

WEDLOCK OR DEADLOCK?  
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It is a blessed experience as we think of all that God has done for us certainly we will never be able to repay Him for all He has done for us and frankly He doesn't necessarily want to be repaid. He said if I were hungry I would not tell thee, the cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. [Psalm 50:10] But what He wants is faithful and loyal service and a love and dedication and faithfulness to Him. We certainly cannot begin to repay Him but we can in this measure give our love back to Him.

The subject this evening is somewhat of an unusual one "Wedlock or Deadlock" and different folks wondered what are you going to say on that? Well I can tell you better after it is said but the thought that I gather from this as the brethren communicated the assignment, the burden of the assignment is this as I understand it: That we believe in marriage and the marriage relationship and remember that the theme of this Bible conference is The Christian Home.

The brother that spoke to me said that he has a concern that even though we as a people do not believe in putting away our companion yet there are those that are living together that are not enjoying themselves like they should and the question this evening I suppose is: Is our marriage a blessed wedlock or is it a tense deadlock? I suppose it's one of the other or something in between.

Now when we speak on the subject like this we need to keep in mind that we are still in the flesh and we have nothing to boast or to brag on and that the happy marriages that we have among us, and most of them are that way, we would say relatively happy because I would say that every married that is here this evening if it is a happy marriage I would say it is a relatively happy marriage, meaning that there are some clouds sometimes but we overcome them and we have a pleasant relationship together even though it is the blending of two personalities and two wills and are brought together in one and find this a satisfactory experience.

Now the subject like we have this evening one could spend the time entirely in speaking to those who are married, how they ought to conduct themselves so that it is a blessed wedlock rather than a tense deadlock. But as we think of young people it is also good sometimes to think of the ideals that they might be establishing while they listen to messages like this. And I suppose every young person this evening who is not yet married has ideals or should have ideals that if they ever get married there are not going to have very many quarrels and that is the way it ought to be and we believe that's the way it can be.

When I say not very many, now it depends what you call a quarrel, I think that a disagreement might be considered a quarrel or sometimes a very tense feelings where one might think one way and one very strong the other way if you want to call that a quarrel, but we certainly do not want to believe that it is in the will of God that couples will quarrel and every so often enter into a real drawn out fight then make up again. I don't think that is in the will of God. Now in the event that someone finds themselves in serious disagreement why we believe that the making up again is always in the will of God but I don't think that it necessarily needs to be that way.

There also is the mistaken idea that marriage is just a lot sweeter when there are some quarrels once in awhile and I don't agree with that, even though I suppose most marriages will have their disagreement but it does not take that to have a happy marriage. I think that our marriage can be happy and enjoyable and we never need to come to the place where they won't talk together for a while or a couple of days of that type of thing. And so I feel that there is a place for a subject like this. I will try and give what the Lord has laid on our heart.

Now marriage, as we think of the relationship that God instituted, we believe complements the man and that is what we consider a blessed wedlock. Now when marriage becomes a deadlock then it becomes a competitive relationship and I think that is about the most constructive way that I could think of looking at a deadlock.

Now we could talk about the problems that the world faces and how that so many people divorce and so on and that is always depressing to discuss that, even though there may be a place for that, I feel frankly that we do not need to advertise before our people all that happens in the world because they know it already or maybe know enough of that already and that never justifies tense relationships that may exist in a home or between a husband and wife, and there are a variety of reasons why such things can happen.

And I remember yet years ago when there was a neighbour man, he lived less than a mile from us, he passed away and then at the funeral why the Minister he made some, Oh he had lots of flowery remarks for him, and he said this couple Mr. and Mrs. Struder they never had a disagreement in their married life. And one other neighbour said: Well, a preacher like that he doesn't care to listen to because he knew better than that. He knew that everyone would have their disagreements.

Now it depends on what we allow our disagreements to become whether it's a disgraceful thing or not but we do know that when there are two people that are capable of thinking why there will be some disagreements. But I would say again that we need to be careful that we do not allow disagreements to come into a disgraceful situation and I think that is as we would find it in life.

