

Victory of the Lamb – September 16, 2018 - Family Matters –

Hosea 3:1-3 - Me First or Not – Pastor Bill Limmer

Jim was watching TV when his wife Terry sat down beside him and asked, “What’s on the TV? To which Jim replied, “dust.” And that’s when the fight started.

John and Lydia had been married for 15 years and it was almost Lydia’s birthday. She was hinting and hinting that for her birthday she wanted something that would go from 0 – 150 in under six seconds. So John bought her a scale. And that is when the fight started.

Mike and Kim met in college and began dating. Kim was always glossy eyed when it came to Mike. Early on their relationship Kim had already tagged Mike as the man of her dreams. After they had gone together for a couple of years two got engaged. Early on in their relationships they would often spend weekends at each other parents’ homes. Kim just knew that Mike would make a wonderful husband, and it was confirmed for her after she met his parents. They are so nice to each other, Kim thought. You see, Kim noticed that every Saturday morning, Mike’s dad would wake up before anyone else and make the coffee. He would then take a cup into the bedroom for his wife. The morning after Mike and Kim were married and they were in their honey moon suite. Kim rolled over with a big smile on her face, her eyes and heart full of love and said to Mike: “It’s great how your dad brings coffee to your mom in bed every morning. She asked Mike with her smile still ear to ear, “Does this trait run in your family?” Mike looked into Kim’s eyes with a loving smile of his own and responded: “It sure does, and I take after my mom!” Mike and Kim were just married and they were already starting off on the wrong foot. They each thought that marriage was about them and not the other. To be clear, marriage isn’t about you. It is about the person you married.

This morning we continue our Family Matters series last week we look at the main ingredient in everyone personal and family life and that main ingredient is Jesus. As we unpack Scripture we see that Scripture teachings two basic things about marriage: 1. It was instituted by God. And the second one is the one we are going to concentrate our time on today: 2. Marriage is designed to be a reflection of the saving love of God for us in Christ Jesus.

Here is a 21st century account of marriage based on a true historical account. I need you to pay close attention because this is going to come around full circle in your and for your life, like you would not believe. Jim was a great guy. He was well respected. A person of character, dignity and character. He was a believer in the true God. Jim knew that God was leading him down the path of marriage to a girl named Connie. Only Connie wasn’t like Jim. Connie was a go with the flow and go with any guy who would buy her a drink kind a girl and sometimes she didn’t even need the drink. Jim loved Connie deeply. And Jim and Connie did get married. Connie got married because of what she could get out of it. And it wasn’t long before they were pregnant. And they had a little baby boy. Things were rocky in marriage. They were going in different directions no matter how Jim tried to tow the line. A couple of years later, they got pregnant again and this time they had a little girl. And for those of you who are married and who have kids, you know that anyone who thinks that having kids is going to make them grow closer, well that is not how it happens most of the time. And the word on the street was that Connie always had her eyes open for another guy. Connie, became pregnant yet again and this time some questioned whether the boy born was Jim’s.

And in fact, Connie left Jim to live with another guy. After that you could see Connie at the bars and the clubs dressed to the hilt and very flirtatious with single and married guys. She left the guy that she left Jim for to live with another guy that she had been cheating with all the time. Connie was a mess. Jim's life was in upheaval. He was very distraught. Caught between what he could do (divorce her for unfaithfulness) and what he wanted to do (bring her back home as his dearly loved wife).

Things got worse for Connie. She made a career choice. She became a willing participant in the human trafficking industry. Meanwhile, Jim knew that despite her very rebellious and harmful ways that God wanted him to go get her. And so he did. He had to buy her back from her pimp. It cost him everything he had. And when I say it cost him everything he had that is exactly what I mean. Guys, how many of you would put up with Connie? Would do what Jim did?

Here is the account as it happened, Jim is Hosea and Connie is Gomer. Hosea 1:2-9 ² **When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD."** ³ **So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.** ⁴ **Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵ In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."** ⁶ **Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. ⁷ Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them."** ⁸ **After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹ Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God. And then in Hosea 3:1-3 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."** ² **So I bought her for fifteen shekels^[a] of silver and about a homer and a lethek^[b] of barley. ³ Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."** Minute 16 on film

So here is what that all means. Gomer/Connie is an example of every one of us. We have walked the fence looking side to side to see what we would be easier for us or more please for us. We have used God for what we could get out of him. We have cheated on him by putting other things and people as a higher priority than God. We have been reckless with our lifestyle from the way we think, to what we say, to what we watch, to what we listen to, to what we do. We have taken his loved for granted and have left him at the altar any number of times. Despite our disregard for him, God yearns for us not because he needs us but because he is love. He wants the best for us. And God our creator, the one who knit us and our DNA together in our mother's womb had to buy us back from our pimps of sin, death and the devil. The cost was everything that he had. The cost was his very life.

So what does this have to do with marriage and husbands? EVERYTHING. Ephesians 5:25-27 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** Husbands and husbands to be, it's not about you. It is about God and your spouse 100% of the time. That drives me to my knees. Any guys here along with me, need to repent of what we have made it. Here are some ways we have made it about ourselves: We come home after work, sit in a chair, and watch the same episode

of Sports Center three times in a row and zone out when it comes to our wife and kids. We have been more devoted to our hobby everything from running, to golf, to video games, to work than to our wife. We then expect her to be in the mood when we have held the controller or golf club in our hand than we have held her.

And as far as the day to day, husbands you can't "innocently flirt: with other women either in person or online and not expect it to bring significant damage to your marriage. Husbands you can't pursue porn and your wife, your wife will always lose because porn is easy since it requires no commitment., husbands do not be harsh with you wife and if she says you are harsh, then you are harsh. Husbands you can't desire to be right more than than you actually desire to settle the conflict because if you do, you are going to be fighting in the marriage instead of fighting for the marriage. And since you are one, if you win the conflict you still lose. Put your wife first. She is God's child. She is a princess.

By the way, A Wife cannot use any of these previous points to her husband up which will leads us to next week talk on Family Matters. A Wife of Godly Character.

Guys you are to be the spiritual leader in your family, not by demand but by default by God. As spiritual leader you are to pray for and with your family and lead them to God. Love your wife unconditionally, and love looks like something. It most often looks like self-sacrifice. As leader in your family you are to serve your wife by knowing her needs and meeting those needs. Do you know what her hopes and dreams are?

How can we all put this message of a Not Me First life into practice into a me first world? How can we all put this message of a Not Me First life into practice in a selfie world? How do we do this when there is a deep loneliness, sadness or struggle, weakness, and sin? Instead of accepting bondage or defeat, remember the gospel that today Jesus is with you, he is for you and his Spirit of power is within you. Christ has set you free through and will continue to empower you to live a holy life. Just as Jesus has freely forgiven your sin so he freely gives you power to be the person he has called you to be. Jesus doesn't love you and leave you. Jesus loves you and leads you!

Friends think that will be different? Do you think that will make your marriage stronger? As the marriage vow says, "I do." Amen.