor* something (Genesis 12:3). The apostle argues that marriage is to be held in honor among all.
 1. Marriage is held in honor when God-ordained authority is upheld (Titus 2:4, 5).

2. Marriage is held in honor purity and holiness are preserved with diligent obedience to biblical instruction on marriage. There are many “believers” who mock God’s standards for husbands and wives because biblical marriage is regarded as old fashioned and outmoded.

B. Moral sins that destroy marriage and brings judgment from God.

1. Adultery brings a curse and destroys the marriage. In Scripture, adultery is linked to idolatry (Romans 2:22).
2. Pornography dishonors the wife and destroys sexual intimacy (Matthew 5:27–30).
3. Feminism and the feminization of men because it trifles with God’s plain order of authority in the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22, 24; 1 Peter 3:1, 5; Colossians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8–10).
4. Marriage is cursed by all forms of sexual perversion such as pedophilia, homosexuality, incest, or bestiality (Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 27:20–23; 1 Cor. 6:9–11).

What can we take away?

1. How active are we to hold marriage honorable before all men. Statistics show that the divorce rate in America is near 50 percent. Some have disputed that claim, but the disputers fail to take into account that millions of unmarried couples are living together (7.5 million in 2010, a 138% increase over 1990. 40% of these couples have children).
2. Are we willing to buck the modern trends and suffer reproach, being reviled and rejected by friends, family, and community because we desire to identify with Jesus Christ, who also suffered these things (1 Peter 2:23: “*When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*”).
3. In order to obey Christ and offer to Him acceptable service of worship as priest-kings in His new covenant temple, the church, we must hold marriage in honor and vigorously oppose all immoral and adulterous sins that defile the marriage bed.