

The Christian Family in Biblical Perspective
Seven Essentials in the Christian Family – Essential #2
“Embracing God’s Design and Experiencing Our Desire – One + One = One”
Ephesians 5:22-33, 6:1-4
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May 3, 2009 – Morning Sermon

We have a couple of passages we are going to look at this morning and there is a note sheet that you may find helpful. Our main text this morning is in Ephesians 5 and 6.

Ephesians 5:21-6:4 says, **21** *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.* **22** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* **23** *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* **24** *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.* **25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* **26** *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* **27** *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* **28** *In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* **29** *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,* **30** *because we are members of his body.* **31** *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* **32** *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* **33** *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* **6:1** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* **2** *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),* **3** *“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* **4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The grass withers and the flower fades. This is the Word of God, it abides forever, by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

When we moved to Miami the very first church I pastored was Pinelands Presbyterian Church. I have mentioned to many of you how much I enjoyed being there. I had maybe one month of winter at most. Miami may get one day or a half a day where it would hit 45 degrees and everybody breaks out their furs and lights their fireplaces. My family was so far away that many of them could not come even for things like Christmas. So those were the days where a couple of weeks before Christmas we would have delivered to our house boxes full of gifts for our kids. Do you remember the Big Wheel? Then I would open the package, look at the box and see what every father hates to see, those dreaded words that read “Some assembly required.” What they mean is you need to be an Auburn Engineer to put it together. I would start to put it together and tell my wife, “Isn’t it nice how they put these extra bolts, washers and things in here for you.” She would of course just smile. We took the Big Wheel out for a trial run and the Big Wheel soon became No Wheel. I would pick the pieces up and come back and usually my wife was standing at the door holding a booklet. She would say, “Do you think we ought to read the directions honey?” That was a new moment for us where we would read the direction book and have to redo it.

That's what I'm trying to do with this series of sermons. I don't want you to try to go into marriage and try to live marriage and then have to go back and check the direction book and undo what's been done. I want you to see what God says. This is not 7 tips from Harry on marriage. This is not 7 techniques Briarwood uses. These are 7 essentials pulled right out of the most definitive text on marriage in all the Bible. These are 7 essentials for an effective Christian family. Family is built into the creation. We are talking about a Christian family in which a man and woman come together with responsibility for their children built upon the promises of God's Word, the precepts of God's Word, the principles of God's Word and their whole life is now flowing from that Word together and then into their parenting.

Here is something very significant I did in the last study. I said this is kind of like buttoning a shirt. There are 7 buttons, 7 essentials but the first button has to get into the right whole or the rest of them do not line up. The first button comes from the verse that very few people deal with when they study this text. Almost every time someone will study this text and they all start at verse 22 of Ephesians 5 but what is interesting is that the word "submit" is not in the original text and so why do they have it there? It is because they borrowed it from the context grammatically from the preceding verse which is where you get the verb. Therefore everything in Ephesians 5:22 all the way through Ephesians 6:4 and even beyond that in terms of our relationships in family, employment, and in the civil areas of society everything flows from that. In other words, Ephesians 5:21 which says, "submitting to one another out of reverence to Christ" is where everything else flows from.

What do Christians do? They submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Why? It is because we love Jesus and that is the only time that phrase "reverence for Christ" is used in all the Bible. Out of reverence for Christ we submit to one another. Now Paul says, "Now let's go into relationships." How does a husband submit to his wife? He does this by loving her as a servant, by leading her as a servant and loving her sacrificially the way Christ loved His church and His bride. How does a wife submit to her husband? She does this by respecting him, completing him and being his helper. She comes along side of him but not to compete or conquer but to complete him. How do they as one flesh in unity now raise the children that are the result of that unity? They submit to their children by leading them to Christ, by parenting them, by raising them in the nurture and admonish of the Lord. How do the children then submit to their parents? It is by honoring and obeying them. Then it goes on about employers to employees and governors to citizens but we are just focused on the family now.

