

Sunday, February 5, 2017

"The Power for Marriage"

THE MEANING
OF MARRIAGE

Be Filled With the Spirit

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21)

"[Paul] is declaring that everything he is about to say about marriage assumes that the parties are being filled with God's Spirit. Only if you have learned to serve others by the power of the Holy Spirit will you have the power to face the challenges of marriage."

"The Holy Spirit's ministry is to take truths about Jesus and make them clear to our minds and real to our hearts—so real that they console and empower and change us at our very center."

Apostle's Creed, Third Article: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

"After trying all kinds of things, Christians have learned that the worship of God with the whole heart in the assurance of His love through the work of Jesus Christ is the thing their souls were meant to 'run on.'"

Discuss and Reflect:

Referring to Luther's explanation of Article 3, how does the Holy Spirit "fuel" you?



Submit to One Another

"... in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:2-3)

"A servant puts someone else's needs ahead of his or her own. That is how all believers should live with each other. And if all believers are to serve each other in this way, how much more intensely should husbands and wives have this attitude toward one another?"

"Kathy and I remember..."

Reflect: What part(s) of Tim and Kathy's story do you find most relatable?

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

The Problem of Self-Centeredness

"Love is patient and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

"Repeatedly Paul shows that love is the very opposite of 'self-seeking,' which is literally pursuing one's own welfare before those of others."

"We were made to serve God and others. That means paradoxically that if we try to put our own happiness ahead of obedience to God, we violate our own nature and become, ultimately, miserable. Jesus restates the principle when he says, '**Whoever wants to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it**' (Matthew 16:25). He is saying, 'If you seek happiness more than you seek me, you will have neither; if you seek to serve me more than [to] serve happiness, you will have both.'"

Wounds We Carry

"[Painful memories] can prevent us from doing the normal, day-to-day work of repentance and forgiveness and extending the grace that is so crucial to making progress in our marriages. The reason is that woundedness makes us self-absorbed."

"[Christians] believe that, as badly wounded as persons may be, the resulting self-absorption of the human heart was not caused by the mistreatment. It was only magnified and shaped by it."

Journaling/Reflection:

This is a personal, private and confidential time of guided reflection. You will not be asked to share your responses.



Wounds We Carry Continued

1. What are your wounds?
2. How are your wounds affecting your present relationships?

THE MEANING
OF MARRIAGE

Confronting our Self-Centeredness

"And [Christ] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

"If two spouses *each* say, 'I'm going to treat my self-centeredness as the main problem in the marriage,' you have the prospect of a truly great marriage."

Journaling/Personal Reflection:

1. Treating *MY* self-centeredness: If I am honest with myself, how am I self-centered?

2. How am I going to become more others-focused?

3. Reflecting on my responses to the previous two questions, and what I've learned today, what is one specific way I can practice humility this week?

4. What is something new you have learned about marriage today? How has your view of marriage been impacted or changed?

