

“DID GOD SAY ... ? SATAN’S ATTACK ON MARRIAGE.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: Ephesians 5:31-33; Hebrews 13:4

Prayer: Holy Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditations and reflections of all our hearts be pleasing and acceptable to you. Deliver us from the evil one and all distractions and destroy his work among us. Glorify yourself in the preaching of your Holy Word. Amen.

Introduction.

In this sermon series on Satan’s attack on God and God’s Word and God’s world, I have neglected to point out something important. Satan isn’t going to like it. And if he can he will try to get me to misspeak and he will try to get you to misunderstand. He will try to sow seeds of confusion and questioning and more lies.

I have been very aware of walking through a minefield, very sobered by the seriousness of the issues and painfully aware of my inadequacy to do this well in a very limited amount of time.

I appreciate one person taking the initiative to talk to me about something misunderstood in last week’s sermon, and I invite anyone with questions or concerns to do the same. I don’t want Satan to gain a foothold in any thing I say. And of course, pray for me for God’s grace and wisdom.

This morning I am continuing our series of sermons under the title Did God Say ...? That’s a reference to Satan’s words to Eve in the garden when he said:

Genesis 3:1 “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

Satan is hell-bent to destroy you and your life and everything good in your life. He is out to get God and he is out to get you. Our world lies in the power of the evil one, in the hands of the god of this age.

If you are a Christian then as far as Satan is concerned you are one that got away, you are an escaped prisoner of the evil one and a danger to him. Most of us go through life ignorant of Satan’s work. He is always at work, subtly trying to subvert and mess with your life, your marriage, your kids, your thoughts, your impulses, your emotions, your plans, your ideas.

This is a reminder to all of us, male, female, young, old, married, single, that Satan hates all Christians and is on the attack in our lives.

None of us are exempt. But Satan's assault on marriage has massive consequences. We all are a part of family structures where there are married people and children. We all interact with and relate to people who are married and have children. And our society is built on a foundation of family that is slowly being eroded. So on many levels it is valuable for all of us to be a part of biblical conversations about the home, family and marriage.

Satan's attack on marriage.

God created the first family in Genesis 2 and in Genesis 3 Satan launched his first assault on marriage and family with disastrous consequences. And the attack never lets up.

In Genesis 4 Satan introduces the idea of polygamy which will lead many into even greater sins.

Abraham and Sarah have a series of sins, Abraham's treatment of Sarah, Sarah's impatience with her infertility and giving her servant to Abraham, which does not turn out well at all.

Lot leads his family into terrible temptation with homosexuality, following which comes the death of his wife and being seduced into incest with his daughters.

Isaac and Rebecca become a house and marriage divided as they play favorites with their sons.

Esau in an incredible display of lack of discernment marries Canaanite women, non-believers.

Jacob's own devious ways come back to haunt him as he ends up tricked into marrying sisters.

And we can go on and on, Samson's marriage to a Philistine and later infidelity, David's adultery, and Solomon's faithless marriage to a 1,000 women that leads to faithlessness to God.

Every marriage and family in the Bible is flawed, broken and dysfunctional in some way.

Satan's relentless assault is clear evidence of his intense hatred of marriage and family and a call to all of us to wake up and be wise of his continued attacks on all of our marriages and all of our families and close relationships.

It will help us if we see what's going on as spiritual warfare conducted by spiritual enemies. Our spouse is not our enemy, our situation is not our enemy. The enemy is the enemy. When we are feeling the attack, when we are in the midst of a conflict, when we are feeling like something is wrong, realize it is Satan's doing. Then you can team up and work together to fight the enemy.

If you knew for a fact that someone was going to come to your home tonight to break in and rob you and harm you, you would prepare, you would plan, you would take action.

So if you know that Satan is out to steal and kill and destroy all God has made and created and given, if you know Satan hates all marriage and your marriage in particular, and he is coming after you, would you do anything, would you plan, would you take action to resist him and make him flee? Would you engage in spiritual warfare?

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful, your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Why does Satan hate marriage?

Satan hates everything that God has made, everything good in this world.

Satan hates marriage because it was created by God and called good.

Satan hates marriage because God created it for fruitfulness and love.

Satan hates fruit and fruitfulness, and he hates love.

Satan hates that God created marriage God to produce a godly seed, that the home is the central place of discipleship, of raising up young believers, of passing on the Gospel of Jesus.

Satan hates all marriage, but he especially hates Christian marriage because of Ephesians 5:32.

Ephesians 5:32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Satan especially hates that marriage is a profound spiritual truth created by God to be an image and reflection (picture) of the relationship between Jesus and His bride, the church.

“As God made man in his own image, so he made earthly marriage in the image of his own eternal marriage with his people” (Geoffrey Bromiley, *God and Marriage*, p. 43).

Our marriages are object lessons, examples to the world of who Jesus is and what He is like in His relationship with us and us with Him.

This is why God hates things like adultery, abuse, desertion, divorce (Malachi 2:16), harsh, cruel and critical words. All those things say something that isn't true about Christ and His

relationship with His bride. Jesus' covenant with His bride is unbreakable. He has no other lovers. He is not intimate with others outside of His marriage covenant with His bride. He doesn't look at pictures of other girls or other religions. He is never abusive, harsh or cruel with His bride. He doesn't neglect her or manipulate her or call her names.

