

The Mystery of Marriage (Genesis 2:18-25)

I. Welcome / Intro / Prayer

A. Welcome (HSL)

B. This morning's journey: Three Big Steps

1. Preliminary thoughts the *mystery of marriage*

2. A walk on holy ground: Genesis 2:18-25:

The creation of Adam and Eve, and the world's first wedding!

3. Application: Some important lessons for the Bride of Christ

C. Opening Prayer

II. Preliminary Thoughts on the Mystery of Marriage

A. *All of us sense it*: Marriage—and all that precedes it and flows from it—is a BIG mystery

- Song: Some Enchanted Evening

B. The prophet Agur sensed it too!

There are three things which too wonderful (mysterious) for me; yes, four that I do not understand: The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, *and the way of a man with a maiden.* – Agur, Proverbs 30

C. But there is good news:

- Yes, it was hidden from Agur (and the natural man)
- But revealed to by God in MANY biblical texts
- But especially through the apostle Paul in Eph. 5 . . .

- . . . *who discovered it in Genesis 2!*

This too is how husbands should love their own wives: just as they love their own bodies! He who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh. On the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *nourishes and cherishes* the church—³⁰ for we are *the* members of his body.³¹ *For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and these two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church!* – Eph. 5:31-32

D. Biblically, what is a mystery? *An open secret!*

E. Biblically, what is the ***greatest*** mystery of all? Let Paul answer:

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you by conforming you to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ—*that is*, by conforming you to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages past, but now is made manifest, and, in accordance with the command of the everlasting God, is made known through the prophetic scriptures to all nations for obedience to the faith—²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen! – Romans 16

- The greatest mystery is the Gospel: The New (and Eternal) Covenant in Christ (***John 3:16***; Heb. 13) (HSL)

F. ***Today's MP: The New Covenant is a Marriage Covenant:***

1. Frequently pictured and promised in OT times:

- Gen. 2 (the first wedding)
- Gen. 24 (The servant of Abraham seeks a wife for the Master's Son)
- **Psalm 45** (The King's love for his glorious Bride)
- **Song of Solomon** (The mysterious delights of marriage and the marriage bed)
- **Hosea 2** (OTKP: God to apostate Israel: "And it shall be in that day," says the Lord, "that you will call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Master.'")

- **Isaiah 54** (OTKP: God to apostate Jerusalem, “Your Husband will be your Maker”)
- **Isaiah 62** (OTKP: God will delight over Zion as a Groom for his Bride)
- **Jeremiah 31** (OTKP: God to the houses of Israel and Judah: “I will make a new covenant with them, “Not like the old covenant which they broke, *though I was a husband to them*)
- **Ezekiel 16** (A prophetic discourse on Jerusalem’s pagan, origins, marriage to the LORD, profound unfaithfulness, and final restoration: (“You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her Husband . . . Nevertheless, I will remember My (marriage) covenant with you in the days of your youth,, and will establish an everlasting covenant with you.”)

2. Fully unveiled in NT times:

- John 2 (wedding at Cana)
- John 3:29 (the friend of the Groom, content to hear His voice)
- Matt. 9 (fasting; can the friends of the Bridegroom mourn?)
- Matt. 25 (parable of the ten virgins)
- John 14 (I go to prepare a place for you)
- Romans 7 (Dead to the Law, married to Another, bearing fruit for God!)
- Rev. 12; etc.

G. MP: The New Covenant is NOT a Legal Contract based on works, but a Marriage Covenant based on love, grace, and the gift of faith.

H. And—as we are about to see—it’s an Arranged Marriage!

III. The Mystery of Marriage: Seven Little Mysteries Mystically Revealed in Genesis 2:18f

A. (1) God the Father did not think it good that His Son should be without a Bride

(18) *Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him.”*

1. *It is not good that the man should be alone (Companion)*
2. *I will make Him a Helper*
3. Who also will be the *Mother for His children*

- “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth. Take dominion!”
- “Now the man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.” -- Gen. 3:20, Rom. 7:1f, Rev. 12)

4. MP: In eternity God purposed that the Church should be a Bride for His Son: A Companion, a Helper, a Lover, a fruitful Mother to His Children, and a Diligent Keeper of His Home! (Titus 2:5, diligent at home-making) (HSL)

B. (2) The Bride that God is Making for His Son Corresponds to Him

(19) *Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper corresponding to him.*

1. Nothing else in all creation “corresponds” to Christ, **but US, his Beloved Bride!**

- By creation, our *nature* corresponds to Him (creation in God’s image and likeness)
- By re-creation, our *character* (ever-increasingly) corresponds to Him (regeneration, sanctification)
- Our *purpose* corresponds to Him (gifts, calling, mission)
- Our *destiny* corresponds to Him (HSL)

3. Illustration: **Ever After:** Prince Henry to Danielle, the wise, good, and beautiful peasant girl. “Perhaps you could tell me where I can find the owner of this glass slipper, *for she is my match in every way . . .* I kneel down before you, not as a Prince, but as a man. But I would feel like a King if you, Danielle, would consent to be my wife.”