Ephesians 5:21 says, "submitting to one another..." Notice how that is just a partial statement. Why is that? It is because it all begins back up earlier that submitting to one another is one of four marks of the Spirit filled life. What is the evidence of being Spirit filled? I'm going to tell you what it is not. It is not that you will speak in tongues. Now can the Holy Spirit give somebody the gift of language? Absolutely, but that's not the marks that show that you have been filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18-20 says, **18** *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He says when you are filled with the Spirit four things will happen. The first thing is

when God's people get together you can't wait to speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. I was really grateful this week that in our singing it was so much antiphonal - men, women, men, women. I love that. It was just like they did in Isaiah 6 – the cherubim are calling out to each other, "Holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts!" The second evidence is you make melody in your heart to the Lord. The third evidence is you're always giving thanks for everything because you know that this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. You know the Holy Spirit is working when you see someone who is grateful to the Lord in everything, you see somebody speaking to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and you see people who make melody in their hearts to the Lord. The fourth evidence is they are people marked by submission. They don't exalt themselves but they humble themselves. One very practical way they humble themselves is by submitting to one another. Why do they do this? It is because everybody deserves their submission, no, it is because they love Christ. They reverence Christ. Their reverence of Christ determines how they have marked out their life.

Harry, is there any limit to our submission? Certainly. If I am submitting to governors or presidents or a husband or a parent, that authority is telling me to do something that will not reverence Christ, i.e., disobey His Word – command me to do adultery, steal, to take the Lord's name in vain, then I won't submit because I must obey God rather than man so that submission always has a limitation. It is out of reverence for Christ so therefore it can't bring irreverence to Christ.

So our first essential, our first button in the hole was for an effective Christian family, the husband and wife need to have an authentic, Gospel driven relationship with Christ that is marked by reverence that is the foundation, the formation and the motivation for all of their relationships with believers and it drives their relationship with each other and their children. It is that relationship that is marked out by embracing the call to submit to one another. That is the first button. So I have the first button in the right hole.

What is the second one? The second one is found in Ephesians 5:31 which says, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* It is this mystery of the two becoming one, the covenant of marriage, the covenant of intimacy that is the second essential. Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 5:32, 33, **32** *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33* *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* I want you to remember that. I'm going to finish this study by referring back to that. Marriage is here to speak to Christ and His church.

Did Ephesians 5:31 sound familiar to you? Where is that first found in our Bible? It is found in Genesis, right? It is found in Genesis 2:24 which says, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* That verse in whole or part is referenced, sited or quoted 7 times in your Bible. In this occasion Paul uses it as his foundational verse to teach us about the Christian family that begins with the Christian marriage. You can't have a Christian family without having a Christian marriage and you can't have a Christian marriage without having Jesus, in reverence for Christ and that will be seen by submitting to one another. The next thing that we want to do then is to go back and get the design book. We don't want the wheel falling off.

So what does the Design Book say? Let's go to the Designer. Who wrote Ephesians 5? I know the Holy Spirit but who was the human author that the Spirit used? It is Paul. In Ephesians 5:31 Paul is quoting from Genesis 2:24. Who did the Holy Spirit use to write Genesis 2:24? It is Moses. How do we know that? Jesus tells us that in Luke 24. Beginning with Moses who wrote the first five books and then with all the Prophets, He explained Himself in all the Scriptures. So all of the Old Testament is pointing to Him and He names the first author of the first five books as Moses. So Moses recorded it inspired by the Holy Spirit. So who said it? Did Moses say it? Who said Genesis 2:24, "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh?*" God said it. It doesn't say in Genesis 2:24 that God said,...Moses just writes it. But I know God said it. Do you know why? The same One who told me Moses wrote Genesis told me God is the One who said that.