Now I would like to look at a number of scriptures, there would be various scriptures that one could use and I have again selected a number of scriptures that give us I would say a comprehensive view of what God intends for the Christian home and the marriage relationship. We trust that what we say this evening may help the young people who are establishing ideals maybe even more than those already in marriage and have their course pretty well set.

I have observed in working with marriage problems sometimes that we are certainly creatures of habit and when a couple gets into the habit of disagreeing with each other in quarrelling that is a hard habit to break. And in one case I had one couple and observed: You like it this way. And they finally admitted Yes they did, even though they wished the other one would change but a certain amount of tension they enjoyed. And that is not the way it should be in a Christian home.

First of all in [Hebrews 13: 4](#) it says that marriage is honourable in all, and marriage is a honourable relationship, and the marriage relationship, or the bed is undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. They are under the censure of God and that is the way it is.

Now it seems to me that a child of God is interested in keeping the marriage relationship honourable and there are a number of things that help to maintain that and we want to keep it an honourable relationship. Now of course one of the things that keeps this relationship honourable is strict fidelity in the marriage union. One of the routes that are often taken when husbands and wives are unfaithful to each other in the world is that they begin to feel hurt and then they try to hurt the other and that type of thing until finally their confidence is broken down and they will sometimes even seek other love outside of the marriage relationship just simply to spite their companion. And we would certainly say that that is beneath the dignity of a child of God and he will not do that.

But I have known of situations where professing Christians have threatened their companion with seeking outside love simply to pester them and to try to get them over the barrel or to yield to them or to get even with them. And again remember in a Christian marriage un-Christian principles never complement the situation under any circumstance.

Now as we turn to Genesis the second chapter we see how that marriage complements the human race and it is a very simple story. Sometimes the publishers like to write love stories and so on and they have, shall we say venerated and have exploited practically every love story in the Bible, I have even seen movies advertised on Adam and Eve and that type of thing, well I don't believe unregenerate people can comprehend what this was like. But it is as we know that God can comprehend what this experience was like. As we see man, as we see Adam looking over all of God's animal kingdom it says that as they

passed before him and he named them there was not a single species that was suitable for man and so in that sense he was a bit lonely I guess.

And then the Bible says here that God saw that it wasn't good for man to be alone and so He made him an help meet, a help that is suitable, one that fills the bill, and sometimes people think that maybe the companion that they have does not quite fill the bill, well maybe it is better to ask ourselves the question: Do we fill the bill? You know the other way around as well.

And then in [Genesis 2:22-24](#)

“And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. <sup>23</sup>And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. <sup>24</sup>Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

It seems to me that here we have the perfect ideal. I don't believe there was anything to be desired as far as a social relationship was concerned when God had made Eve. Now sometimes people may pity Adam because he had no choice, but I don't think that that was really a problem because I believe God made the most beautiful and most suitable companion that was possible to have and before sin had entered the picture why that is the way it was. And you know if sin would not have hampered and become a part of the human family's experience we would have had a lot more good wives and good husbands too, no doubt, but that's how it is and we work with those limitations.

We are also glad that God has extended His grace to us so that actually in the Christian marriage one can realise almost what Adam and Eve had, even though at times there are shortcomings. Isn't there some satisfaction to be able to live with the shortcomings? That is also a dimension to marriage that is certainly to be noticed. We see sometimes that is through natural circumstance one of the other of the marriage partners is not able to fill the place any more that they did at one time. Well which is more honourable? For that one companion to accept that fact and to live together honourable or to decide that that isn't satisfactory any more and seek someone else?

I remember one of the dirtiest deals that I ever heard of or ever experienced when I was in service, I was in the tuberculosis sanatorium, and there the patients would stay maybe for six months or sometimes a year, sometimes longer, and I remember one lady in particular she was maybe 30 years old or so and she came into the hospital with TB and she was there and her husband came to visit her and she was making substantial progress. And as she was there, of course she had to be there for a period of time, and she was making substantial progress. After about six months why this man decided that the wait was too long and he divorced his wife whilst she was there in the hospital and married another and from there on down it simply went downhill and one day she died, and I always felt sorry for her. That was a raw deal if there ever was one. At the time that she needed him the most why he decided that it was not worth the wait and so he went and found another companion.

