

TOGETHER IN FAITH
A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE ON MARRIAGE
SESSION 1

- I. Creation Ideal – Pre-Fall
 - A. Creation Narrative Story I – Genesis 1:26-31
 - 1. Simultaneous creation of man and woman in the image of God (vs. 27)
 - 2. God blessed them and gave them dominion (vs. 28)
 - 3. God saw it was good – it was very good (vs. 31)
 - B. God’s creation originally involved community/partnership
 - 1. A simultaneous creation – combination male/female – a filling out of anima/animus, yin/yang, etc.
 - 2. Human beings/disciples of Christ are meant to live in partnership
- II. Creation Story II – The Real – Post-Fall
 - A. Genesis 2:15-24 – Still pre-Fall
 - 1. Helper – helpmate – completer (vs. 18)

Ish = man; ishshah = woman; ishshah fills out (vs. 18 and 20) the man; each allowing a fullness to occur
 - 2. One flesh – undivided – mutually complete (vs. 24). Coupling more than wearing the same sweatshirts
 - 3. Leaving parents - both husband and wife developing necessary distance from the family of origin
 - B. Genesis 3:8-13 “They” – Adam and Eve – hear the sound
 - 1. Terrorized by the rustling of a leaf
 - 2. The blaming begins – ideal to the real
 - 3. The woman you gave me (vs. 12); the serpent tricked me (vs. 13)

C. Marital strife from the ideal to the real is

1. Blaming; desiring to be as God; lacking mercy; engaging shame – disproportionate hiding; humanity revealed (Wangerin 48-49)

III. Gospel of Jesus Christ: Creation Restored

A. Colossians 1:15-23 Reconciled in Christ

1. We who were once estranged – real-life marriage now reconciled/transformed

B. Adam typology Romans 5:12-19 Righteousness of Christ leads to justification for all

1. Implications of extended righteousness from Christ to Christians; husbands and wives

C. Ephesians 5:21-31 Ephesians author presupposes the transformed life

1. “Be subject to one another as the holy redeemed.”
2. Live the servant life with the other: footwashing; caring; responding

D. Have this mind among yourselves Philippians 2:1-11

1. *Kenosis* – self-emptying/humility; bowing of the knee

E. Forgiveness – marriage’s watchword

1. Wangerin: “There is no tool more practical to marriage maintenance, nor more important than that both husband and wife are capable of the reparation of forgiveness. Let there be communication and let the thing being communicated be forgiveness.”
2. Romans 7:14-25 Wretched person/ wretched choices – unbelievable hurt
Yet Luke 6:37-38; 41-42; Matthew 18:21-22 - The divine absurdity
3. In forgiveness you give up your rights – choosing not revenge nor redress for the sins committed against

IV. Practicing Forgiveness - Wangerin

- A. A loving willingness to forgive is a crucifixion. I am being killed all the day long
 - 1. A different pain in forgiveness/not soothing
- B. Exaggerations minimized “you always”
 - 1. Not really what is the particular grievance – don’t generalize from the particular
- C. Remember your own need of forgiveness
 - 1. There is no distinction since all have fallen short of the glory of God
- D. Explore the hurt poignantly without a motivation of revenge or retribution
 - 1. Forgiveness is not denial of the hurt; it is the Spirit of Christ reconciling the hurt

SESSION 2
**LUTHER: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGIAN: A CHANGE AGENT WHO
LOWERED THE BAR AND SIMULTANEOUSLY TRANSFORMED THE
STATUS OF MARRIAGE**

- I. Luther dealt with two significant realities – celibacy and marriage as sacrament
 - A. Both imply an obvious divine sanction – a holiness
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 Paul on the celibate life
 - 2. Genesis 1:28 Be fruitful and multiply – fill the earth and subdue it
 - B. Very lofty impression of marriage as holy/undefiled – a vessel of God’s grace as would be the celibate priest
 - C. Luther responding to both celibacy and marriage as sacrament suggested marriage as ordinance
 - 1. To be married is an ordinance and institution of God – God placing the married in the estate where they not only could but should live holy lives
 - 2. Be confident as the married that you are living in an estate honored by God – obeying God by being married
- II. Marriage – a civic or civil matter – not first the business of the church
 - A. Marriage for Luther was a left-hand of God business; a part of the created order of things – male and female he created them
 - 1. God instituted but not gospel required
 - B. And yet marriage as an offset to loneliness 1 Timothy 4:1-3
 - 1. Luther: “Ah, how I was oppressed by natural affections when lying at the door of death in Smalcald. I thought I could never again see my wife and children. How that separation affected me. And I now readily believe that the dying meet these natural affections most intensely – but having become well again I love my wife and children all the more.”
 - C. Never wish to exchange Katie. Why?
 - 1. God has given her to me and me to her

2. Shortcomings in other women are far more than Katie's; hers are offset by greater virtues
3. She keeps the faith and honors our marriage

E. To Luther a practical/theological approach to marriage was vital

1. "A pious spouse is as necessary as a sound hand or leg. If married life is to turn out well, it must begin with God."
2. Marry the daughter of a good mother. Advice to men: "If a man wants to marry he should inquire not about the father but about the reputation of the mother because the beer usually smells of the barrel."

III. Luther's Incarnational Theology – God in the flesh shows up in marriage "lowered the bar to the earth"

A. Beyond the angel of romance from idealization to realization

1. Love accommodates; love acknowledges; love (Christian) refuses the worldly inducements and lies. A theology of the cross calls something what it is

B. Christian love/marriage is unafraid of announcing the struggle and the differences

1. Love unmistakably made known in Christ Jesus in the acceptance of the other
2. Amidst shortcomings/foibles (smells)/brokenness/disappointment/laughter/body change/career change/children/in-laws/holidays/anniversaries, etc

C. Be confident in every hour that you are living in an estate which was instituted by God and is pleasing to God

1. And God shows up in it in Jesus Christ in mercy; spontaneity; celebration; forgiveness; mess; pain/joy
2. After religion, marriage is, for many reasons, the principal estate – God has God's hand in on the marital estate
3. God shows up sacramentally – in the place of the flesh even as marriage is not a sacrament