

I.N.I.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 28, 2019
Exodus 20:14

In Christ Jesus, Who reaffirmed the institution of marriage in the New Testament, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

“SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE; IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. . . THEN GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND INDEED IT WAS VERY GOOD.”

Thus we began. Created in God’s image, that is in perfection (holiness), and in perfect knowledge of God. As we read everything was very good that God created. How else could it be, for God is perfect, everything He made had to be perfect as He is.

But even in perfection the man, named Adam, was at first alone. All of the animals had been created and passed by Adam on that sixth day and he named them. But as we heard in our first reading this morning: **SO ADAM GAVE NAMES TO ALL CATTLE, TO THE BIRDS OF THE AIR, AND TO EVERY BEAST OF THE FIELD. BUT FOR ADAM THERE WAS NOT FOUND A HELPER COMPARABLE (SUITABLE) TO HIM.**

Adam lived in perfection but he was not complete. He was as yet unfulfilled. He had no companion with which to share his beautiful new and perfect life. So we are told: **AND THE LORD GOD CAUSED A DEEP SLEEP TO FALL ON ADAM, AND HE SLEPT; AND HE TOOK ONE OF HIS RIBS, AND CLOSED UP THE FLESH IN ITS PLACE. THEN THE RIB WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD TAKEN FROM MAN HE MADE INTO A WOMAN, AND HE BROUGHT HER TO THE MAN.**

It was at this time in history, on the sixth day of creation, that God instituted marriage---the lifetime living together in a most intimate way of one man and one woman. Adam declared: **"THIS IS NOW BONE OF MY BONES AND FLESH OF MY FLESH; SHE SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN, BECAUSE SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN."** And the words are then added: **THEREFORE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**

This special relationship is that of two becoming one---one in their goals, desires, dreams, pursuits and in their sexual union. The LORD uses a very appropriate word to explain this oneness. He says the man shall **BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE**, that means “to adhere, to be fixed to, to be glued to” his wife. The King James has the word “cleave” and the NIV has “united.” This cleaving, joining, uniting together for Adam and Eve was an easy thing to do. They were perfect! Everything they said to each other, did for each other, thought about each other, felt toward each other, desired for each other was perfect and holy. They were totally selfless and always wanted to please the other.

How long this lasted, we do not know, we are not told. We do however know the rest of the story. Both Adam and Eve fell into sin by rebelling against God, disobeying Him and eating of the forbidden fruit. Now everything they said, did, thought, felt and desired was just the opposite of perfect---everything now was sinful and selfish.

We see how rapidly sin took hold of the hearts of our first ancestors. As we heard last week, the first person born into this world became a murderer of his own brother. Also, since that fall into sin, marriage has been under attack. Instead of perfect peace and harmony between husband and wife, now because of sin there would be quarrels, fights, strife, bitter words, disputes, disagreements, arguments, anger and hurt feelings. Look at how Adam treated his wife when God asked him what he had done. He didn’t accept the blame and admit to his sin, he blamed his wife. The same wife Adam was so enamored with on that sixth day of creation when he said “WOW! This is what I need.” Now he says “It’s her fault, she is the one to blame, she gave me the fruit.”

But even though sin has now filled every marriage because every marriage consists of two sinful spouses, God still intends marriage as a blessing to mankind and as a lifelong companionship. He

alone has the right to sever the marriage bond through the death of one or the other spouse. What God has joined together no one has the right to separate. Unfortunately with sin there came desertion, separation, divorce, adultery, unfaithfulness. People in their sinful, selfish lives did not and do not care what God said.

God's command was clearly given on Mt. Sinai, "You shall not commit adultery."

Adultery in the narrow sense always pertains to a married spouse. It can be the putting away of the lawful spouse and establishing an unlawful union with another, or it could be someone who is not married having a sexual union with someone who is married and therefore bound to someone else.

In the broad sense adultery involves any violation of the principle covered in this sixth commandment—that is fornication—sexual union by those who are not married, lust, unfaithfulness, desertion, prostitution, pornography, rape, homosexuality, incest, public nudity and even sexual jokes.

Martin Luther explains the sixth commandment in this way: "We should fear and love God that we live a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor one another."

This morning we shall see through God's Word how this applies to husbands and wives. What are the requirements of married people to each other and then we shall see what God demands of all of us whether married or unmarried.

A good place to start in finding out how husbands and wives should live and treat each other is Ephesians 5. Our Epistle reading for this morning listed for us what God requires of husbands and wives. We heard God first speak to wives: **WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS, AS TO THE LORD.** Without those last four words, this submitting could be a bitter type of slavish servitude, but knowing that you, as wives, are to submit to your husbands as all of us as Christians willingly, out of love, submit to Christ our Savior, puts this submission in a completely different perspective. This submission is to be done out of sincere and devoted love and selfless service to the husband under his headship. It is not to be done or demanded by the husband out of fear, or in anger, or reluctantly. The Lord continues: **FOR THE HUSBAND IS HEAD OF THE WIFE, AS ALSO CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH; AND HE IS THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY. THEREFORE, JUST AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT TO CHRIST, SO LET THE WIVES BE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS IN EVERYTHING.**

What is the Lord here commanding of the wife? 100% devotion, love, and submission. 100% of giving and living for her husband!

