

Exodus 20:14 The 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Marriage should be honored by all.  
Pentecost 11 August 16,17, 2009

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior...

God's Word to show us the value of marriage and to protect it is written in Exodus 20:14

This is the Word of our God. We pray: O God, who hears when sinners cry though all our crimes before You lie, behold them not with angry look, but blot their memory from Your book. Amen. (TLH #325 v.1)

Dear Friends, in Christ,

Of all the commandments we have studied, we are now at the one that I believe is in the most danger. Marriage is under attack in our nation. On one side, many people just ignore God's command that they be married in order to live in an intimate relationship. On the other side, people are trying to redefine marriage to include two men, or two women, or who knows what the combinations will be! It led one modern writer to comment that in 50 years he didn't think our country would have marriage at all as we know it. Yet for us, God's Word could not be clearer regarding marriage. It is to be a lifelong union of one man and one woman into one flesh where husband and wife promise to be faithful and love each other. All Christians, whether married or not, have a responsibility. "We are to strive to preserve marriage as God gave it, to guard it, and keep it pure and holy." (E. Kauffield) So, we say,

### **Marriage should be honored by all!**

**First, why did God establish marriage?** God established marriage for an intimate companionship. He created Adam first, and said of him, "*It is not good that man should be alone.*" (Genesis 2:18) God created the first bride from Adam's rib, and He performed the first ceremony. Then Adam said his vows, "*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.*" (Genesis 2:23) In a sinless world the first couple had a perfect love for each other based on the love of God for them. God also told the first couple to *be fruitful and multiply*. To this day in marriage, God often blesses couples with children.

God also intended order in marriage. The Bible states, "*Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.*" (Eph. 5:25) The husband is to take the responsibility for the home, especially taking into account his wife's needs. Also, the Bible states, "*Wives, submit to your husband, as to the Lord.*" (Eph. 5:24) Let him take the lead. As long as husband and wife love and respect each other as God says, their marriage should flourish.

But, we don't live in a perfect world. The devil is constantly trying to break up what God established to be for life. For our good, God warned, "*You shall not commit adultery.*" (v.14) Two people through marriage become one. That is what God considers pure. No one else is to be included in that intimate relationship. This is true for all, including Christians. Paul wrote, "*It is God's will that you ... should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)

**Second, how do we and all people measure up regarding God's will for marriage?** Being married does not exempt us from this commandment. Every one of us must fight against our sinful heart, no matter how good our relationship is. Jesus said, "*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, [and] adultery....*" (Matthew 15:19) We must keep guard. Our minds get tempted with lustful thoughts. Jesus warned, "*I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" (Matthew 5:28) Imagine if there was a computer that could display all our thoughts. How often would we be embarrassed if others knew the wicked things on our minds. Jesus can read our minds. God is not fooled by any outward appearances of piety. Paul warned, "*Everything that does not come from faith is sin.*" (Romans 14:23)

We cannot be satisfied if we are seek to keep this commandment for ourselves, but have no concern for others. Martin Luther wrote that if we fail to help our neighbor stay faithful "we are just as guilty as the culprit." Also, if

others are degrading marriage or speaking sinfully about sexual matters, we cannot condone such talk. Paul wrote, *“Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking....”* (Ephesians 5:3-4) The overall command of God is in Hebrews 13: *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”* (v.4) That is the negative side of the commandment.

**Third, what does God want us to do in a positive way?** Whenever we find our minds or actions breaking this commandment, we are turn away and confess our sin. The Bible states, *“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”* (2 Timothy 2:22) That is exactly what Joseph did when he was tempted to commit adultery with his owner’s wife. He literally ran away so that he remained faithful not only to his owner, but to God. But, what if we have sinful thoughts or actions?

Can God forgive such sins? God forgave all sins, when Jesus died on the cross. Although we have not always been faithful, God remains faithful. For any of us who are truly sorry for our sins and trust in Christ, the Bible assures us that God *“is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9) As we daily commit ourselves to Christ, we can build a stronger relationship with our spouses or others in God’s love.

God positively wants to fortify us with His Word. The better we understand God’s will in marriage and sexual purity, the better we can avoid such sins. Here is an example. Bible: *“Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* (Romans 6:11) When we are tempted, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin. Sin has no power over us. When sin accuses, we don’t listen, because in Christ, our sins are paid in full. When sins condemn, we don’t fear, because there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. So, let’s fill our minds with God’s promises.

God wants us to pray for strength, wisdom, and guidance from Him, for we cannot stand against powerful temptations on our own. When we sin and receive forgiveness in Christ, we pray with David, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God.”* (Psalm 51). Another thing which God wants us to avoid is idle time. King David had to confess his sins of adultery and murder because he had been at his palace with nothing to do but to peep at a woman. If we have too much free time, or spend too much time watching movies or shows which we just should turn off or leave, then we need to find better things to do, like working, helping others, reading, doing fun things with people. We may also need to avoid certain people when possible if they are trying to tempt us. Rather we should seek to be with believers who have the same values about marriage and all that is related to it.

Together in Christ, we can take a stand regarding marriage. Those of us who are married can set a good example of how loving spouses are to act faithfully toward each other. Also, we must pray for people, especially for Christians who are breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment. We don’t want them to be condemned by God. So we should encourage them to marry and find God’s forgiveness in Christ. Then, 50 years from now, by God’s grace there will still be marriages in our nation. There will still be people who wait until marriage before they live together. There will be Christians who know and follow God’s plan for marriage who will be blessed. Amen.