Well we certainly would not think of doing that in a Christian marriage but one does see that sometimes among us there is a type of thinking that is not altogether wholesome. We will look at some of that yet a bit later.

Now another verse we would like to notice in first Corinthians 11. We have here the order of headship established, well not established but it was confirmed here again and it says here [\[1 Cor. 11:8-9\]](#)

“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. [9] Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” and then it goes on and says [\[1 Cor. 11:10\]](#) “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”

A little bit earlier on he gives the order he says: [\[1 Cor. 11:3\]](#) But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

There is an order of headship here that if that is ignored it does always bring about a certain amount of tension to any marriage situation.

Turning also to first Peter the third chapter it tells us, it gives us advice for the wives and for the husband's as well:

[1 Peter 3:1-3](#)

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; [2] While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. [3] Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning....”

It goes to show that the attractiveness that the world often works on why this is finally not what keeps a woman attractive to her husband.

Well it says the hidden man of the heart [\[1 Peter 3:4\]](#)

“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Then verse seven

[1 Peter 3:7-9](#)

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. [8] Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: [9] Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing:... (Well that certainly applies to a marriage relationship)...but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”

Now as we think of the Christian home and the marriage relationship is it a deadlock or blessed wedlock? We want to simply say again that the marriage relationship as God has instituted it is a complementary thing for the man, it is a compliment to him and it is certainly not as one man said, I remember he was a sort of a joker and the day of his wedding, after the wedding at the reception someone asked him: “Well Lester how do you feel?” “Well,” he said, “I feel my freedom slipping.”

Well maybe that's the way the world looks at it but really that's not how it is. It is simply calling on the man to be his best and to fill the place that God has called him to fill. Now if the greatest desire of his life is to do as he pleases or to enjoy himself well then Yes his freedom is slipping, but isn't it far more satisfying to be able to bring joy and happiness to others rather than simply to see what joy and happiness we can have for ourselves.

On the other hand if the marriage relationship is a deadlock then it is certainly a competitive relationship. There are sometimes marriages that I see that are a bit more competitive than what they ought to be. Now there is never anything wrong with competing with one's self and wishing we could do better but there is plenty wrong when a husband or wife judge each other by a standard that is much stricter than what they are willing to judge themselves by. That always brings difficulties and will never bring joy and satisfaction.

We believe that marriage is or can be possibly the most satisfying relationship that is to be experienced on this side of the eternity. On the other hand it can also be as some have said: It is actually hell on earth. Now when they say that of course they don't know what they are saying because I am sure that there is no marriage relationship, bad as it may be, that is as bad as hell, I know that, even though I have been to neither of those places. I feel that we have had a relatively satisfying marriage and I have never been to the place of eternal punishment but I am sure that there is no comparison even though it is in idiom that can be used, but we believe that eternal punishment maybe for those people that have a bad marriage, and I have had men tell me already that had lots of complaints about their wives and one said: I have my hell here. Well no he doesn't, he might have a hard time but it is not hell because “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched” is yet something different. [\[Mark 9:44\]](#)

But we do know that the Bible does say that a sour marriage relationship can be a very serious thing and Solomon has a number of expressions like one that a woman who is not faithful why is like a continual dripping and one that is constantly nagging why that's a very unhandy thing, but it is still not as bad as hell. Let's have that straight. [\[Proverbs 27:15\]](#)

Now a marriage can be and should be a most satisfying relationship.

