

Lies We Believe About Marriage

Opening Joke:

A young bride-to-be was at the rehearsal for her wedding. She was nervous and having a hard time remembering what she was supposed to do when she walked down the aisle. The minister said, "Relax, it's not hard. First, all you need to do is slowly walk down the aisle. Second, walk straight at the altar. Third, when get to the altar, turn and look at him—your husband to be. If you'll just remember those 3 things, you'll do just fine."

The next day, everyone was seated at the church and it was time for her to walk down the aisle. As the organist played the Wedding March, she walked down the aisle saying out loud, "Aisle. . . altar. . . him. Aisle. . . altar. . . him. I'll alter him!" Thousands of brides have walked down the aisle saying the same thing—"I'll alter him. I'll change him!" Kent Crockett's Sermon Illustrations, www.kentcrockett.com

1. Introduction –

- a. Why are we doing this series: We have been examining the lies we believe in our lives. Part of the reason that we are examining these in a series is because we will act upon what we believe. If we believe false information, it will profoundly affect us. You can imagine stopping at gas station and asking directions. (Only women do this). They snicker and laugh and then give you directions...to a street dead ending at a hog farm. You believed them but they told you a lie. Now you have to turn around and start over.
- b. It is the same with our lives. When you find out you have followed or believed false information, you need to TURN AROUND (repent) and start over with the truth.

2. Today we are examining the lies we believe about marriage.

- a. I am reasonably certain that most of us have believed our share of false information about marriage and had a rude awakening after the honeymoon.
- b. A young man asks his father, "Is it true? Dad, I heard that in ancient China, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries." The father replies: "That happens everywhere, son, everywhere"
- c. If you thought that all your problems would be solved by marriage, you found out that they were just beginning.
- d. Marriage is a wonderful institution but it is the bringing together of two very different people with very different goals, expectations, and needs and desires.
- e. What should surprise us isn't that 50% of marriages end in divorce but that 50% of them remain married! Marriage is hard work!
- f. Lets examine what the bible says about marriage and expose the falsehoods of marriage with God's word.
 - i. Matthew 19:3-11 *Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.*

1. Jesus goes back to the very beginning of creation to develop the authority for his teaching. He covers divorce, marriage and the nature of marriage in this teaching.
 - ii. This morning, I will be making a few references to divorce. If you are divorced, I want you to know that you are not a second class citizen in the Kingdom of Heaven. God sees you in the present and not in the past.
 1. He dealt with your past at the Cross and He desires to make your future something special.
 2. So as you listen I want to remind you, “do not take condemnation from my teaching this morning.”
3. **Marriage can be between people in love.**”
- a. In our society we have attempts to redefine marriage.
 - i. This is not the first time there have been attempts to redefine it. In the 19th century, the Mormons tried to define marriage as a man and many women. They did not succeed.
 - i. What is at fault and at the root of this problem is a fundamental misunderstanding of what marriage is.
 - ii. When Jesus was asked about divorce, he went back to the beginning.
 1. Jesus defined marriage for them as a permanent relationship between a man and a woman. In our passage we just read it said, *"Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'*
 2. Jesus did not say, “made them male and male”
 3. Jesus did not say, “a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his husband and the two shall become one flesh.”
 4. Marriage very clearly and distinctly, if you believe in the authority of Scripture, is exclusively reserved as an institution of one man and one woman.
 - b. Now before we demonize those who are trying to redefine marriage, we ought to first try to understand **why** they are doing so.
 - i. We have a group of people who have believed a lie that the American Psychological Association has told them...that they are born with a NORMAL desire to be attracted to people of the same gender.
 - ii. Consequently, they believe that their sexual orientation is God-given at birth and should not be a basis for any form of discrimination in society or within the church.
 - iii. They should be allowed to marry people of the same gender because their desires are “normal” according to psychologists.
 - iv. Remember, if you start building upon a faulty foundation, the whole house will be built upon a lie.
 - c. Lets examine just a few key arguments that those who desire to redefine marriage make.
 - i. **It is discriminatory not to let me marry the person I love.** – Homosexuals and liberal churches argue that if you oppose legalizing homosexual marriage that you are denying them their civil rights and making them second-class citizens.
 1. Marriage is an institution, not a civil right.
 - a. It has nothing to do with first- or second-class citizenship.
 - b. Marriage either has an enduring, unchanging definition, or it will have no definition.
 2. Every adult in the United States already has a right to marry.
 - a. But everyone also has restrictions on whom they may marry--again, without exception.

