

“The Creator’s Handiwork”
Series: Marriage – What’s the Point?
Genesis 2

Introduction: Take your Bibles and turn to Genesis 2, Genesis chapter 2.

It has become our pattern as a church to have a short series of sermons on a topic between our longer exegetical series that go through a book. So we just finished our 10 month journey through the Kings of Israel and in the beginning of June we will start a series on the Gospel of Mark. So, between here and there we begin today a short series of messages on marriage. Now, you may immediately think – okay great, I can check out for the next 6 weeks or so because I’ve got this marriage thing down and man, I have heard it all before on marriage so certainly there is nothing new. Or maybe you are thinking that we don’t really have trouble with this whole marriage idea at our church so why do we really need to spend time thinking about it. But before you mentally object and check out let me lay the groundwork for why I think this series on Marriage is so important to the life and health of our church.

Next January our church will celebrate its 60th anniversary. When the church was founded in 1955, the cultural landscape of Newton, KS was quite a bit different than it is now, and this is especially true in the area of marriage. It was assumed in 1955 that most people would get married soon after graduating high school or college. It was a cultural norm that once you got married you simply stayed married. It was shameful for people who were not married to be living together or shacking up. Men and women generally knew that their roles were unique and different and that wasn’t questioned or challenged by most. When two unmarried people started dating they were doing so for the purpose of getting married. Adultery and promiscuity still held a high level of shame in the culture. Homosexuality wasn’t even a blurb on the screen of the culture’s collective consciousness. My how things have changed in 60 short years. Now, before I run down the list of things that have changed in our culture as it relates to marriage please do not misunderstand me to be saying that things were great and grand and glorious in 1955. Sin was still rampant and it was still destroying families. Divorce and adultery and abandonment were happening. Homosexuality was around. The feminist movement was beginning to make inroads into the psyche of the American woman. Things were not all chocolates and roses. But marriage was generally understood to be the basic building block of society and the Biblical model of marriage was rarely questioned.

But times have a changed! Now marriage is looked at as one option among many other options. Instead of dating to get married now our culture promotes dating as a means to gratifying sexual desires without long-term commitment. Instead of getting married it is now totally acceptable to live together. If you do get married you can always get out of the marriage through divorce and that is an acceptable out in society. Homosexuality is common place in our world. It may not be a very large percentage in actual practice, but the air time it receives makes it seem as though it is completely normal and commonplace. All of this rests upon the post-modern worldview of the common man which insists that everyone is entitled to an opinion and no one opinion has the right to thwart anyone else’s opinion. So, you can believe what you want to believe about marriage, but just don’t force that on anyone else, especially not if your view looks anything like the traditional and Biblical view. So, you can think that homosexuality is a sin against the living God, but that is only true for you and it might not be true for your neighbor or your classmate. And so it would seem that the overwhelming question of society at large in 2014 is “what is the point of marriage?” If people feel no shame in living together and divorce is a cultural norm and the homosexual movement is re-defining marriage to its own liking, then what is even the point of marriage at all?

And that is the question that will guide our series. And this series will look to a book, given by God, that spells out for us the many glorious purposes of marriage. This book, this authoritative Word of God, makes known to us that marriage is God's design and God's doing and God's decree. You see, if marriage is mankind's deal then mankind is free to change it whenever and however we decide to. If this whole marriage idea evolved over time along with the ape-men then maybe this pre-historic idea has met its fitting end and we should scrap it and start over with a more modern and inclusive design. But this whole marriage thing is not man's to tinker with, nonetheless completely overhaul. And so in this debate over marriage raging all around us we must plug our ears to the voices of depraved culture and we must open wide our ears to the voice of the Lord. In Genesis 2 we have the definitive and authoritative Word of God on the issue of marriage.