One of the reasons why marriage is many times not satisfying is because husbands and wives are not willing to compromise quite as readily as what they ought to

Now we are not suggesting that we compromise with evil but we do know that life is full of compromises and we are doing that right along. Husbands and wives will compromise, this time we bend this way and next we will bend that way, and there is a compromise in order to make it work. We sometimes compromise with our children, they would like this or that and sometimes that is all right, but we always need to be careful that we do not compromise with evil, but a satisfying marriage relationship does require some compromise one with another.

Now as we think of a marriage that is a complementary thing there is a number of things I would like to say about the marriage relationship that I feel will make it a complementary thing and it will continue to be that.

One is that as long as first love continues marriage is going to be a blessing.

Now there are those who have lost their companion and they may have something to say in relation to first love, but it seems to me that that can be recaptured even in a second marriage or a third marriage if they want to, it will never be like this situation or that situation because we can't back up to that. But the fact remains that the first love must continue if marriage is a complementary thing.

You know one of the unique things about our first love is the amount of things that it can overlook, and we believe that that is a part of making marriage a blessed wedlock. I can honestly say that in the 29 years that we are married I was never sorry that I got married and I was never sorry that I chose the one I did, never, never for a minute and I hope you can say the same thing. We believe that the marriage can be a satisfying experience and by this we are not saying that we never had any disagreements, if you think we didn't why then you probably don't know us well enough, but the fact remains that it can still be a blessed relationship and a blessed wedlock.

Another thing that makes marriage a complementary thing is when there is that unselfishness present which is present when a person is first trying to win the other person's affections. You know when that unselfishness continues then marriage will continue to be a blessed that thing, it will be a blessed wedlock and you will not regret the day but you will rather be glad for that experience

Another thing that I think makes marriage a complementary thing is when there is at least a reasonable amount of communication.

Now sometimes you hear the thought of the silent treatment and how one companion may get irked at the other and not talk for a while. I do not believe that that belongs to a Christian, the only situation where that would be justifiable if they would feel that if they would say something that it would be an explosion, then it maybe all right for all while to hold it, but only for a very temporary period. And I feel it is complimentary when there is continued communication.

Now some husbands and wives communicate much more freely than others do and quite often the wife you know is a bit more free to chatter than what the husband is, and there are different responsibilities that come on people that may limit how much you may share. Now for instance when a person is in the Ministry, why his marriage undergoes a type of stress that most other people's marriage doesn't and there is a number of reasons for that. And for that reason sometimes there are some ordained men's marriages that may not always be the best because of the stress that they may be under. For one thing some wives may want to know everything and sometimes it is the best for them not to know everything, and if they are satisfied to just wait until you tell them why then it works out all right. But I believe that a certain amount of communication is necessary and it is possibly one of the things we constantly need to work on.

You know when two persons live together for 10,15, 20 years there is a danger that you begin to assume that the other knows what you are thinking, and it often isn't that way, they can guess pretty good some times but it often isn't that way. Along with that is then the danger of taking each other for granted and just simply expecting the other to do for you and vice versa without really expressing appreciation or showing appreciation and I feel that communication a certain amount of it must always be with words.

I like to tell young couples that come to make wedding plans that they should not waste their time by wishing the wedding day were here but they should rather spend their time in constructive thinking and in communicating talking and together because the pattern of communication that is established between the time that the couple decide that they are for each other until it is consummated in marriage, that oftentimes set the pattern for the communication throughout their marriage. And so it is good that they tell each other with words what they want to say and not spend their time in other things that sooner make a problem. I feel that it is one of the things that makes our type of courtship a good thing, where we do not expect our young people to do a lot of caressing, holding each other and that type of thing but rather that their communication is with words and it sets a good pattern for their married life. And that makes a complementary thing.

Also marriage is a complementary thing when we have it clear in our mind that here is a solemn obligation before God not just before your companion and there is a vast difference there. You know if we look at that relationship only as a solemn obligation or promise to our companion we could say that it could lose its solemnity, its effectiveness. We will always need to remember that marriage is a solemn obligation before God and if we fail in that we are actually letting God down and going back on the promise that we made before God.