I'm going to show you what I mean. Matthew 19 is another place where that verse is quoted. In this passage they come to Jesus and ask Him about divorce and we'll have a whole sermon on that on a Sunday night titled "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage." Jesus had been preaching and teaching. During this age if the wife burnt the toast then they could divorce her. If she didn't get up on time they could divorce her. They are basically asking Jesus if He believes in "no fault" divorce. So let's look at this passage in Matthew 19:1-6; *1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he (God) who created them (Adam and Eve) from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said (God said this), 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*

If we dismiss this or treat it trivial then we are telling God, "What You said doesn't matter to us." We are on sacred ground here. This is God spoken truth for us. God joined them. Who alone can separate them? This isn't hard, you just have to be willing to say it. God joined them, man can't separate them but God alone can separate them. Harry, what about divorce? We'll come back to that text and I'll give you a brief download but God never commands divorce. God gave commandments to regulate divorce which was here for protection because of sin. You don't find divorce in Genesis 1 and 2. You find divorce after Genesis 3. You don't find a family messed up until sin comes in. You don't find polygamy or divorce until sin comes in. Divorce is a result of sin and it's somebody's sin. You can sinfully divorce or you can divorce because you have to because of certain patterns of sin that God says, "When this is here as a pattern, I'm going to protect the victim and I'm going to pull them out of that situation." But God joins and God separates.

Normally how does God separate? It is called death and the marriage is over. That marriage is over in this world at that time. We know that we are married to the one we are married to until one's death. One of the things I love to do is to visit cemeteries. I love to exegete cemeteries. You can go through and see dates and you know when a fever came to that community, you know when this happened and when that happened. Sometimes I'll stand in front a grave and I'll see a tombstone and it will have somebody's

name, their birth date, their death date and then I'll look at the tombstone next to it and it will have somebody's name, a birth date and there is no death date. I know somebody has been standing where I am probably crying because they just got separated. I then will pray, "Lord, I pray for this one who is gone that they are with You and I pray that this one who is still here knows You and if they haven't yet please get them to know You. Get them to trust in Jesus so that they can see each other in a relationship beyond what they ever had here in marriage." Normally it's God who separates. Now God has regulated separation before death in something called divorce as a necessary protection but it's never a solution to anything.

What is God's design? God made Adam. What did God say in Genesis 1 and 2 every time He made something? He said, "It's good" and then He made Adam. That was the end of "it's good." Now don't jump too quick ladies. He gave Adam a task. He said, "I want you to be fruitful and multiply. I want you to subdue the earth and I want you to rule over the creations. I put you over My creation." Adam did not crawl up out of a gas heap of mutations. He was made by God to specifically oversee His creation. The He said, "It's not good for the man to be alone." He brought the animals to demonstrate but none of them would be a suitable helpmate. For Adam to be fruitful and multiply, subdue the earth and rule over God's creation, he needed a suitable helpmate. So God did something that He and I have in common, every Sunday. God put Adam to sleep. Wake up! When He put him to sleep he took from his side. Adam was made from the dust of the ground and Eve was made from his side.

Then He introduces Eve to Adam. Adam wakes up and looks at her and says, "Wooo man" but I don't think he said it quite like that. Let's just say that he didn't have a lot of dating that he needed to do. He got this one right and as he saw her he said, "Woman!" Adam who is man is *ish* in Hebrew and woman is *ishshah* in Hebrew which means my reflection. "This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). The God put them in the covenant of intimacy, marriage and God said, "For this cause..." God brought the wife and He gave the first bride away. God sent the groom. The first groom left the hand of God's creation and then was holding fast to the one that was given to him by God and then said, "The two shall become one." So God created man. God created woman. God created marriage and the God sealed the marriage and what happened? Those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder.

