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## Living in Love and Faith

### What Christ says about marriage

The Church of England has just published its report “Living in Love and Faith”. The report does not tell you about what Christ says so much as giving different people’s views all around the theme of diversity.

What Jesus Christ says to us all is clear and positive for all the people of the world so it is always strange to hear some launch-in straight away with what they think are “politically correct” views.



To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word “CHRISTian” means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says.

Today, and this is completely modernist, university academics very strangely want to show off their political correctness rather than find and tell us the truth. This means they are instead being “economical with the truth”.

This is doubly strange because we live in a world surrounded by technology, science and engineering that only ever works because of truth. So truth is real and not some fabricated idea.

The truth is that every child in the world has a mother and a father. That is the basic, truthful and real origin of life for all of us.

Firstly, the Bible does not say that married couples can always have children at all. We may put the ingredients together in preparation for a family, but it does not follow that any couple will be blessed by children.

Secondly, Jesus Christ does tell us what marriage is in the Gospels and marriage is from God and not from the State. In Matthew’s gospel at chapter 19 our Lord Jesus Christ does tell us what marriage is, and again Jesus tells us in Mark’s gospel at chapter 10.

It has become popular to say Jesus' teaching was about divorce and yet no matter how you translate the original text from the koine Greek of the New Testament into English Jesus never, ever says what divorce is. Jesus simply says what Marriage is.

Firstly we have to see that the title to the section that the editors and publishers put to a section is NOT in the text of the Bible itself and never, ever has been, nor will it ever be in the Bible. Some Bibles give a title to chapter 10 of "Teaching about divorce" and yet, even though some Pharisees do ask Jesus Christ about divorce, Jesus does NOT tell them about divorce at all – Jesus never tells anyone what divorce is – Jesus instead tells us what Marriage is.

Jesus says in Mark's gospel at chapter 10:

<sup>6</sup> "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' <sup>7</sup> 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,  
<sup>8</sup> and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

What Jesus does not tell us is what divorce is at all, Jesus tells us instead what marriage is simply by us translating His own words.

We also see the affirmation that marriage is from God and not from the State, when Jesus Christ tells us:

<sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.

It is God who joins a man and a woman together. It is not the State who says what Christian marriage is but God. Same sex relationships have value and worth, but the modernist version is muddling up words when it calls them marriages.

So firstly some academics at universities try to say that Jesus is talking about divorce when he doesn't say what divorce is, and when the academics fail at that attempt they try to be equally dismissive by saying Jesus Christ is only speaking of marriage at the time ....only He wasn't.

Polygamy was normal then just as it is still today in some societies. Yet Jesus says:  
.....*a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,*

This is about "a man" (singular) and "a woman" (singular). It is neither about one man marrying several women, or about one woman marrying more than one man, nor is it about bigamy.

The original koine Greek in which Mark and Matthew's gospel was written has no clear and distinct word for "wife", only a word for "woman". It is the translators who have looked at what is being spoken about and translated it as "his wife" ... and yet: The marriage of the time had the expectation that it was only the woman who would leave their family, but the man would not. The man would take his wife but remain in the clan or tribe headed by the patriarch. This is true patriarchy (not the modern invention of simply being male). Yet when you look at the words of Jesus Christ, Jesus does not support patriarchy at all. Jesus tells us that

.....*a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,*

If a man leaves his Father and is joined together as husband and wife, Jesus is saying that they form a new unit completely and this is NOT patriarchy at all. Even in the Bible the duties of a husband and wife are laid out and they are to love and support each other. So it is clearly untrue that Jesus was ever only speaking of marriage in his own time, when the marriage that Jesus Christ tells us about is NOT the marriage of his time at all.

What Jesus says about marriage being between one man and one woman is a scenario that means that every child in the world has a mother and a father. That is the basic, truthful and real origin of life for all of us and it is a truth confirmed.

This is actually positive for all of us. This is not like the lost children of Argentina which never knew their Fathers and Mothers. That is distasteful politics rather than normal reality. This is instead the true reality that every child has a father and a mother.

This concept of marriage being between one woman and one man is throughout the New Testament: In the first letter to Timothy a Church leader can only be the husband of but one wife. As it tell us in 1 Timothy chapter 3 we are told:

*<sup>3</sup> The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way— <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?*

Just because you get married the Bible never says that you will be lucky enough to have children. One of the two wedding Psalms used in the church was Psalm 128. What Psalm 128 says is:

### **Psalm 128**

- <sup>1</sup> Blessed are all who fear the Lord,  
who walk in obedience to him.*
- <sup>2</sup> You will eat the fruit of your labor;  
blessings and prosperity will be yours.*
- <sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.*
- <sup>4</sup> Yes, this will be the blessing  
for the man who fears the Lord.*
- <sup>5</sup> May the Lord bless you from Zion;  
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.*
- <sup>6</sup> May you live to see your children's children—  
peace be on Israel.*

In verse 3 it is “Your wife” that will be like a fruitful vine, and “Your children” that will be like olive shoots but an olive tree doesn't grow in a vineyard, and in verse 4 this will be the blessing for the “man who fears the Lord”. Therefore back in verse 3 this is about a man / husband and a woman / wife.

The reference to the wife being a fruitful vine and the reference to children being like olive shoots are in different paragraphs. When you visit a household you know whether it is a warm place instinctively and so the reference to fruitful vine is about the house and about the couple and is linked to the “man” fearing the Lord. This actually not only refers to the husband believing in God, but also to the woman, as the reference to “man” can be understood as human (and St Paul’s letters deal with the question of what happens when a Christian marries a non-Christian). What is true is that whenever the respect and fear of God is not present in a Christian household, however imperfectly, then it is noticeable, and when a man or woman does not fear God then that incompleteness reflects onto the family around.

As Michael Wilcock wrote about this Psalm:

*The fear of the Lord and his blessings are matters of daily life, to do with house and family, work and food just as they are also in Psalm 127.*

In the Message translation of the Bible into modern language it is translated as “...your *household lush as a vineyard*.” which expresses the idea that the words are not about a building but about an environment. So “fruitful” is about a warm, Christian atmosphere through that complementarity and togetherness, it is not necessarily about the blessing of children at all. So not all couples will have children, but all couples can be fruitful. As soon as you see that it is about a fruitful household then you realise that such a couple is a real blessing to the whole community. This also reminds us that marriage is something that is worth constantly working on, as we each constantly change, because the ultimate reward is always there.

The phrase “God is love” does not appear in the Gospels.

In the letter 1 John chapter 4 at verse 8 it says:

*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

But love in this verse is NOT “Eros” (sexual love) but “Agape” (caring love). So whoever does not show caring love does not know God, because God is caring love.

Marriage is from God is what our Lord Jesus Christ tells us. Jesus does not mislead us by referring to the same idea as we find in 1 John 4 when that particular idea is not directly about marriage at all.

Christian marriage is God given. “Fruitful” is about a warm, Christian atmosphere in the house, it is not necessarily about the blessing of children at all. So not all couples will have children but all couples can be fruitful. This also reminds us that marriage is something that is worth constantly working on as we each constantly change because the ultimate reward is always there.

God also wants your marriage to work, and if God is behind it then God is also behind your constant efforts to make it work.

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