Marriage is also a complementary thing when those involved in the home relationship, namely the children or others who may live in our home, know that there is a degree of appreciation and love for each other and that that atmosphere prevails. Now in that sense I suppose we could all use some improvement, at least I would say that for myself, but we certainly don't want to take our companion for granted because that finally does not work out for the best.

Now we also want to look at marriage when it is a competitive thing.

And I feel that here is where we maybe treading on some dangerous ground and yet it is a part of human experience. But we might raise the question: When can marriage be a competitive thing?

Well in some cases it is already competition before they are married, in some cases. But then in other cases why marriage can become a competitive thing when, shall we say the natural pursuits of life are not as successful as what we had hoped they would be. And it is always good, I like to warn young brides that the young man that you are marrying, even though you have all kinds of confidence in him, he may not be as capable in providing a livelihood as what your father was, and so it is not fair to compare them. And that has sometimes made a problem when there have been some disappointments, and I suppose all of us have had those and we look at our efforts in life and how little we accomplish sometimes, why we are not always the glowing success that we would like to be and that can bring a degree of competition into a marriage.

Sometimes a wife may feel; "Well if my husband would just earn more money why we could just be a lot happier." Well I am not sure that that is possible or that that is true. Now if he is not doing the best that he can well that might be true but the statistics would say that an abundance of things does not necessarily make a happy marriage, it may sometimes contribute to the well-being especially if the normal things we need are short and yet when we look back at the "good old days" why isn't it the days when we didn't have everything that we wanted? Aren't those the good old days? We often think of it that way. At least we look back on that there was times you know when you were poor and you were hard up and you hardly knew just what would be the best thing to do under certain circumstance. We think back yet of our 1W experience when the wages were very meagre and we look back at that as the good old days. After all it was fun, it was enjoyable even though at the time maybe there was a little fretting that if we just had a little bit more money we would do a few more things, but then would that have made happiness? That is a good question.

Another thing that brings competition into marriage is children. It does not need to but it often does.

Now one of the usual or is it unusual things about having a family is that you produce your own kind. That's about what you do. And have you ever noticed that maybe the things that irritate you in your

children the most are maybe things that you struggle with yourself, it becomes the most irritating. And I have seen marriages that have become quite competitive as the children grew up and it is understandable that maybe a husband's and wife's attitude toward a certain child is not always identical. But always keep in mind that if we allow a marriage to become competitive over children why it is the children that are the battleground and therefore it is not fair, and so we owe it to our children not to be competitive with each other.

Where a marriage gets to the place where parents will openly solicit the support of a child against the other parent, you know we then call that a disaster, because that is just about what is to happen. But we feel that finally children like to be loyal to both parents and that is the way it ought to be. But marriage can become a competitive thing over children and the children need not be very old before that happens. Maybe there is not the kind of loyalty and the kind of submission on the wife's part or maybe there is a lack of leadership on the husband's part that sometimes can do that.

I feel that when wives are not willing to submit, you know it isn't always that they are just block headed or that they are stubborn, but maybe sometimes the husband doesn't assume his role like he ought to and they don't feel secure in that.

Another thing that happens that can make marriage competitive is when husband and wife did not reckon with the changes in life that will naturally come.

You know the world tries to hold on to that thing, you know where the husband is still that fresh, ardent and sharp lover and the wife is still that one that gets everybody's attention, why you know life just isn't that way. But I think that the husband and wife that live together in harmony, the wife will never lose her attractiveness to her husband. Why she is still as pretty as she ever was, even though from the, shall we say from the evaluations of Hollywood, why it might be time for a facelift or that type of thing. Well we don't need that, I don't need that, I think my wife is still as nice as pretty as she ever was, even though by Hollywood standards they might say this or that would complement her now. Well that doesn't matter because finally when you've had a satisfactory relationship over the years there are some things that at one time were very important, are now not near as important any more, and so we should always keep that in mind.

