

Heb. 13:1-6; Eph. 5:22-33; Concerning Marriage I. The Honorable Marriage II. The Wicked Adulteration
 Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, why do people get married today? And again- why do people get divorced today? The answer to both questions centers on the concept of love- people get married because they love each other- and they get divorced because they no longer love each other they say. But as we consider today- understanding what marriage is and how we are called to love within the context of marriage will help us guard our marriages. As you may know, approximately 50% of all marriages in the US end in divorce. To say nothing about premarital and extramarital sex, it is clearly evident that our society is anything but chaste and pure in this regard. I also found out this past week that 35% of all internet downloads are pornographic in nature- while 70% of US men visit a porn site at least once a month. In this wicked and adulterous generation, we hear these words- let marriage be held in honor! So today we are going to considering the 7th commandment- you shall not commit adultery; and the 10th commandment- you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. Last week we were instructed not to covet money or wealth- this week we learn not to covet other people! In Heb. 13 we are in the context of NT worship- since are a part of the bride of Christ we have privilege of knowing the true purpose of marriage. When two Christians enter marriage, they can enjoy a wonderful privilege from God which is a foretaste of the glories to come. So today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ commands that marriage be held in honor because marriage points to His relationship to the church.

I. The Honorable Marriage

Our text from Heb. 13:4 begins, let marriage be held in honor. Marriage is a privileged state- one that must not be despised. It is not to be entered into lightly, nor is it to be taken for granted. It must not be trampled upon nor twisted to man's fancy. Marriage is to be honored because it is honorable- it is weighty and worthy of respect. The word of honored here means esteemed- held in high regard- as if it were very expensive and precious. This honoring is something that we are all called and commanded to do. Honored by all! Even Jesus honored marriage by performing his first miracle at a wedding in Cana!

If we are married or if we are not- we are all called to esteem the covenant of marriage as something significant. We can rejoice when we see godly marriages- even celebrate those who have been married for years! When two people become one, they are entering into a union that is weighty. So before you get married- you had better think long and hard. Is this the person that I want to spend the rest of my life with? And if you are married, see that marriage as something that has great cost- as marriage is precious to God! There is a proper sense of jealousy that should be found within marriage. Since your marriage is precious to you, you guard that relationship! If you were to purchase a bar of solid gold, you would not use it as door stop! You would not use it to as a stepping stone. No, its value would necessitate protection. So those who are married should seek to protect that relationship- and within the church we should see marriage as something special and precious- honored by all! Now the reason we are to honor marriage is twofold. First of all, where did marriage come from? In Genesis 2 the LORD saw that Adam was alone- and it was not good for Adam to be all by himself. God made Eve as a helper that was suitable- a compassion and partner according to Adam's need. It was the LORD that instituted marriage in the beginning- before the fall He made them male and female- where the two become one flesh. So as a pre-fall, God ordained institution- one that was meant to be a blessing to those who entered into it- it is to be honored! The second reason marriage is to be honored is because of what marriage reflects- what does marriage point to? As we read earlier from Eph. 5, Christian marriage is a unique, God inspired picture of Christ and His bride! Christ the husband loves his bride- so husband's love your wives! The church loves and cherishes her Lord Jesus- so wives submit to an honor your husbands. It is because our marriages are meant to be a picture that represents Christ and His church that we must honor the institution of marriage. Our marriage on earth is a foretaste of the marriage to come- the wedding supper of the Lamb! To profane marriage is to defame Christ! To disdain marriage is to treat Christ as if His love and sacrifice for the church was insignificant! Added to honor, the marriage bed is to be kept pure. Let the marriage bed be undefiled! Do not soil or profane that which Christ has

made pure and clean! If you honor something- you will seek to keep it honorable! The marriage bed is a reference to the unity of flesh that takes place within the context of marriage. Where two become one. Marital union is a good, God glorifying event. We are exhorted to take pleasure in the wife of your youth as Prov. 5 puts it. A husband and wife should be able to enjoy spending time together unashamed! But this marital bed must be kept pure and holy- set apart for the purposes God has ordained! Sexual purity within the context of marriage is necessary because God is holy and His people are called to be holy! So marital union must continue without pollution- without committing sin in the bedroom. Rather be satisfied and joyful- happy in the gift of union which comes from the Lord's hand. So there is no room for the polluting acts that we read of and see all around us. God made marriage to between one man and one woman until death parts them. Adultery and sexual pollution, as we will see in our next point, are so heinous that they rip the fabric of the marriage- that is why Jesus says that adultery is the Biblical grounds for divorce in Mt. 19. Rather we should be known as people who love rightly- who seek to serve in the context of the family and the home. With mutual support and loving service, seeking the betterment of the other. But also of joy, delight, companionship and pleasure within that marriage. So love in the context of marriage means that you are committed to the other- covenanted and honorable- not living your day in passing lust and infatuation. As we saw a few weeks back in Micah 2- God is a witness between you and your spouse. Not only does He unite a husband and wife for the sake of raising Godly offspring, He also unites them by giving them a portion of His Spirit! So hold marriage as honorable- and keep the purity of that marriage, because God who has joined you is holy!