Most of you know the context of Genesis 2, but to refresh your memory – out of nothing God has created all things. Over a course of 6 days God has powerfully created all things through His spoken Word. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was the Heavens and the Earth. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was light. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was separation of waters to above and below the expanse. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was land and sea. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was vegetation, plants, and fruit trees. There was nothing – God spoke – and there was the sun, moon, and stars to fill the expanse of the heavens. There was nothing – God spoke – and there were living creatures swarming in the waters and birds flying in the sky. There was nothing – God spoke – and all land creatures were brought into existence. And then it was on that sixth day that the Triune God determined to make a part of the creation unique – a special work of creation that would display God's image and likeness to the rest of Creation. And so mankind is made by God – male and female – and they are told to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth and have dominion over it and in doing this they are to take God's glorious image and likeness to all of Earthly Creation. As we come to chapter 2 we read in verses 18-20 of a critical flaw in God's otherwise good creation. So, we see in Genesis 1 the grand picture of God's creative work during those 7 days of creation, but now in chapter 2 the text focuses in on Day 6 and on one member of God's creation in particular – Adam. In telling us about this critical flaw in creation God is actually going to be laying out for us His blueprint for marriage. It is in the passage we will read here in a moment where we read the details of the first Father giving away the first bride to the first groom. We have the very first covenant commitment between one man and one woman here in Genesis 2. And in this we learn a crucial truth that must shape our understanding about marriage – Marriage is God's Design. In other words, Marriage is His idea, His thought played out on the tapestry of His created world. Let's read Genesis 2:18-25.

I. Marriage is God's Design – Gen. 2:18-20

- a. Up to this point in God's creative work he had decreed that everything was good or even very good, but now we come across something that is not good. What is it that is not good – the man is alone.
- b. Man is Alone – vs. 18a
 - i. At this point in the text you have to ask “why in the world is he alone?” We read in verses 19-20 that God had paraded all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air before man and allowed Adam to name them, and what did he see? Each beast of the field and each bird of the air had a corresponding partner – they were not alone. Now, why didn't God create male and female of humanity together like he did with every other living part of his creation? Why did he leave this part of his creation incomplete? Obviously this is not a case of God asleep on the job. In other words, this was no light bulb moment for Creator God as he just now notices that Adam is alone. No, this was intentional and purposeful. But why? What was the purpose? I think this was done to heighten the relationship between Adam and the soon to be created Eve. This was done to make known to Adam – and to every person who has lived since that this relationship

between man and woman is more important than the relationship between male and female hippopotamus', or male and female ducks. This relationship is unlike all others that were created on Day 6. Hence, there is a unique work of God that follows verse 18 to make this unique relationship known.

c. This is Not Good – vs. 18a

- i. Along with seeing God's intentional heightening of the importance of this relationship we must also not miss Adam's plight here in the first part of the verse. He is alone, and there is absolutely nothing he can do about it! This is a terrifying phrase filled with sorrow and angst and loneliness – Adam is alone. This does not mean simply that at that moment he was alone in the Garden. This means that there was no other created being that was like Adam. He was on this big wide Earth – just him and the animals. And while this might sound mildly appealing – I mean aren't there times when we all wish we were on a deserted island with no hope of rescue! I can assure you that being completely alone with no hope of it changing is a terrifying reality – one that God himself says is not good. Man was made for relationship, and in this we mirror the God who made us who is Himself a relational being. And so, if we have no one to relate to, we are in a bad spot. In verse 18 – Adam is in a bad spot – he is all alone, and this is not good!

d. So God Acts to Make it Good – vs. 18b

- i. So God declares that he is going to do something about this not good situation. He says he will make a helper fit for him. This not good situation was brought about by God and now it is addressed by God. He is going to make another creation that will fit with Adam. There are several Hebrew words that are used in the creation account for God's act of creating or fashioning something and they each seem to carry some of their own nuance to the idea of creating. The word for the work of God to create something out of nothing through the glorious power of His word is the word "bara." The word that God uses here in verse 18 when he declares that he is going to make a helper for Adam is the word "asa." This word has the idea of taking from the material that was spoken into existence when he "bara"ed, and fashioning or forming something further with material that is already there. In other words, the materials for Eve were already present, but he was going to now take those materials and create a wife for Adam. God had created, and now he was going to further make this creation so as to address this glaring need of a companion for Adam.

e. Adam is Shown that this is Not Good – vs. 19-20

- i. But before we get to that further making and shaping of God's creation we have verses 19-20. God had already formed all of the beasts of the field out of the dust of the ground and every bird of the air out of the same, and so he brings them before the man to see what the man would call them. We don't have time to park here, but there is great significance to this part of the passage. What does this tell us about the character of God when we see that he does not dictate the names of His created beings, but rather takes delight in seeing what man will call each animal? He is certainly not a dictator God who must have everything just as he demands. The things that must be as he says he will never budge on, but where there can be freedom – God gives that freedom to Adam. He gets to name the animals. What a relational God who delights in seeing the expressed creativity of mankind's work!
- ii. But there is obviously more going on here. They are all paraded before Adam and he gets the glorious privilege of naming them and pleasing God in the process, but there was a