The husband and wife who are able to adjust to today's changes will save themselves a lot of trouble. When the husband is so, shall we say uncultured, as to remind his wife that she isn't pretty any more like she was at one time, why maybe we had better look in the mirror, he might not be either you know, and so that's about the way it works. If we do not reckon with the fact that changes will come and those adjustments we must face then it is going to bring lots of competition into a marriage.

I feel that the marriage relationship as our people generally enjoy it is usually satisfactory. Now and then there are, there is some need for a little counselling, but I feel that that can be overdone. When husbands and wives had some troubles to tell, sometimes the Minister may be just as wise to tell them to: "Think it over a little bit before you tell them, maybe after all you don't want to say it, and if you can resolve those differences yourself well that is the most satisfactory." Now sometimes some outside help may be needed.

But I feel that in marriage we should avoid it from being a competitive thing and rather and we should help each other to be what we ought to be and at every stage in life you know selfishness is a challenge. It doesn't matter whether you are 20 or 25 or 50 or how old you are, selfishness is a challenge. Also I feel that the method that is generally used among our people to find companions is a satisfactory method. Sometimes you hear people say we ought to revolutionise this whole thing. Well you don't know what kind of products we would have if we did that.

I feel that there are two extremes. Sometimes children want to get married too soon and then sometimes there is some that I think maybe would better take that seriously and find a companion. I think that young people dating at 18 and thereafter is all right. Now it doesn't mean that you have to at that point, and some maybe aren't quite mature enough at that point, but usually when they face some responsibilities why there is some maturing takes place right fast. I feel basically that to emphasise the importance of a

good sound Christian life and Christian conduct is very important in being ready for marriage. It is understandable that there will be some things that they have to mature in and grow up fast, but that is the way most of us had to.

Now as we think yet in conclusion we might raise this question: Why should we not allow marriage to become a deadlock?

I feel basically we have that in our hands to do that or not to do that. Well you might say: You don't know some of the things that I face. Well maybe we don't, but then on the other hand every person has to live with his set of circumstances and I feel that generally life is fair to us.

First we should not allow it to become a deadlock because of the spiritual damage that it goes to ourselves. And then also we should not allow it to become a deadlock because of the spiritual damage and the social damage that it does to our children, our families. That certainly would be a very good reason why it should not become a deadlock.

Now as far as separation is in our church we would know that it is just not acceptable, there is no other alternative acceptable. We do not allow our people to put away their companion and then go and find another companion and so they know they have to make it work and I feel that that is doing our people a favour. Because I believe that if we start allowing any other alternative then there soon would be a lot of them, and that is not speaking derogatorily of our people, but it is simply stating the facts as they are, and so let's stand with that and not start thinking as one said: "Well these two they are just at odds and they don't appreciate each other, why they might just as well separated." No, no, no, no. They might just as well resolve their differences. That is the thing to do and not make it worse by separating.

I would say that the only exception to that would be if there would be mental deterioration and a person would no longer be safe to live with, that maybe would be the only exception that I would think of and once in awhile a person has to be committed to an institution and of course that does require separation. Or sometimes cases maybe not quite that serious or so but basically we are dishonouring the type of marriage it should be by separating.

I am glad this evening that when we preach on marriage and this type of a subject that we are not facing a situation like many, many churches face today. And I tell you all we need to do is to simply allow it a little bit and we will face the same things, because I know of individuals, close relatives, that gave up the Conservative way of life and; Well they didn't intend to go that far but after all a person can be a Christian and maintain the principle without being so particular about some of these details.

Now 20, 25 years later they never thought that that road was going to lead them to the place where their children would put away their companions. Now they can wring their hands and weep, why here this one is a divorced woman and this one puts away his wife.

Well all you need to do is to leave the impression before our people that another alternative is acceptable and you will find in short order that you will have alternatives. And we don't want that because finally the Bible says the adulterous will have no part in the inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. [1 Cor. 6:9]

So may God help us to have happy marriages.

We do not have any magic formula but the scriptures do after all bear out the Truth.

May the Lord continue to blessing young couples with a frame of reference and with a desire to even in these last days to be faithful and may the Lord help us to do that.