C. (3) In order to create a Bride for His Son, God the Father must first put him to sleep

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

- *He caused a deep sleep (atoning death)*

Yet it pleased the LORD to crush him and put him to grief; and though the LORD will make his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. -- Isaiah 53

“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. – Acts 4:27-28

- *He took out a rib (Heb: rib, side, plank, beam): **The finished Work of the Son**, issuing from his heart, destined to bring His Bride to His side) (John 19:31-37)*
- *He closed up the flesh in its place (HSL: Resurrection)*

D. (4) Because of the Work of Christ Accomplished in Love, God the Father is Now bringing the Bride to His Son

22 Then the rib (plank) that the Lord God had taken from man He fashioned (Heb., built) into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

- **He Brings and Builds Now**

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day . . . And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all (My Bride) to myself.” –John 6, 12 (*cf. Hosea 2*)

- **He Will Build and Bring Then**

And Jesus spoke to them again by parables and said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³ and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they

(Israel) were not willing to come . . . So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests. – Matt. 22

Arranged Marriage, Destination Wedding: Get your garment now!

E. (5) The Son greatly rejoices in His oneness with His Bride

23 And the Man said: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (Heb. Ishah), for she was taken out of Man (Heb. Ish).”

- *This at last!* (Luke 15; joy)
- *Is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh (John 17; 1 Cor. 6)*
- *She shall be called Woman (Heb. Ishah), for she was taken out of Man (Heb. Ish)” (Bearing his nature, she bears His Name: Christ – Christian)*

F. (6) Till the end of time, the institution of marriage will picture the way in which the Son of God left heaven in order to seek, find, save, and cleave to His Beloved Bride forever

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined (or, cleave, hold fast) to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- This is Paul’s **great mystery**, which contains three main elements:
- **Leaving**: Kenosis, Humiliation of Christ, making cleaving possible
- **Cleaving**: being joined to, holding fast to, cleaving / Eternal union with Christ, participation in the Trinitarian life, made possible by leaving / (**Note**: HE cleaves to us!)
- **Becoming One**: The SUPREME Goal of Redemption!

This too is how husbands should love their own wives: just as *they love* their own bodies! He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh. On the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *nourishes and cherishes* the church— ³⁰ for we are *the* members of his body. – Eph. 5

G. (7) God means for Christ and His Bride to stand before one another “naked and unashamed”

25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed.

- HSL
- **MP:** *Because of residual indwelling sin, there is tendency in the Bride to shrink back from her Husband in shame. But we must not, for now we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ:*

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation; He has wrapped me in a robe of righteousness *as a bridegroom bedecks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.* (Isaiah 61:10)

- MP: Church, because of the Gospel He now gives himself openly, freely, and passionately to you; and because of the Gospel, *you now, as His Beloved Bride, can do the same with Him!* (SONGS)

V. Conclusion/Application

A. Loaded with typology, our text again demonstrates *the Christ-centered Unity of the Bible*

- Assures us of the divine inspiration of Scripture
- VERY useful for evangelism (e.g. Dean’s letter to editor)

B. It supplies both Christian singles and married couples with wisdom and encouragement:

- It enables Christian singles to *appreciate* marriage
- It enables Christian couples to *manage* marriage (roles)
- It enables Christian couples to *manifest* the marriage of Christ and His Bride

C. It GREATLY enriches our personal relationship with the Lord:

- It illumines His deep, eternal, purposeful, and practical love for us

- Setting us free to ever-increasingly fall in love with Him!

D. A concluding admonition from Grandma Barry:

GB: “Anne, do you have a circle of new friends at college? And are there any young men in that circle?”

Anne: “O I’m far too practical for romance; I’ll probably end up an old maid!”

GB: “It’s not a circumstance I’d recommend for you. Take a little advice from one who knows, *and make a little room in your plans for romance*, Anne Girl. All the degrees and scholarships in the world can’t make up for the lack of it!”

Dean: Actually, make a LOT of room! You’ll be glad you did!