- hidden motive in God doing this. He was not just having Adam name the animals, but he was showing Adam in the first great object lesson of the world that Adam's situation was not right. No other creature was even close to Adam, and certainly none of them could provide the help Adam knew he needed. This object lesson drove the point home – Adam was alone and this was not good, and Adam is now very convinced of this as well.
- iii. Notice the need in verse 18 and verse 20 is specific. Adam does not just need anything, he needs a helper who will be fit for him. In other words, all of the other creatures are not fit for Adam. The term “fit for him” literally means “for facing him” or “for in front of him.” The idea here is that Adam needs God to do a work to give him a helper who can stand face to face with him and match him. The giraffe can't do that and the dog can't do that and the turtle can't do that. Adam has looked at them all and he is convinced that there is a huge need here.
 - iv. Also notice the need is for a helper. Adam is incomplete and in need of help. He is insufficient by himself and needs God to do something to change the circumstance. So God promises to address the need by crafting with His creative power the ordained helper that Adam needed. He is going to craft Adam's help-meet because without this helper the situation for Adam is not good.
 - v. Now, don't buy into the world's propaganda here. Don't be conformed to society's way of thinking. They will tell you that this idea of woman being specifically designed to be man's helper is a chauvinistic and degrading idea against all women everywhere. But actually this very word for “helper” is used of God. He is looked to as mankind's helper.
 1. Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!" (Ps. 30:10 ESV)
 2. Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. (Ps. 33:20 ESV)
 - vi. So don't buy into the world's propaganda here. Being a helper to anyone is an opportunity for you to show forth a glimpse of the very character of God. Ladies, for you to be able to fill this role all the time as the wife of your husband puts you in a unique position to show forth God's helping character all the time. God promises to make a helper who is fit for the man. To be this helper is a glorious and wonderful thing. Adam knows that he needs this helper. He is self-conscious to this very fact – things are not good and they need to be made right.
 - vii. This is the hole every man knows. Man knows of his need for help and God has designed the woman to be that helper in this life for the man. She is not the only helper, nor is she the ultimate helper, but she is the daily real life help meet for the man. So then aren't mankind's attempts to re-define the marriage relationship as we would like really an attempt to meet this need? So, doesn't it become obvious when you look at the cultural landscape that mankind is just as aware today as Adam was in the Garden that to be alone is not a good thing. And so we seek to fill that void and meet that need, but our depraved hearts don't want to do it God's way because we are deceived by sin and Satan to think that there must be a better way – better than what God has given. And so we fill the void with promiscuous relationships, or live in boyfriends, or homosexual encounters or even unions that we think should be called marriage too. You see, all of the alternatives to marriage that man has laid on the table are nothing more than our attempt to address the very need that Adam is aware of in verse 20. It is not good that he is alone. God addresses that, but often we would rather have our answer to the problem than look to the creator God for the solution.