So here is the first thing. The premise is that God has created man, male and female, and designed them intentionally to live in a marriage covenant of intimacy which is heterosexual and monogamous. Marriage is not a social evolution that we can philosophically we can play with. We are in the midst of a society and culture that think marriage belongs to us. No, that is not so. There is a wonderful song I love to sing in my quiet time and I love to sing it in the shower – *we are standing on Holy ground and I can see the angels all around, let us praise Jesus now, we're standing on Holy ground.* Marriage is not a social play toy for society. You're standing on Holy ground. Marriage is covenantal, monogamous, heterosexual, one man one woman one life. That is what God has called us to and now it's good! It is the design of God that He has put in place.

What else did God do? God also gave us the process. He not only gave the premise, He gave the man, He gave the woman and through them He gave us. He gave marriage, He designed it and then He gave the process. How do you do marriage? A

man shall leave his father and mother, shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one. How do we have a covenant of intimacy of oneness? You have to leave and you have to cleave, hold fast. That is what we are called to do in marriage. You leave and you hold fast.

So what is the third thing He says? The third thing is the promise. He says when you leave, you cleave, I bless you be enabling you to leave and I bless the woman so she can leave as she is being given to the man, now here's My promise. One plus one equals one. I love to say that almost every ceremony. It is "you are about to witness a miracle – one + one = one." It is a miracle where God has provided when God joins them together. How does God seal the marriage? It is not the rings. We just do the rings for a little public nicety. When you come to a wedding I do, I never say, "I now pronounce you man and wife." I never say, "By the laws of the state of Alabama we obey." They do it. The church doesn't do it. I say, "Upon the consummation of this union before God I declare you, man and wife." We have set the covenant and it is then joined in the marriage bed. The two celebratory one and God seals the marriage. It is God who seals the marriage. It is God who declares the marriage. God has designed us physically, emotionally and spiritually to be one in Him and for Him.

The fourth thing is the problems to this. There are two problems. One is ignorance of God's design for marriage. We did so much teaching on the family and marriage in the early days of the church and we just thought it would be handed off to generation to generation but we can't depend on that any more. We have to disciple people on what God teaches about marriage. You can't depend on what happened in the past. There are too many broken homes and too many fearful situations where we now have to gear up again and make sure that we address what the Bible says marriage is. It is not tips for survival. My goal for you is not to stay married or stay in love or stay at the same address. My goal for you is that you keep covenant with each other. You hold fast by the power of the Gospel of grace. You hold fast to one another and to the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to learn how to do that as God tells you how to do that.

The second problem we have in marriage is sin. When did Adam and Eve grow apart? Remember when it said they were without clothes and they were not ashamed? What does that mean? It doesn't mean some pristine thing that everybody had a perfect body and no body was ashamed to look at it. That's not what it means. It means that there was no sin. When there is no sin there are three things that are always missing – guilt, fear and shame. That is why you have to come to Jesus to have a Christian marriage because Jesus at the cross deals with your sin, guilt, fear, and shame. So what we have is a sin problem that we have to deal with that obstructs this marriage.

So let me just finish this study by giving you three obstacles and let's illuminate this second essential. What are we talking about? We are talking about embracing God's design and experiencing our desire. We have a desire for intimacy therefore you have to embrace God's design. Listen, you can have intimacy in many relationships at a certain level. There are the boys you hang around with, "Harry, I love ya man." Then you have relationships and get together, alumni gatherings, hobby gatherings, and we have a relationship of intimacy among ourselves in the fellowship of God's church but nothing compares to what God designed for our absolute intimacy, marriage. This desire we have for intimacy is fulfilled at a whole level. God's design and our desire is fulfilled in the covenant of marriage when a man and woman intentionally leave their families and

unreservedly hold fast or cleave to each other with a relentless passion for our marriage to succeed. No, with a relentless passion for an intimacy that joyfully displays the glory of God in their lives. It is much more than my happiness. It is my joyful privilege that people would see the glory of God in Christ because that's why God made marriage. It is a mystery, remember? But I say it speaks of Christ and the church. Marriage wasn't just there for my desire for intimacy. My desire for intimacy was there that I might embrace God's design and when I do I have set up an audio visual to tell the world of what God has done to save His people with a Groom who died for His Bride, Jesus for the church.

