

Marriage (Outline)

- God gave life to humanity (2:7)
- Humanity created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), then separated into man and woman (Gen. 2:21-22).
- The woman comes to the man as the gift of God (Gen. 2:22)
- The union of man and woman is God's design and intention, so that each might be a help and companion for the other (Gen. 2:20,22), their union reflecting the image of God (Gen. 1:27b=Mt. 19:4).
- The union of man and woman in marriage is also said to reflect the mystery of Christ's union with the church (Eph. 5:22-33), a divine matter once hidden and now made plain through the revelation of the Gospel (the good news concerning God's plan of salvation) (Eph. 5:32; cf. 1:3-14). Costly, sacrificial love is required so that the other might be well, following Christ's own example (Eph. 5:25-28).
 - Marriage must be respected for *what it is* (apart from and prior to what we make of it). It is something to be *kept sacred*.
 - Cf. Augustine on the first of the three goods of marriage being *sacramentum* (an engagement with another person that is sacred in character and reflects and involves the working of God toward us).
- This union, as instituted by God, has a supernatural character (is to be a unique one-flesh union) and takes precedence over all preceding natural loves.
 - "The man must *leave* his father and mother and *be united* to his wife" (Gen. 2:24=Mt. 19:5).
 - "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mt. 19:6).
 - Marriage is thus defined by an exclusive loyalty, so that
 - the individual can have no other similar relationships and
 - no preceding natural relationships can be put on par with marriage and make similar or competing demands.
 - Marriage must be actively defended from all competing claims.
 - Cf. Augustine on the second of the three goods of marriage being *fides* (faithfulness as exclusive loyalty).
- Marriage is a union that is open to and embraces children who are born from that relationship (Gen. 1:28)
 - Children are to be received as the gift of God (Ps. 127:3; cf. Gen. 18:10-14 and the birth of Samuel in 1 Samuel 1), given for a time in trust to us, and are to be returned back to God (cf. Mal. 2:15; the dedication of Samuel in 1 Sam. 2; compare the perversion of this ideal in Ezek. 20:31)
 - Cf. Augustine on the third of the three goods of marriage (*proles*=offspring, i.e. children that are born from that relationship and are to be brought up with faith in God).

Divorce (Outline)

- God's intention is the creation and preservation of marriage.
- God did not institute or desire divorce.
- Divorce arises from hardened hearts (Mt. 19:8) that do not love or protect, but break trust and engage in adultery (Mal 2:15-16), which is rebellion against God (cf. Heb. 3:8) and spiritual adultery (cf. Jer. 3:1,8, etc.).
- God regulates a pre-existing Near Eastern practice of divorce to limit its abuses by making the status of women clear (the writ of divorce in Dt. 24:2), preventing the husband from manipulating the wife by casting her off and then taking her back again as he pleases. This allows the woman to seek a new marriage in which she will be loved and faithfully protected.
- "Let man not separate" (Mt. 19:6) implies that man can separate another person from their marriage.
- Although there is some discussion of what "indecent" means in Dt. 24:1, the majority opinion (apparently supported by Jesus in Mt. 5:32; 19:9) refers this to extra-marital sexual activity, so apparently this can compromise the one-flesh union to such an extent that divorce is the acknowledged outcome.
- 1 Cor. 7:11-13 also considers final rejection of the Christian partner by the non-Christian spouse as the basis for dissolving a marriage initially contracted before one became a Christian.