II. Marriage is God's Doing – Gen. 2:21-23

- a. So, God has designed marriage to be the perfect answer to this not good situation. But he doesn't just design it, he does it. Marriage is God's doing. So we read in verses 21-23 of God's carrying out of the very thing he has promised. *Read 21-23.*
- b. This design of marriage now needs to be accomplished through the mighty creative works of God. Adam has no ability to solve this problem on his own, so God must do it. And so he causes a deep sleep to fall over Adam and he takes a rib from Adam and closes Adam back up with flesh and out of this rib God builds the woman. The word in most English translations in verse 22 says that God used the rib and made it into a woman, but the Hebrew word is build. God built the woman from the rib of mankind. He took existing material that had already been made, much like he took the dust of the ground and fashioned every beast of the field and fowl of the air, now he takes the rib of Adam and makes woman. Now, just for the biological record here – men do not have one less rib than women. Both males and females have 12 sets of ribs – 24 in all. The text doesn't say anything different. We are not told how many ribs Adam had before God did surgery, and we are not told how many ribs Eve was made with, but we do know by looking at the human body that when the sun set on day 6 both Adam and Eve had 12 sets of ribs. But why a rib? Why does God do this? Why does he perform the first surgery and take a rib out of which to build the woman for the man? Well, most certainly you have heard the quote before by Matthew Henry on this:
 - i. "Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him." – Matthew Henry
- c. What wonderful thoughts run through this quote, but for our purposes this morning there is an even more basic meaning to the use of man's rib. God wanted to take an integral part of man and out of that part to make woman. From the very core of man's body he took a part that was both bone and flesh – a rib – and used it as Ground Zero out of which to build woman. The point of God's work here is to make it known that woman is from man – she came out of him through this Divine surgical procedure.
- d. And this is made clear in how Adam talks about her in verse 23. There are two Hebrew words for man used in this passage. The main one used is "adam." But here in verse 23 another one is used and that is "ish." I say this to you because names are really important in Hebrew. They have meaning and significance, especially in a narrative like this one. And so, the rib has been taken out of the "ish", the man, and out of this rib God has formed the helper fit for the "ish" that he promised. And so from Adam's own lips we hear in verse 23 that this new creature is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh and then he names her. The name he gives her is "isha."
- e. So, for drama's sake I can imagine this going like this. Adam is waking from his deep sleep, rubbing his eyes, maybe splashing cold water on his face to make sure that he is seeing clearly as he lays his eyes on God's amazing handiwork. And he says – "Oh – at last – this one has the same structure and looks similar to me. She has been taken from my bones and my flesh. She is of me. I am ish, she shall be called isha!" And yes, I do believe the emphasis on the last syllable is inspired! I say this because what groom hasn't been standing at the front of the church and when those doors finally open and he gets to lay his eyes on his bride doesn't have this same thought. Of course, we don't think in Hebrew so we don't go – Isha! But rather we look at our bride and we go Wo-man! (some of you will get that in the car on the way home!)
- f. Do you see the significance of the name here? Adam's name is "ish" and this helper fit for him is named "isha." He tells us why he names her this way. He calls her this because she has come out

of him. Therefore the word reflects this in that her name is a slight variation of his. Woman was made from man. But this isn't the only name this first woman is given. At the end of Genesis 3 we are told that Adam also named her Eve because she was the mother of all living. So she is called woman – isha – and Eve – chavvah. In other words, there is an everlasting truth in the very names given to the helper fit for Adam that was made by God. In the first name we learn of the woman's dependence upon man because she came from him. In the second name we learn of man's dependence upon the woman for she becomes the mother of all men after Adam. And so the Apostle Paul makes this explicit when he says in 1 Corinthians 11:

i. ¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; ¹² for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. (1 Cor. 11:11-12 ESV)

- g. God has made woman for man, and man for woman. They are dependent upon one another. They were designed this way down to their very biology. God designed and then carried through with the design to make a helper fit for Adam, and to make Eve to be the mother of all men. Don't miss this foundational truth for the conversation about marriage. God unmistakably designed the man for the woman and woman for the man. He didn't create from the rib someone who was identical to Adam, rather he created a helper that we suited to fill Adam's need of a helper. So get this – by the very act of God's creation here in Genesis 2 he intends for Adam and Eve to be together. He makes them interdependent and then he brings about their union in this very first covenant of marriage. God does this. God is the actor in these verses. This is his work and he carries out his design in his work.
- h. This is crucial in our understanding of marriage because when we see that this is not some manmade invention that is somehow supposed to keep society together, or some antiquated method of giving and receiving love, then we are drawn to something greater than our own ideas here. To see that God has designed this and done this draws us to long for a deeper and greater understanding of the plans and divine ideas that are wrapped up in human marriage. This was not an afterthought or a reactionary move by the Creator God, but rather this was an integral part of his original design. He made them male and female and he did this for a purpose – to join them together in a unique and lifelong union called marriage. At the heart of your marriage then, there is a fundamental truth – it is God's doing. There is a divine design and plan at work in your marriage. He created you as a male or a female and he created your spouse to be the opposite. This is divine design and the divine doing that brings eternal truth to bear upon your relationship. This means that your marriage is significant beyond this life. This marriage is not something that simply helps society work better or that gives you more happiness. This marriage has God's ideas and His workings all throughout it, and this means that your marriage has eternal significance.
- i. This marriage was God's idea and it was God's doing, and in verses 24-25 we see that it is also God's decree.