To the husband the Lord says: **HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER.** Husbands, we are to love our wives even more than our own bodies. For we are to sacrifice everything for our wives, in selfless service to them, even as Christ sacrificed everything, His body and His life in service to us.

So what is the Lord commanding of the husband? 100% devotion, love and service. 100% of giving and living for his wife!

It is truly a most beautiful picture that the Lord through Paul is here drawing for us. Christ sacrificed everything for us, His bride. He lived for us, He died for us, He now sends us the blessing of the Holy Spirit; the blessings of faithful preachers and teachers of His Word; the blessings of freedom to spread His Word; and especially the blessing of the forgiveness of our sins because of His suffering, death and resurrection.

We as the members of Christ's Church, out of true and complete love and devotion to Him are moved to submit to His will, His deigns, His Word. It is a joy for us to do this out of love for Christ. In the same way you as Christian wives will willingly submit and serve your husbands as to the Lord. And we as Christian husbands will willingly love and serve our wives following the example of how Christ loved and served us.

Sounds so good, doesn't it? And it is good! But we also live in the reality of our flesh. Sometimes the desire may be there to love and serve but the effort is not. Sometimes even the desire is not there because of sin. Sin rears its ugly head in so many, many ways so that instead of both spouses giving 100% of their time, love effort and service to each other's happiness and welfare, there is that selfishness that expects to get instead of give, that wants more than gives. Unfortunately quarrels,

strife, disagreements and disharmony will enter into every marriage even with the most faithful God-fearing spouses.

But again that is where Christ comes in. He has forgiven us husbands of all of those times we have not devoted ourselves to our wives as we should, when we have not given of our time, attention and service to our wives as we ought. Therefore how can we not forgive our wives and live at peace and harmony with them?

So also you wives have been forgiven for the many times that you have not listened to your husband, served and loved him, given him of your time. Therefore how can you not forgive your husbands and live at peace and harmony with them?

However, this commandment also applies to all of us, married or unmarried, young or old. The Lord demands that we **“live a pure and decent life in word and actions.”** Luther could well have added in thought also. The Lord says in I Cor. **DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE; THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S.** When we think lustful, sexually impure thoughts we are polluting that body which God owns, our body that Christ paid for with His precious blood. When we look at sexually impure, pornographic pictures or movies we are again littering that temple of the Holy Spirit with filth. Paul says: **BUT AMONG YOU THERE MUST NOT BE EVEN A HINT OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY, OR OF ANY KIND OF IMPURITY, OR OF GREED, BECAUSE THESE ARE IMPROPER FOR GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE. NOR SHOULD THERE BE OBSCENITY, FOOLISH TALK OR COARSE JOKING, WHICH ARE OUT OF PLACE, BUT RATHER THANKSGIVING. FOR OF THIS YOU CAN BE SURE: NO IMMORAL, IMPURE OR GREEDY PERSON-- SUCH A MAN IS AN IDOLATER-- HAS ANY INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD.**

As young people, you, especially in this day and age of sexual permissiveness, are and will be tempted and tested from all sides to join in with the group, be part of the crowd. The temptations are many. All around us we see people living together outside of marriage without even the slightest idea that it is forbidden by God. It is the acceptable thing to do—try it out first to see if it will work. God calls it sin!

Today the belief is that our young people will have sex together so let's just protect them from unwanted pregnancy, or sexual disease, rather than teach them what God wants. You prevent immorality, fornication, sexual permissiveness and sexual diseases by providing the help, counsel, advice, comfort and power of God's Word, not by giving blanket permission to it all. God commands us **KEEP YOURSELF PURE** and tells us **THIS IS MY WILL, YOUR SANCTIFICATION: THAT YOU SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY.**

Today we also see the world condemning us who call homosexuality a sin, telling us we should be tolerant of and accept their life style as being proper and okay. Again God condemns this lifestyle as sin.

It is a daily, constant struggle, this battle against our sinful desires and sexual lusts, a battle that we shall never completely win here on earth. Sin has made that God-given natural sexual desire in us to so often captivate our lives, take control and lead us into areas of sin, loss of self-control, and the satisfying of those desires in a sinful way.

We thank God that His Son Jesus not only reaffirmed the estate of marriage for us, but also suffered and died for our many sins against this institution and against this commandment. For we are assured that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sins.

So we pray:

All desires and thoughts of mine from my youth are only evil;
Save me by Thy power divine from myself and from the devil;
Give me strength in ample measure both to will and do Thy pleasure. Amen.