

Marriage and the Mystery of the Cross Questions

Sermon #3 of *The Storm-Tossed Family*

Read I Corinthians 13:1-7 and Philippians 2:1-11

1. Conrad described marriage as a project of love. Have you ever thought about your marriage in that way? How does thinking of your marriage as a project of love shift in any way how you view your marriage? Or what your responsibility is to the marriage?
2. Russell Moore says that marriage belongs to the church. How might the church take new ownership of its marriages if this is the case?
3. Conrad noted that the covenant of marriage is “outside” of the marriage in the sense that it does not belong to the couple but to God. How does this understanding of the marriage covenant differ from the ways that we often think of marriage? What are the stakes involved in violating that covenant?
4. What does the story of Hosea teach us about God’s covenant with we the church? How is Hosea to be a model for our own marriages and our love for our spouse?
5. In what ways have Christians bought into the culture in our thinking of weddings and honeymoons and marriage that may be detrimental to us? In what ways has our acceptance of the culture’s values eroded our views of weddings and marriages?
6. If you had to do your wedding or honeymoon over, is there anything you would do differently? If so, why?
7. Conrad noted that “the only reason these messages on accountability and authority and covenant and commitment grate us as legalistic is because we have so absorbed the culture of personal freedom and individual rights that surrounds us like fog and enters our pores without even recognizing it.” What are your thoughts about this statement?
8. What does a cross-shaped marriage look like as compared to a marriage that is shaped by values other than those of the Gospel (Philippians 2).
9. Conrad said that marriage begins with covenant before consummation, because only covenant promises commitment. How might this be another argument for our teaching against pre-marital sex and the value of waiting for the covenant? That the covenant is worth waiting for the consummation that follows it—a consummation that is physical and bodily but also spiritual and emotional?
10. What was your reaction to the following quote by Russell? “The wise path would be to choose a mate that one can imagine not only lying in bed on a honeymoon but kneeling by a bedside at hospice. Such a covenantal view of the whole sweep of life, of belonging to one another through everything, is the only way to bring real joy.” How is this counter-cultural to the teaching even within the church?
11. What are biblical metrics of a successful marriage as compared to the culture’s metrics of such success? Which measures of marital success are you paying attention to?
12. Conrad noted that most marriages can withstand most problems, including even the unfaithfulness of one of the spouses and including even a decline in or absence of sexual intimacy; that even these marriages can recover and thrive. How can this be so? What about the cross and the Gospel makes this so? How is this statement so very different from the culture?

13. Conrad said that love and faithfulness warps our perspective God's way when it comes to how we view our marriages and our spouses. How have you seen this in either your marriage or others?