

**HEBREWS 48
(Hebrews 13:4)**

**Purity in the Kingdom
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(July 22, 2012)**

INTRODUCTION

We have come to the practical part of the book of Hebrews. We have studied all the theory. We have contrasted the two religions – Judaism and Christianity. And we have found that Christianity is much better. No matter which part of that old religion is compared to Christ and Christianity, it always comes up woefully short. If you compare the deliverer under Judaism (Moses) to Christ, Christ is much better. If you compare the priests under Judaism to Christ, Christ is much better. If you compare the sacrifices under Judaism, why, Christ's sacrifice is much better. If you compare the mercy seat under Judaism to the mercy seat under Christ, Christ's mercy seat at the throne of God in heaven is much better than the Jewish mercy seat which was in a little cubicle on earth.

And there were human kings that ruled over the people of Israel. And all of these kings were imperfect. Most of these kings were wicked men and they caused the people to worship idols. But Jesus is a better king. He is a most righteous king and he will not cause his people to worship idols. Rather, he will cause his people to worship the true God.

There was an old, imperfect kingdom. It was imperfect for several reasons. It was imperfect first of all because it was the product of the Old Covenant. It was the Old Covenant that created the kingdom of Israel. And Hebrews has shown that the Old Covenant was faulty.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Hebrews 8:7

That old Jewish kingdom was imperfect because it was earthly and Hebrews has made it clear that all the heroes of faith always sought a heavenly kingdom. That old Jewish kingdom was imperfect because it was made up of unregenerate people. But Christ's kingdom is made up of

regenerate people. That old Jewish kingdom was imperfect because there was always an imperfect king sitting on the throne. But in Christ's kingdom there is a perfect King sitting on the throne.

And this King, Jesus Christ, brought in a better kingdom. Everything in the book of Hebrews points to something better. And the kingdom of Christ is so much better than that kingdom under Judaism.

You will discover here in Hebrews 12:28 that when you receive Christ by faith, you also receive his kingdom. It says,

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved . . .

When we are saved we enter into the kingdom of Christ. This idea is expressed in Colossians.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Colossians 1:13

Now the kingdom from which you came was a dark kingdom. There was no light there. Everyone stumbled around in the dark. In fact, everyone in that kingdom was blind. And that old serpent Satan sat on the throne of that kingdom and he laughed at our blindness as we stumbled around in ignorance and despair.

But Jesus came along and translated us out of that dark kingdom. And he translated us into a different kind of kingdom. It is a kingdom where righteousness and holiness reign.

Now many would like to have the benefits of the kingdom – eternal joy and happiness in heaven. Why who wouldn't want that? But few there are who have any interest in righteousness and holiness. Righteousness and holiness is the very nature of Christ's kingdom. And there are principles of living in Christ's kingdom. And all of Christ's subjects live by these principles.

Jesus doesn't allow murders and fornications and coveting in his kingdom. Jesus will not have liars and thieves and cheats in his kingdom.

This is quite a different kingdom than Satan's kingdom which now reigns on the earth.

Now when we come to Hebrews 13 the writer gives us a glimpse of some of the major principles in the gospel kingdom of Christ. And if anyone claims to know Christ and to be in this kingdom, then these principles of living apply.

Last week we saw the first and chief principle of living in the kingdom of Christ. And that principle is found in verse one of chapter 13. And the principle is that we should love one another. All other laws and requirements in Christ's kingdom are comprehended in this one principle – love one another. And the idea is that if we are loving one another then we are fulfilling the law of Christ.

If you are loving your neighbor, then you do not steal from him. If you love your wife, then you don't commit adultery. So, loving one another is mentioned first here, because it is the chief requirement in the kingdom of Christ.

The second requirement of the kingdom in Hebrews 13 - Purity

But when we come to verse four, we find the second principle of the kingdom. And I have named this principle the principle of purity. And specifically, the writer refers to sexual purity.

Now in the world that we live in and maybe especially in the culture that we live in we are absolutely bombarded with sexual provocation. Everyone sells their products by ads with sexual overtones. You can't watch a movie without encountering sexual innuendo and outright nudity. In our American culture, fornication and adultery is not only condoned, but it is virtually expected. If you are sixteen years old today then you are a weirdo and an outcast unless you are sexually active.

There is hardly a marriage anymore that has not been invaded by the sin of adultery. It is just what the culture expects. It is what the culture encourages.

But look what our text says.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (v.4)

Sexual sins have always been front and center in human history. It is much more open and pervasive now because it comes right into your home with the internet and with satellite and cable TV. But don't think that sexual sins are something new.

In the Old Testament, it was common for men to engage prostitutes and to have a whole assortment of concubines and then to have multiple wives. In the time of Paul, there was a heathen temple in Corinth which history records was famous for its 1000 temple prostitutes. And people engaged in prostitution as a part of their religious worship.

Sex has always been a front and center sin. And it appears that sexual sins are among the most egregious sins to God. I want to show you a few verses in which it appears that fornication is most egregious to God.

Romans 1:29 - Acts of unrighteousness are listed and fornication is first.

I Corinthians 6:9 - Sexual sins are listed first.

I Corinthians 10:7, 8 - Fornication is associated with idolatry.

Galatians 5:19-21 – Sexual sins are listed first.

Ephesians 5:1-5 – Fornication is listed first.

Colossians 3:5 – Fornication is listed first.

Now some may ask, "Why. Why does God so strictly forbid fornication and adultery and all such sins?" Let me just offer a few reasons.