III. Marriage is God's Decree – Gen. 2:24-25

- a. And so God says in verse 24 – Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Now you may notice that in the text there is no indication that this is God speaking at all. We are simply in the middle of a narrative. We are told in verse 23 that Adam says that whole bit about naming this helper fit for him woman, but we are not told who these words in verse 24 are attributed to. This is definitely a decree of how things should be from now on. Verse 24 is definitely making it known that this is now the normative way for all of mankind from Adam and Eve down to function. But is it possible that

this is just some well-intended insertion by the human author to somehow validate a cultural norm of his day? So, as has been charged by many a critic, is Moses simply inserting this idea into the text so as to make marriage between one man and one woman for one life normative? Is it possible for this decree to be culturally relevant to Moses' day and that is all, and therefore not the eternal decreed truth of God? Turn with me to Matthew 19, Matthew chapter 19.

- b. Jesus is being tested once again by the Pharisees. They are trying to trip him up and so they try to trap him with a question about divorce. And so in verse 3 they ask him if it is lawful for someone to divorce their wife for any cause. In his answer Jesus points immediately to the Creation account of Genesis 2 and he says this. *Read vs. 4-5.* Did you catch it? We are not told in Genesis 2 whose words verse 24 are, but here Jesus, the very Son of God, tells us whose words these are. The Creator, the one who made them male and female to fit perfectly together, this God has said! Those are glorious words my friends. Because they have come from the very mind of God we have in Genesis 2 the very decree of God. This is his will spelled out in black and white. He has designed marriage, he has done marriage in bringing Eve forth from Adam and joining them together, and now he decrees marriage. In other words, this is how it is always supposed to be.
- i. The man is to leave father and mother. This doesn't mean that he will no longer be their son, but it means that their relationship will forever change because their son will no longer be dependent upon them or primarily accountable to them. He is to take on his own identity and be independent of them. But why is he to leave? Is it for selfish and self-serving reasons, or is there a great reason at stake here?
 - ii. He is to leave so that he can hold fast to his wife. He is to leave his parents and he is to cleave to his wife. The man has been made for the woman and the woman for the man. God made them as male and female so that they would perfectly go together in God's institution of marriage. They are not to stay with their parents because that is not what they were designed for – they were designed to be together in a marriage relationship. And so God's decreed will is that the men who are Eve's offspring are not to remain under the safety and protection and provision of dad and mom, but they are to leave so that they can cleave to their wife – God's provision for them.
 - iii. This cleaving to their wife results in a weaving together of the woman and the man. This marriage relationship is essentially defined by a one-flesh union. Those who were once two are now one. They are joined together and they become one flesh. This one flesh union is mysterious and profound and eternally significant, which we will see next week. But remember, it is not they who have joined themselves together into one flesh, but rather this is God's doing. It is God who has made the woman for the man, and it is God who has brought her to him. It is God who here gives his timeless decree that this is how it is to work – the man is to leave his parents and he is to be joined to his wife and they are to be one flesh. We know this is God's doing not just by what we saw in Genesis 2, but look at what Jesus says in verse 6 of Matthew 19. "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Jesus is not just talking about the first marriage here – he is talking about every marriage. God's hand is at work to bring together men and women in His gloriously designed institution of marriage. He has decreed that this is how it is to be – one man joined to one woman and made to be one flesh for one life. And, according to Jesus here in Matthew 19, what he has decreed he is at work to accomplish. Marriage is His design, his decree, and his doing.

Therefore – keep your hands off of God’s design. Don’t tinker with or overhaul or destroy what he has come up with and what He has done!

- iv. To drive home this point about two people joined in marriage becoming one flesh, turn back with me to Genesis, but this time turn to Genesis 5. Marriage is the only place where one plus one equals one. This was first made known through the statement about one flesh in chapter 2, but this is proven again in chapter 5. *Read verses 1-2*
- v. They were both created by God and made in his likeness and image. They were made male and female, just like God knew they needed to be to fit perfectly together, but then notice what they together are called. They are called Adam. The two together are called Adam. In other words, Eve assumes Adam’s name. They have gone from Adam and Eve to Mr. & Mrs. Adam. There is significance even today in a name. Feminism has been somewhat silly to demand that women keep their own identity in marriage by not changing their last names to match the name of the husband. In doing this they presume to be keeping some independent identity in the relationship. This is not just silly, it is downright rebellious. The first married couple were called by God by the man’s name together. The wife did not lose her identity – she gained the identity of a one flesh union that only God could put together. There is not dishonor here for the woman, but great and glorious honor. Man and woman joined together by God’s grand design and doing!
- vi. Our world does not understand this, and most Christians do not understand this. They do not think of marriage as something that God has brought together, but rather they think of marriage as a product of human love and attraction. So when human love, attraction, and romance fail, then the marriage will fail as well. People can maintain a casual view of marriage because mankind has done it and they can come up with their own ideas about marriage because it is man’s institution, but that is not what the Scriptures say here. God has done this. Marriage is his design, and his doing, and his decree. One man and one woman joined in marriage for one life so that they are one flesh is God’s doing. Therefore, let no man separate what God has done.

