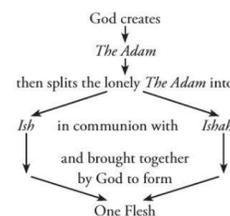


TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP**JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Message Series: Ever After****Message Title: Sustained by Oneness****Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:21-33**

Last week we asked: *What do you do when the wine runs out?* This week, we ask: *How does Jesus sustain a healthy marriage over time?*

1. Jesus Sustains Marriage by Restoring Oneness

- The story of the Bible begins with oneness. In Genesis 1:26-27, God said, *“Let us make human beings in our image...male and female he created them.”* Humanity was created as *eikons*, image bearers. God did not want the first human to be alone, but to reflect the oneness of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), so God divided the human into two: man and woman. God created otherness for man and woman to experience the glories of love and mutuality. God brings the man and the woman together in Genesis 2:24, as the “two become one flesh.”
- In Genesis 3, the problem of sin fractures oneness. The image bearing humanity is cracked, and oneness with God, self, others, and the world is fractured. This is why marriage is so hard sometimes: it is the uniting of two cracked image bearers. We all feel shamefully naked when we’re exposed. We hide from God and blame each other. We experience a disconnection from the world and even ourselves.
- Before we ever have oneness in our marriage, we must have oneness with God first. Jesus came to restore cracked and lost image bearers to the Father. Jesus came to restore oneness with God, ourselves, and others. If you want oneness with your spouse, seek oneness with your Savior first. You cannot be one with your spouse while disconnected from Christ. A healthy marriage is not two people staring at each other; it’s two people walking toward Jesus together.



2. Jesus Sustains Marriage through Mutual Submission and Love (Ephesians 5:21-33)

- In Ephesians 5:21, Paul calls everyone in the church to *“submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”* Submission means surrendering your rights to the Lordship of Christ and trusting him. Paul calls every Christian to submit voluntarily, placing themselves under the care and protection of others, because the love of Christ unites them.
- Paul uses “head” to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church, and a husband and wife. There is much debate about what “head” means. However, it does not mean absolute authority. Paul uses a metaphor to explain source, origin, and an essential relationship that holds all things together.

- The husband is called into a new way of relating to his wife, which involves laying down his life for her sake to contribute to her sanctification and maturity in Christ. The husband nourishes, nurtures, and cherishes his wife.
- The wife is called to respect her husband as an expression of her love.
- Marriage is built on our submission to Christ first, then our mutual submission to each other, expressed through love and respect. Healthy marriages are sustained when both spouses ask: “What would obedience to Jesus look like right now?”

3. Jesus Sustains Marriage through Spiritual Practices

- As cracked image bearers, oneness does not naturally occur. It takes intentionality and work to sustain oneness with your spouse. One of the simplest ways to sustain connection is through weekly intentional conversation.
- A marriage cannot thrive spiritually if two people pursue Christ separately but never together. Together, a couple must cultivate spiritual practices through sustaining oneness.
- Praying together cultivates humility, unity, shared dependence, and emotional safety. If you would like to begin praying together, keep it simple and keep it consistent. Praying together, like all growth, requires consistency over time.
- Reading scripture together or sharing scripture can encourage your spouse in their relationship with Jesus.

4. Jesus Sustains Marriage through Reflecting in Us

- Together, a married couple reflects the image of God more fully. God created man and woman in his image, and in unity and oneness, the couple has an opportunity to reflect that image to the world.
- Marriage is a signpost to the oneness of the Trinity and the oneness of humanity with God at the end of time. In Revelation 19:6-8, the church is described as the bride of Christ, who marries the Lamb at the end of time.

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Us in Mind Class | March 3 - April 7 | 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Do you find yourself asking, “What does it take to have a great marriage?” Research shows that happy couples think differently from unhappy couples. What if you could ensure your thoughts were setting you up to love well? You can. We encourage all couples to join us for a fun, life-changing six-session series where you will discover through Scripture, research, and neuroscience a simple way to rethink your marriage and focus on five thoughts to help you love well, even when it is not easy. Be assured, this series is not a bunch of stuffy lectures. It's full of humor, real-life examples, and practical application. You can change your marriage by changing your thoughts, and it's simpler than you think.