So what are the obstacles to this? There are three obstacles. What's the first obstacle to overcome in our marriage for this kind of intimacy? Let me quote G.K. Chesterson. A lady came up to him and said, "Mr. Chesterson what is wrong with the world?" He looked at her and said, "Ma' dam, that's easy, me." What's wrong with my marriage? The husband, the wife, our kids, no it's me. I'm saved by grace but I still have this old man within me. This old man keeps trying to make this marriage not about intimacy for the joyful glory of God but it tries to keep marriage about my needs where my wife becomes my trophy or my significance, or my husband becomes my idol. Our marriage itself becomes an idol. We have this sinful way of taking God's good gifts and turn them into idols, even including our children where our children exist so that I have a bumper sticker on my car about my children's achievements. We are constantly making it all about me.

First I need to know Christ. Then I need to know the reverence of Christ. Then I don't need to exalt myself. I can die to myself. I can submit to the Lord and to one another and then as I move into marriage it's not about me. I can humble myself so that my marriage and my family might exhibit the glory of God in every aspect of life. It is sin that keeps me from following God's sacred design. It is sin that stands in the way. I need a Savior and then I need to walk with that Savior every single day. I need to know Him and I need to walk with Him so that He is my all and now I can give what He is pouring into me into my family. The first obstacle that has to be overcome is the sin, me.

The second obstacle is the lack of discipleship in the church about marriage – leaving and cleaving. For instance, many well meaning Christians are letting the world define marriage and I'm not just talking about this drive for aberrant behavior, but anything other than one man, one woman, is an aberration. Anything other than monogamous, covenantal, heterosexual marriage is an aberration but I'm not talking about that dynamic in our culture. I want to back up further and that is even in Christian marriages why are our divorce rates just as high as non-Christians? Number one is because of our sin where we are not dealing with our sin on a daily basis. The second reason is we don't understand God's design at what we are called to do and be. We don't understand leaving. If you don't leave you can't cleave. If you don't leave you have one plus one equals six. That doesn't work. Believe me it doesn't work. Or if you don't leave you have one plus one equals two and the rest of your life you are negotiating instead of one plus one equals one. You have to leave and you have to cleave.

Now I want to say something to people my age, 50 plus. We are the ones messing things up. We are the boomers who raised the boomerangs. Do you know why? Are children today any less smart, any less adapt? It's because most of us bought into the world's definition of marriage and family that our children were there for our self esteem and our self fulfillment. So we raise children that can't leave us and we did it because of

our own needs being met in them. Do you want a little bit of secular proof? In the 1940's do you know what the adolescent age was, that is the time when a person is socially, emotionally and psychologically ready to step into the world? It was 18.5 years of age. People were ready to leave the home and start one and live life. Do you know what the adolescent age is now? Now this isn't Christians trying to come up with a sermon illustration for me. These are secularists. The age now is 26.5.

I don't think young people are any less adept. I just think that we don't parent and what we don't do most of all is we don't raise our children to leave us. We raise our children to cleave to us. This isn't handled geographically. I know people who live next door to their parents and they have left them. I know people who live across the other side of the continent and they haven't left them yet. I know people whose parents are dead and they haven't left them yet. Sometimes they don't leave because of fear, or they haven't been equipped or they saw what happened to their father and mother and they're afraid to step out but we have not properly prepared the next generation to leave.

I hear it all the time. I'll go to a ceremony and I'll hear a very well meaning statement and the statement goes like this, "I'm not losing a daughter, I'm gaining a son." "I'm not losing a son, I'm gaining a daughter." Bong! I understand the sentiment but wrong answer. That woman is not going to get a husband unless you lose a son. That man is not going to get a wife unless you lose a daughter. This is not two families coming together. This is a new family that is starting and the old immediate family they will reconnect to as their extended family. This is a new family. We leave, we cleave. Everything was over here psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, plugged in here and now I leave and then I cleave and the two become one. Now *together* we're going to relate to each other's parents with honor and respect.