“How we treat our wives is a dramatic statement of how we think Christ should treat the church. How wives treat their husbands is a dramatic statement of how they think the church should treat Christ” (John Piper).

Satan hates this dramatic display of this profound mystery, that human marriage is a picture of the God glorifying relationship that exists between Jesus and His bride the church, a profound story of love and grace, of laying down one's life for another, of self-sacrifice.

Marriage is a spiritual battle ground, it is spiritual warfare. The sooner you realize this the sooner you will fight the enemy of your marriage rather than each other.

So Satan's sows the seeds of doubt and confusion. *Did God really say?* Did God really say marriage is only between one man and one woman? Isn't that old fashion, out of date, too bigoted and intolerant and limiting?

What did God Say? In Genesis 1-2 God creates, defines and gives purpose to marriage.

Marriage is created by God, defined by God, blessed by God and called good by God.

Marriage is heterosexual, not homosexual.

Marriage is monogamous, not polygamous or polyamorist.

Marriage is a God-ordered relationship between two equal but very different persons with different roles to play in marriage.

Marriage is sexual, meaning it is the only place for sexual expression.

Marriage is permanent and unifying, the two become one flesh, until death.

Marriage is procreative, fruitful.

We are all here because of a fruitful union. We are here because of God's plan to make marital intimacy His way of populating our planet and populating heaven through godly seed.

Satan can't create. All he does is imitate at best, and at most destroy and tear down creation. Satan is not fruitful. He is sterile, he isolates, he separates, he makes lonely. He hates unity, intimacy, love, anything that looks like God or what God does.

Satan remakes marriage in his own image, sterile, fruitless, selfish. This is why when Satan redefines marriage he redefines as something that can't bear fruit, that is not life giving but life destroying, that is a kind of sexual suicidal, like homosexuality and pornography.

It doesn't matter that other people think or what public opinion says or the Supreme Court or Congress or Hollywood or your best friend or neighbor. Marriage is God's idea, His creation, designed just the way it should be and the way it works best. Marriage is one of God's good gifts.

What did God say? Marriage should be honored by all.

Therefore, God says marriage is to be held in honor by all.

The word honor used here is used in other verses where it is translated precious. Precious stones, precious blood of Jesus, precious promises of God. Treat marriage like a precious jewel, like something sacred and to be treasured, to be esteemed and valued.

In a culture that demeans and belittles and disrespects marriage, we must make sure we don't join our voices and actions to theirs. Whether we are single or married, even unhappily married, let us honor what God calls honorable and not let sin or Satan get us to say or do otherwise.

This is a call to all of us to be out of step with what Satan says and what our world all around us says about marriage, to be counter-cultural, to be revolutionary. We should guard our lips and hearts from course jokes and comments about marriage and our spouse.

Honor marriage by not calling marriage what doesn't fit God's definition. I never use the term same-sex marriage. It is not marriage, God calls it an abomination. It does not honor marriage to call what is an abomination, marriage. I call it same-sex union or partnership. Or I like the term same-sex mirage.

Our text says to honor marriage by keeping the marriage bed pure. Purity is found in keeping sex safely within the walls of marriage.

We honor marriage and the marriage bed by agreeing with God about marriage. One way we show our agreement is by repenting of our sins, our going along with the culture, and our sinning against God through fornication, adultery and pornography. This includes watching any act of sex in movies, on TV or computers. They are dishonoring the marriage bed by making public what is meant only to be in private.

Repenting of our past sin and living in harmony with God's wisdom and will honors marriage.

Honor marriage by not making it do things God didn't design it to do or expecting from it what it can't deliver. Like meeting all our needs, fulfill all our expectations, doing for us what only God can do.

We honor marriage by not keeping a record of wrongs, of little hurts, making subtle attacks, little digs, tone of voice, silence, drifting apart; by not letting the sun go down on our anger. Even if the issue can't be worked out or resolved, at least say I am sorry for what I said, I am sorry for getting angry, I love you, we can work on this later. We honor marriage by using generous amounts of confession and forgiveness.

Chesterton once said marriage is the melding together of two incompatible forces—man and woman. He added that the question wasn't whether or not it would be a quarrel, but to keep it a lover's quarrel.

We honor marriage by praying for your spouse and your marriage. Pray for other marriages. Prayer is the greatest weapon you have against Satan.

Prayer draws you out of your own mired thinking into God's heart, to hear His voice. Prayer opens you to hear the Spirit, prayer humbles you and takes you out of attack mode, prayer opens you to have God's perspective and heart for your spouse. Prayer reminds you that you aren't alone and you aren't in this alone.

God is the God of resurrections, of bringing dead things back to life.

God is the God of reconciliations, of tearing down the dividing walls of hostility.

God is the God who recreates, who can make old things new, dead things alive, broken things restored.

Jesus is personally and eternally invested in our marriages. Seek Him first, put Him at the center. Honor marriage by honoring the one in whose image marriage is made and through whom all marriage is blessed.

Prayer: Holy Father, we ask that you would cause and enable all our marriages to increasingly be a reflection of the love relationship that exist between Christ and His Church. Lord, we know that doesn't just happen overnight and we know that we are far from your best for us, and we know that we can't get to where we should be without your divine intervention and help. Lord begin today to spread a revival of marriage vows in this place that more husbands would love their wives the way Christ loves His Church and more wives would respect their husbands the way the Church honors and regards Christ. We ask you for this in the name of Jesus, for the sake of Him and His glory in the Church. Amen.