II. The Wicked Adulteration

Now that we understand the positive calling- what we are to pursue- in our second point we consider the end of v. 4 where we find a wicked adulteration of marriage. As we heard in the reading of the Law- you shall not commit adultery and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. So v. 4 concludes with a

warning, God will judge those who rebel against His commandment- He will rebuke those who pollute what He created good! This is a strong warning- God will judge those who trample marriage- He will condemn those who do not honor this institution. God will protect marriage- and this warning is not to be taken lightly. Although we may not see how God will judge those who break this union, we are promised that He will judge. And even as Rom. 1 puts it, sometimes God's judgement is seen already in this life when He gives them what they want! When God gives them over to the desire of the flesh- they find in themselves God's judgement as they are consumed with the lusts of their hearts and they dishonor their own bodies by their scandalous actions. So who then will God judge- first of all He judges the sexually immoral. The word in the Greek is "porneos" and it covers a whole range of sexual sins. Fornication, prostitution, lust for hire, and perversion of the flesh. Basically, anything that arouses or seeks to gratify the passing desires of the body- any act, desire, look or thought that is outside of God's norm for our bodies. God will also judge those who are adulterous- this is a specific term that describes those who break faith- those who are unfaithful to their vows and breaks their marriage covenant. As Heb. 12:16 puts it, do not be sexually immoral or unholy like Esau. And we know that as Jesus applies the 7th commandment, this extends even to a lingering look or to allowing your thoughts to stray into wicked ideas- this too is to commit adultery in the heart. So we must be clear- truthful with ourselves. It is evil to look and linger- as Job put it- to look lustfully at a maiden. We need sanctified minds and eyes desperately! So then, to seek the fruits and privileges of union outside of marriage is forbidden. Premarital and extramarital sex is not proper! Pornography and lust all pollute what God has created holy! It now becomes clear; God is against any union outside the bonds of holy, God-ordained matrimony. As a church, we must be very clear on this! We stand vehemently opposed to the sexual revolution of our day. Not only the attack on marriage but even the confusion of gender itself! God has and will continue to judge those who engage in such horrendous acts of perversion! The pope last month gave his blessing on same sex, civil union! But we never will- any union that is contrary to God's

created order is to be forbidden! Anything but one man united to one woman in a life long marriage is clearly against what the Bible teaches. There is no such thing as a gay or lesbian marriage- it is not only unnatural it is contrary to God's clear design and Teaching. We find these same two words of v. 4 - sexual immorality and adultery- in I Cor. 6:9 as well. Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality will inherit the kind of God! So it is clear, that those who live in and celebrate this kind of lifestyle do so at their own peril! There will be no place for such as these in the Kingdom to come! But- we have to continue in I Cor. 6 by reading in the next verse. And such were some of you- but you were washed, you were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Did you catch that- and such were some of you! Evidently the early church was made up of homosexuals and adulterers! This is also an important point- committing a sexual sin is not committing the unforgivable sin! Sexual sins can be forgiven- you can be delivered and set free from that way of life! Although you cannot go back and undo what you have done- you cannot unsee what you have seen- you can be washed and renewed! You can dedicate yourself to holy and godly living- to a descent and chaste life! That is good news for us all! Christ's blood is sufficient to cover even these sins- His Spirit powerful enough to liberate us from this way of life! So let us all pray that we would be set free from the temptations around us- that we whether we married or single might act in holiness- to use these bodies as they are – temples of the Living God!

To conclude, marriage is precious and it is to be honored by all- because marriage was something that God designed and marriage points to Christ and His church! Brotherly love within the church and within the society applies to how we live together in the home- and how we view the spouse of our neighbor as well. So let us all seek to keep the act of marriage pure- and hold it as an institution with proper respect! And to the married and the single, seek to live a descent and chaste life- because the God who called you His own is holy!