Do you know who has the hardest time at a marriage ceremony? It is two people. The two people that have the most bittersweet experience at a marriage ceremony are who we make the jokes about – the father of the bride and the mother in law. Why do we make all the jokes about these two? It is because it's true. These two are conflicted. When a man's son gets married it's "Praise the Lord!" When his daughters get married it's "Oh no I can't stand this. I don't think I'm going to be able to breathe tonight." He knows he is no longer the number one man. He's number two and by the way it's a downward slope because as soon as some snotty nosed little boy is born he becomes number three and then number four. When the daughter of the mother gets married she says, "thank you Lord." When one of my brother in laws, I have three sisters, married my sister my mother grabbed his legs and started singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" right then. Have you ever noticed how a mother and daughter start getting closer after she marries? They almost get like sisters.

When the son marries his mom says, "Oh my little boy, now you take care of my little boy. He likes cornbread and don't forget his vitamins." The mother has got to let him go and that mother has to go. You don't bring your mother back in and say, "Mother, did it this way." You don't bring your dad back in and say, "Daddy would have never said that." You don't do that. You leave and you cleave and we need to teach people how to do it Biblically driven by the sufficiency of Christ with the Gospel.

The last thought here is He gives all this about a marriage, all of the implications and the man is supposed to love his wife as Christ loves the church and lead his wife as Christ leads with servant leadership and the woman is like the bride to Christ so there is

this Christ and His bride, the church, are this marvelous model for us. We are going to go deeper into that so not now but I want to bring you away from marriage and back to the Lord and focus on Him.

According to Ephesians 5 Paul says one of the reasons God ordained marriage was to point to Christ and His bride, the church. Jesus left His Father to hold fast to His bride and He went to die on a cross to keep her. Then we, the bride, have been prepared and given by the Father of the Groom who prepared us the bride, and gave us to the Son. Then the Son goes to the cross and takes hold of His bride, cleanses her and washes her with His blood. He clothes her in spotless garments of His righteousness. He holds fast to her, holds onto her and then says to the Father, "The bride You gave Me, I lose not one." Then we are in Christ and Christ is in us and we are one in the Lord. We have the precious privilege to get a glimpse of that as we mirror that in our marriages to the world. That challenges us to think "Do I hold fast to my bride? Do I honor my husband the way the bride has been called to honor Christ? Do I know that deep intimacy?"

I'm not just asking us to reclaim marriage for the public good and for your joyful glory of God in intimacy, but I'm asking you and me to reclaim that which God made to point people to Him. When they know Christ He holds them fast and nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. There is no divorce. He will take you to the home that He is preparing for you but first you will sit down at a marriage feast with Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we have been able to be together. Thank You for Your Word and the glory and majesty of it. Father, thank You for how it calls us. The bottom line is that you can't have a Christian marriage without being a Christian so may I invite you to Jesus Christ today? He is the One who will teach you how your marriage can be one of covenant joy in the Lord, even as it overcomes the brokenness in this world by His grace. This is the One Jesus who will deal with the problem in your marriage, you and me, by saving us, redeeming us and changing us. I just talked to someone last week who at this moment two weeks ago gave their life to Jesus and I invite you to do that now. Here is your invitation, not to a Christian marriage but to Christ who will make your marriage. Father, for all of us, would you renew our joy in seeing Christ and the bride as our model and then seeing our marriages point men and women to Christ and His bride. God, thank You for Jesus who left His Father to cleave, hold fast to the bride, His people, whom You gave to Him. Thank You for giving away the bride to Jesus and thank You that we are one in our Savior who will hold us fast. Thank You in Jesus' name, Amen.