- b. No one is permitted to marry a child, a close blood relative, a person who is already married, or a person of the same sex.
 - c. These restrictions apply equally to everyone--there is no discrimination involved.
 - d. Marriage by the nature of its legal institution is discriminatory.
 - i. It says that you CAN marry anyone you love, as long as they are of the OPPOSITE gender, are of legal age and that they are not a close relative or already legally married.
3. In actuality, a homosexual is not being discriminated against, because the law is applied equally among all.
 4. Every person in our country possesses the right to marry.
 5. The attempt to pass a constitutional amendment is not attempting to take away something that already exists but instead attempting to prevent a liberal judge from imposing his will upon an entire nation.
 6. The same-sex marriage movement, by contrast, is grounded in the denial of a fundamental truth: **The Creator who made us equal made us male and female.**
 7. That duality has always and everywhere been the starting point for marriage.

ii. **This is civil rights argument not a religious argument.**

1. The proponents of redefining marriage say that this is a strictly religious point of view of marriage and that it should not be allowed to constrain our courts because of the separation of church and state.
 - a. You are basing your argument on the Bible which has no standing in American law,
 - b. Just because my convictions find their place in sacred literature doesn't invalidate them.
 - c. Murder is outlawed in the bible, does that mean we ought to make it legal?
 - d. Because theft is outlawed in the bible, should we make it legal?
 - e. Is that just a religious argument?
 2. But defining marriage as the union of male and female is not something unique to Christian theology, biblical teaching, or even a Judeo-Christian worldview.
 - a. In fact, until the last blink of an eye in human history, there has never been any civilization, any religion, or any culture that has treated homosexual relationships as the full equivalent of heterosexual marriage.
 - b. Marriage is not simply a religious institution, nor is it merely a civil institution.
 - c. Instead, marriage is a natural institution, whose definition as the union of a man and a woman is rooted in the order of nature itself.
 3. Same-sex marriage would start us down a "slippery slope" towards legalized incest, polygamy and other forms of personalized relationships.
 - a. It will because it already has.
 - b. Polygamy was outlawed in our country 150 years ago, yet now there are lawsuits being filed saying, "we want our rights too!"
- d. Finally, don't hate the homosexual. They are blinded by the god of this world.
- i. Some may claim to be believers, but if they reject the authority of scripture, then they are building their lives upon a lie.
 - ii. You can only be FOR homosexual marriage if you reject the authority of the bible.
 - iii. You won't argue a homosexual to become straight. But you can love him or her so that they might be able to see Jesus.

4. **Divorce is better than a bad marriage.**

- a. You and I can do nothing about your past. If you have a divorce in your past, the last thing I want to do is to beat you up with it. God isn't beating up on you, so neither will I.
- b. What we must look at is the relationship you are now in and how to make it better.
 - i. When a marriage is disintegrating, both partners ALWAYS seem to have the point of view that it is the other person's fault.
 - ii. For both partners, their lives revolve around themselves and their hurts.
- c. If you are in a troubled marriage, I would urge you to get counseling. If your spouse won't go, I urge you to go to counseling.
 - i. You can only change yourself.
 - ii. You are only responsible for how you conduct yourself in the marriage.
 - iii. Make sure you are following Christ.
- d. I have seen some horrible things happen in marriages. I will not urge anyone to divorce. I may urge a legal separation, but divorce is not something I believe a Christian should initiate or seek. If you have a violent, dangerous or a spouse prone to alcohol or drugs or crime, a separation is wise. You must have the space to protect yourself and your family. I don't urge remarriage.
 - i. I have done weddings for divorced people. I do it cautiously. Let me leave it at that.
- e. I heard of a couple who, as they were paying for groceries in the check-out line, were discussing their soon to be 50th wedding anniversary, when the young cashier interjected by saying, "I can't imagine being married to same man for 50 years!" The wife wisely replied, teaching the young girl a lesson at the same time, "Well, Honey, don't get married until you can ."

5. **I can change my spouse.**

- a. This is a disastrous lie that many of us fall into. It will lead only to frustration on both partner's part.
- b. Dr. Howard Hendricks has said people get married with a picture in their minds of a perfect marriage. Then after a few trials, they discover they aren't married to a perfect picture, but an imperfect person. When this realization occurs, they will either tear up the picture or they will tear up the person. (Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, 86)
- c. **The truth is the only person you can change is yourself.**
- d. You cannot do the job of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The tools you have at your disposal for change are
 - ii. A godly life – will produce conviction and spiritual hunger in your spouse.
 - iii. A life of prayer – will lead you to back off the pressure on your spouse (which they inevitably resist) and allow God to work from the inside out in their life.

6. **I have to be married to be happy.** Au Contraire! There are several fallacies behind this lie.

- a. If you aren't happy before your are married, being married certainly won't make you happy! Amen?
 - i. **No one can "make you happy."** You find happiness from within, not from without. Trying to find your fulfillment IN another person is like trying to fill your gas tank with water. It will only make things worse!
- b. I really think that this attitude comes from a misunderstanding of the purpose of marriage.
 - i. **Marriage doesn't exist to make us happy.**
 - ii. **Marriage exists to glorify and reflect God in the most difficult and intimate of all human relationships.**
 - iii. Difficult you say?
 1. I have found very few people who say that they have an easy marriage.

