



Home : Sermons : Aug 28, 2005

Cultured Olive Branches – Courtship: Biblical Principles (Gen 2:18-24)

- A Redeemed Culture #17

Introduction – We are seeking to obey the Lord in the context of our families with a view to redeeming the cultures in our homes. This affects how husbands and wives act, how parents and children relate, and how a community of families lives in community. The Word also instructs us with regard to the formation of new families.

The First Courtship – God the Father showed Adam his need for a wife. Scripture teaches three basic purposes for marriage: companionship in culture-building (Gen 2:18), godly children (Mal 2:15), and sexual fidelity (1 Cor 7:2, Heb 13:4). The pattern we learn is that men marry and women are given in marriage. This is affirmed throughout the scriptures (Ps 78:63, Matt 24:38). This requires young men to become responsible covenant heads prior to marrying, and for women to be honored through covenant security, protection and love at all times.

A Different Culture – To really examine this and let it sink in, we have to consider the state of the 20th, and now 21st Century culture – a culture that even among most Christians, is considered 'normal.'

Boys – Boys are told to be nice, but are taught that walking in and out of relationships is quite fine, with no strings attached. Most boys and girls move from one relationship to another, their hearts hardened in countless ways as they go. And with no direction from scripture, 'nice' has degraded to the level of STD protection.

Girls – Because fathers have not provided masculine, covenantal headship in their homes, our society sees women in general, and daughters in particular, as autonomous individuals, and for boys this means girls are 'ripe for the picking.' Feminist egalitarianism has not granted freedom to women – instead women are no longer treated with special, biblical honor, and far more today are treated, in their relationships with men, like dirt.

Weird Traditions – In the midst of ignorance for some, and high-handed rebellion for others, several generations have abandoned the Word. We have mistreated our daughters and poorly prepared our sons. But in today's wedding ceremonies, we still keep in some sentimental fashion vestiges of the very principles we have rejected. For instance -

Dressed in White – It is breathtaking to watch a beautifully dressed woman escorted down the aisle brought to her bridegroom. We need to honor chastity (2 Cor 11:2). Young unmarried women should learn about the language of clothing, and dress to honor their father as a virgin, not to honor Madonna and the culture of Brittany Spears – they are saying something else.

The Father as Escort – Here is the picture of protection and love. The head of one family, having taken responsibility for the spiritual and physical chastity of his daughter, escorts her (with her full permission), to a new covenant head.

The Engagement Ring – This promise harkens back to the dowry (Ex 22:16-17) which was not the sales-price of the bride, but was a gift given to the father for the use of his daughter and particularly in case of abandonment by the husband. Husbands are giving themselves and all that they have to their wives, and this is promised on the day of betrothal.

Vows – Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman before God. It is His institution and He establishes the rules. A covenant always comes with attendant blessings and curses and so must be entered into with great sobriety.

Bridesmaids/Groomsmen – Marriage is a public covenant. Families are the foundations of community, of the redeemed culture, and so the public witnesses and has an active interest in the success of this new family.

"You May Kiss the Bride" – Marriage is a sexual covenant. Sexual activity had been prohibited by God until this moment. The wedding night is God's introduction to the holy marriage bed. Christians are not to be prudes or uncomfortable with sex and sexuality. We are to redeem what has been perverted and nearly destroyed, not by throwing it away, but reclaiming it for what God has intended.

Re-establishing Cultural Norms (from Scripture) – In Psalm 78:63 we see the result of the Lord's judgment upon His unfaithful people. Fire consumed the young men and their maidens were not given in marriage. Society crumbled, and it could be described by the lack of faithful marriages taking place.

A Culture of Forgiveness and Transformation (1 Cor 6:9-11) – Let us never forget from whence we have come, and welcome those into our midst based upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and not upon our past history. This is the gospel.

Recognize Godly Lines of Authority (As a Blessing) – A young man must understand that he must pursue and initiate with the father of a woman he is interested in. The father is to have complete oversight and direction in this interest, and a wise father is doing this in the context of a bank account of trust, love, and wisdom he has deposited in the relationship with his daughter over years.

Prepare Sons – Honor Women and the Woman You Wish to Pursue – A son should be learning the special manners men show towards women from his father (and this is something we all need to recover). It should be practiced for years, first towards his mother, and then towards his sisters. Growing up with a high view of women will be a great protection for him as he enters adolescence and fights temptations. He will also grow up seeing that most dating practices today are antithetical to showing such honor.

Prepare Daughters – Practice Respect – As she grows up watching her father love her mother and sacrificially serve the family, she will naturally stay under his authority whenever an interested man calls. She will keep the standards her father has lived, not necessarily what he has said. In that security, she will have a sense of protection and an ability to easily shun inappropriate advances. Dad – fill her emotional tank.

Another Adam and Eve – The first couple was a picture of the glorious relationship of Christ and His church (Eph 5:31-32), and each new couple is to model the same picture. In Christ, we not only picture, but bring forth that reality as families gather together to be the church of Jesus Christ, His bride. This means that every activity leading up to the establishment of a new marriage must also be done in light of God's Word, and with wisdom. He is building something in our midst – we are to walk in that work by faith.

Dave Hatcher – August 28th, 2005