Conclusion: As you process these thoughts I wonder if you view your marriage as God’s doing? Is your marriage to your spouse sourced in God’s work? Did God join you and your spouse together in a one-flesh union that is meant to last a lifetime? If this is true, then I wonder what would change in your view of your marriage, and therefore in your actions in your marriage? You see marriage is not simply about staying in love or about keeping it together for the kids. Rather, God has a bigger and more amazing plan that is at play in your marriage. As we work our way through the other sessions I hope to show you what this plan is so that you will be spurred on by a right understanding of God’s design to live in God-glorifying ways in your marriage.

So, as we close this morning let me give you some bottom line applications. If Genesis 2 is for real, which it is, then what does it matter? How does it change your life today?

- Rejection of Genesis 2 marriage is a rejection of the Genesis 2 God
 - If it is true that God is the designer, doer, and decreer of marriage, then if we tinker with or completely overhaul what God has done here, we are actually tinkering with God. In other words, we are rejecting his authority by saying that he has no right to tell us how marriage should look. We are declaring independence from Him and His way and we are rebelling against Him in the most fundamental of relationships.
 - So, this means that the conversations our culture is having about marriage and the struggles we see around us of co-habitation and divorce and adultery – all of these things are not just issues to deal with, but they are of fundamental importance. They are evidence of the sin-dominated

hearts of mankind. And so we are not just dealing with social issues that threaten to decay the fabric of our country – we are dealing with heart issues that threaten to damn people to an eternity apart from God in Hell. This means the answer for the critics of marriage in our culture is not fundamentally a good argument about the virtues of marriage, though we must argue for this. But we must never forget that the ultimate answer is fundamentally changed hearts by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And this should be the lens through which we view the struggle.

- Your Marriage Matters
 - God's design, God's doing, and God's decree is on the line in your marriage. God has given you your spouse. He has brought you together and you are now joined as one flesh. You can break this one flesh union, but if you do you are defaming the reputation of God in the world. As God's people we bear God's name, and so we of all people must be the most serious about upholding God's design, God's doing, and God's decree.
 - This means that as a spouse, or future spouse, you should long to be taught in God's way for marriage. You see, what God decrees God also orders. In other words, God has given us marriage, and he has given us how marriage best works so as to accomplish the purposes for which he gave it. We then as people called by God's name should be most interested in living within it as He orders so as to tell the truth about the God who gave us marriage.
- Marriage is not a flawed idea
 - Marriage is not the problem. We need to stop tweaking the design of marriage and we need to seek God's work to change the heart because Genesis 3 follows Genesis 2 and it makes known to us that marriage is not the problem, it's the sinful hearts that make up the marriage that are the problem.
- Embrace the Glorious Opportunity
 - For many reasons this is one of the battles that is before us as the church. And as you gaze at Church History you see that this often happens. Destructive heresies are used by a Sovereign God to clarify and strengthen and make known that which might have been assumed and somewhat unclear before. So, this current cultural phenomenon that seeks to mitigate God's decree of marriage provides for us a glorious opportunity as the church to make known the glorious truth of God's Word that guides our practice and shapes our hearts.
 - On top of this, you personally have a glorious opportunity in a messed up world to have a marriage that makes known the grace of God as you leave, cleave, and weave. You see, all these brilliant ideas of mankind that re-invent marriage leave people completely hopeless and helpless and hurting. Your unsaved neighbors are struggling to make sense of it all. They are wrestling with the hurts of divorce, adultery, co-habitation, homosexuality, or any other number of things. What a glorious opportunity we have to live in front of the world in marriages that make known the glorious design, doing, and decree of God. May God's name be praised as He strengthens the marriages of this local church so that we as His people show forth His glorious grace in a dark and needy world. Let's pray.