2. When someone says, “we’ve never had an argument” I always want to say, “did you live in separate homes?”
 - e. The ideal marriage is where both partners are focused upon meeting one another’s needs above their own.
 - i. Most of us are selfish at our core, and we pull for our own needs pretty hard, making trade-offs so that our needs are met when we meet the needs of our spouse.
 - f. People who believe this lie that a spouse will make you happy end up settling for less than the best that God intended for them.
 - i. So many people who believe this lie marry non-Christians. One spouse stays home while the other goes to church. One spouse has Christian friends, the other has beer drinking friends. One’s priority is the children the other’s priority is their job or their hobby.
 - ii. I really believe that when I counsel people for marriage, I must do a better job than just helping them see blind spots in their relationship. I, as a pastor-teacher, must help them see the purpose for marriage.
 - g. When Jesus discussed divorce with his disciples in Matthew 19:9-11 his disciples were shocked and concluded that it was “better not to marry.”
 - h. His reply, “Not all men can accept this statement.”
 - i. If you are a single adult, I challenge you to make the following decision.
 1. You will not marry for anything less than the glory of God.
 2. Decide today not to marry for loneliness, for emotional love, or for companionship. Decide not to marry because you are burning with sexual desire and you want a “legal” way to express that. (If you don’t have it under control before marriage, you will still have the problem afterwards).
7. When a newly married man looks happy, we know why. But when a ten-year married man looks happy, we wonder why.
- a. Ephesians 5:25-31 *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”*
 - b. The story is told of a prince and his family who were captured by an enemy king.
 - i. When brought before the enemy king, the prisoner was asked, "What will you give me if I release you?" "Half of my wealth," was the prince’s reply.
 - ii. "And if I release your children?" "Everything I possess."
 - iii. And if I release your wife?" Your Majesty, for her I would give myself," said the prince.
 - iv. The king was so moved by the prince’s devotion to his family that he freed them all.
 - v. As they returned home the prince said to his wife, "Wasn’t the king a handsome man?"
 - vi. With a look of deep love for her husband, she said to him, "I didn’t notice. I could keep my eyes only on the one who was willing to give himself for my sake."
 - c. Marriage was designed by God to reflect His glory and His redemption.
 - i. Imagine what would have happened if Adam hadn’t eaten the fruit...Eve would have been condemned.
 - ii. Imagine then what Adam would have done if he had loved Eve more than himself. He would have offered to die in her place.
 - d. Marriage, according to Ephesians 5 is to be a relationship where the husband lays down his life for his wife, loving her the way Christ loved the church.

8. **Truth: Marriage is not easy and cannot be neglected.**
- a. On July 29, 1981, one of the most highly publicized and glamorous weddings in history took place.
 - Britain's Prince Charles married Lady Diana
 - An estimated audience of 750 million people worldwide.
 - 4500 pots of fresh flowers lined the route to St. Paul's cathedral.
 - 2500 people crowded that grand church where more than 75 technicians with 21 cameras worked to enable the world to watch this wedding.
 - For many people, this was a modern fairy tale. A royal prince weds a lovely lady in a grand cathedral surrounded by adoring subjects.
 - They were the envy of millions. They were rich, young, handsome. It was a "marriage made in heaven."
 - Sadly, we know that the fairy tale became a nightmare. The couple grew more and more distant.
 - Affairs ensued. The storybook marriage made in heaven eventually collapsed into adultery and divorce.

It takes more than a prince, a lady, and a palace to make a happy marriage.

 - As someone said, "marriages may be made in heaven but the maintenance must be done on earth."
 - b. • For marriages to survive, they require regular maintenance. They require effort.
9. Jack Benny was rather shy when he was young. One day at work he saw a young lady that greatly attracted his attention. But he was too shy to speak to her. So he went to the florist & ordered one red rose to be sent to her without any card enclosed. And every day he repeated that order. Well, after 4 days of receiving one red rose each day, the young lady went to the florist & asked who was sending them. The florist told her that it was some guy who worked where she did by the name of Jack Benny. "Yeah," she said, "I think I know who he is." So she searched Jack out & asked him why he was sending her those roses. He told her that he wanted to ask her out, & she accepted his invitation. And other dates followed that first one. But still, every day, she continued to receive one red rose. Then Jack & Mary got engaged, & Mary figured that the red roses would stop. But still they came. Finally, they were married, & even on the honeymoon she continued to receive one red rose each day. But once the honeymoon was over, she figured that the roses would stop. But month after month, then year after year, all their married life, every day without fail she received a red rose. Finally, Jack Benny died. But the very next day, here came another red rose. Thinking that maybe the florist somehow hadn't heard, she called to tell him of Jack's death & that he could now stop sending the roses. He answered, "But you don't understand. Before he died, Jack made all the arrangements. You'll receive one red rose every day for the rest of your life."

I Do not know what God has been saying to you this morning. Perhaps you have secretly been thinking of ending your marriage. Perhaps you have been waiting for your spouse to make you happy. Perhaps you have put your needs and wants at the center of your marriage instead of Jesus. Whatever it is...If God has spoken to you, I urge you to make it right with God this morning. We have confronted the lie. Now believe the truth. Let's pray.