- (1) Fornication appears to be a form of idolatry. (I Cor. 10:7, 8)
- (2) Fornication is self-destructive. (I Cor.6:18)
- (3) Fornication and adultery destroys homes, marriages and health.
- (4) Fornication is dishonoring to Christ. (I Cor.6:15)

For these reasons,

- I. Marriage is an honorable institution.

Now in our culture, marriage is coming into disrepute. People don't marry anymore, they just live together. Marriage is no longer a sacred institution to most people. It is something to be discarded. It is something to

be bypassed. It is something to be avoided. It is something to be despised. But the writer of Hebrews says that marriage is an honorable institution.

It is honorable first of all because;

A. God the Father personally and directly instituted marriage.

God created Adam and God understood that it was not a good thing that Adam was alone. On the other hand, it was a good thing that Adam should have a companion. So, God created Eve and Adam and Eve became one flesh.

God the Father, in the very beginning, established the ideal state of both man and woman and that ideal state was not a lonely isolation but a comfortable and compatible union with another person.

And it says in Genesis 2:22 that God brought Eve to Adam. God himself walked Eve down the aisle there in the Garden of Eden and God gave Eve to Adam.

So, we certainly see that God the Father honored the marriage of the first man and the first woman.

But also note that,

B. God the Son honored marriage.

Jesus not only attended the wedding at Cana, but he also performed his first public miracle on this occasion. I don't know who the happy couple was, but Jesus highly honored them by beginning the miracles of his public ministry at their wedding. (John 2:9)

Jesus spoke a parable one day in Matthew 22:2 and in that parable he compared the kingdom of God to a marriage. What high praise for the institution of marriage.

Furthermore, Jesus once said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

C. The Holy Spirit of God inspired Paul to write that marriage is a type of the union between Christ and his church.

Listen to Ephesians 5:31, 32.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

God has placed a tremendous importance to the institution of marriage, not only because of the many benefits of the institution, but also because it is a beautiful picture of Christ and his church. Of course, in the Scriptures Christ is said to be the Husband of His people and his people are his bride. And of course total and permanent fidelity between God and his bride is most important. Of course Christ has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) And Christ is faithful in every way to his church. How it must grieve him when his church strays into various acts of unfaithfulness.

It seems to me that God has placed something in the heart of man that causes the most intense pain whenever the marriage vows are broken. Women and men will sob uncontrollably when they discover that their spouse has been unfaithful. And God has put such pain in the heart so that we would not treat divorce lightly. He has authorized marriage and he intends that it should be permanent.

Now we have seen that marriage is an honorable institution and is authorized by God. Now let's take a look at,

II. The reasons for marriage.

The first reason for marriage is for,

A. The propagation of children. This is its most obvious and normal purpose.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created He them.

Gen.1:27

Furthermore, God told Adam and Eve, *Be fruitful and multiply.*

We sometimes refer to marriage as matrimony. Matrimony means “motherage” because marriage results in women becoming mothers. This is one of the primary reasons why God didn’t make two males or two females for one another. But, he made one male and one female and he said, *“Be fruitful and multiply.”*

However, there are other reasons for marriage. God also instituted marriage for,

B. Companionship.

God said, “It is not good that man should be alone. (Gen.2:18) Apparently, it would have been quite miserable for Adam had God not fashioned him a wife. Just as Adam was lonely, the same sense of loneliness is often seen in single adults. You would think they could find some happiness in the simplicity and peacefulness of their single lives, but no, they tend to whine constantly about the lack of a mate. They say, “If I just had someone to talk to I could be happy.”

C. For help.

Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.”

Eccl. 4:10

Example: I was painting my house about three years ago and I had successfully painted the high parts of the house. If I had fallen from those high places I wouldn’t be here this morning. But when I painted my shed out back, I fell off the ladder and broke my ankle. When I realized I couldn’t walk, I began to call Sonya. But then I remembered that she had gone to the store. The only one that was there was my little schnauzer dog and she just stood there and looked at me. So, I crawled all the way from the back of the property to the house on two hands and one knee. Then, I couldn’t reach the door handle. And when I figured that puzzle out, I couldn’t hold the door open so I could get in. It was a mess.

And Ecclesiastes 4:10 says,

Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.”

You will remember that when God was preparing to create Eve, he said, “I will make him a help meet (fit) for him.” This clearly shows that man is advantaged by having a wife. She is designed for the very purpose of being a helper to him.

So, the third reason for marriage is for strength and help. But there is another important reason for marriage and that is

D. To serve as a preventative for immorality.

To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

(I Corinthians 7:2)

The flesh of fallen man is so uncontrollable, so given to rebellion against God, that apart from the institution of marriage, immoralities would run out of control. They are running out of control anyway, but imagine the confusion and the utter chaos if there was no such thing as marriage. It is hard to imagine the depth to which our depravity would take us if God had not instituted marriage.

III. The choice of a mate.

A. The one who is to be our life partner should be of the opposite sex.

B. The one who is to be our life partner should not be a close blood relative. (See Lev. 18:6-17)

C. The one who is to be our life partner should be a Christian.

1. God forbade the people of Israel from marrying people from the other nations. They were to marry only within their own nation. This is because Israel served the true God and other nations served other gods.

The same principle holds true with God’s spiritual people.

2. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Cor.6:14)

If you have learned anything about the Bible you know that there are only two families in this world. There are the children of God. And, there are the children of the Devil.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

I John 3:10

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.
John 8:44

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

John 8:47

- D. Don't marry a drunkard.
- E. Don't marry a man who does not work.
- F. Don't marry someone who is not approved by your parents or family.
- G. Don't marry a criminal.
- H. Don't marry an angry, brawling woman.

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Proverbs 21:19

- I. Don't marry a nagging woman.

A nagging woman is like water going drip, drip, drip.

Proverbs 27:115