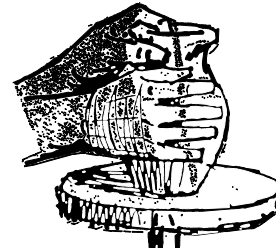


His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

How Same-Sex Marriage Should Change the Church *by Russell D. Moore*

The Supreme Court has now ruled on two monumental marriage cases, and the legal and cultural landscape has changed in this country. The Court voted to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act and remand the decision of the Ninth Circuit in the Proposition 8 case to the District Court, holding that California's Proposition 8 defenders didn't have standing. Justice Kennedy's opinion in the Defense of Marriage Act case used sweeping language about equal protection and human dignity as they apply to the recognition of same-sex unions and outrage against advocates of traditional marriage. The issue is far from settled. But what has changed for us, for local churches, and our proclamation of the gospel?

In one sense, nothing. Jesus of Nazareth is still alive. He is calling the universe toward His kingdom, Eph 1:9-10, and He is Lord indeed and will ultimately have all in subjection to Himself, 1 Cor 15:25-28. Regardless of what happens with marriage, the gospel doesn't need "family values" to flourish. In fact, it often thrives when it is in sharp contrast to the cultures around it. That's why the gospel rocketed out of the first cen-

tury from places such as Ephesus and Philippi and Corinth and Rome, which were hardly Mayberry.

In another sense, though, the marginalization of conjugal marriage in American culture has profound implications for proclaiming the gospel. **First of all, marriage isn't incidental to the gospel—it is central.** There's a reason why persons don't split apart like amoebas. We were all conceived in the union between a man and a woman. Beyond the natural reality, the gospel tells us there's a cosmic mystery regarding marriage and the church, Eph. 5:32. God designed the one-flesh union of marriage as an embedded icon of the union between Christ and His church. Marriage and sexuality, among the most powerful pulls in human existence, are designed to train humanity to recognize, in the fullness of time, what it means for Jesus to be one with His church, as a head with a body. God's design for oneness in marriage is at the heart of God's purpose for mankind and the gospel. **God's ultimate purpose** for the universe, and all of history, and your life, **is to display the glory of Christ in its highest expression in His**

dying to make a rebellious people His bride. That's the reason the universe exists. Everything exists so glorifying God's grace can happen, and everything exists to highlight that truth of Christ's sacrifice for His bride and make much of it, and glorify that—especially you exist for that. God's ultimate purpose in creating the world and choosing to let it become sin-wrecked is so the glory of Christ could be put on display when He bought the rebellious bride at the cost of His life. Two texts teach this: Rev 13:8 and Eph 1:5-6.

In Rev 13:8, God speaks of writing names down in a book, and those who are in the book don't worship the beast. He says, *"Before the foundation of the world, in the Book of Life of the Lamb Who was slain."* So God's book existed before the foundation of the world, and the name of the book is *"the Book of Life of the Lamb Who was slain."* That is amazing. Before anything existed but God, Christ was crucified in God's mind for sin that didn't exist anywhere in the universe. That's amazing. It is staggering to think that God was planning the death and slaughter

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"And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...'"
—Genesis 2:23

—that's the word slain—of His Son before the universe was made. Why? Here's the other text: *"Having predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace..."* Eph 1:5-6. There isn't anything further on the other side of His design—that's the end, that's the purpose. When you arrive at the praise of the glory of the grace of God, you're home. That's it. There isn't anything beyond that. That was what the universe was made to do, to be. God was planning it so that the apex, the climax, the supreme expression of that grace would be the Son's purchase of His wife—the church, you and me—at the cost of His life. His eternal purpose is for the church to make known His wisdom in making this plan. Ephesians 3:8-12 and 5:25 show this. *"To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of ages has been hidden in God, Who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in Whom we have boldness and access in confidence through faith in Him,"* Eph 3:8-12. That's the reason the universe exists: to display the glory of God's grace in its highest expression, as the Son of God died to make a rebellious people His bride. *"Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church [there's the parallel—husbands love wives / Christ loves the*

church, His wife] and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, 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," Eph 5:25. So putting those four texts together—Rev 13:8, Eph 1:5-6, 3:8-12, and 5:25-27—we draw the conclusion: The ultimate purpose of all things is the praise of the glory of the grace of God, supremely manifest on Calvary when the Son of God laid His life down to purchase and purify His wife out of an absolutely hell-bent, rebellious people. That was the apex, and that's why God created the world, and that's why He created you and me. **Manhood and womanhood belong at the center of God's ultimate purpose.** Manhood and womanhood are not an afterthought of creation. They are not an afterthought of the cross. They're not peripheral to the design of Jesus dying to magnify the grace of God. They're right there at the center at Calvary. It's staggering. Your manhood and your womanhood are at the very center of the purposes of God in this universe, which come to a climax when Christ, the husband, bought His bride. Mankind, male and female, were created in God's image, Gen 1:27. A purpose of marriage is to mirror His image. God made two distinctly different humans so that in union they would reflect the image of God. Their oneness reflects the character and unity of God, Mt 19:4-6; Jn 17:22-23—and their oneness is a living picture of the intimate relationship between Jesus and His church, Eph 5:22-23. In marriage, we complete one another, helping one another in companionship and growth. Companionship replaces isolation, Gen 2:18—marriage is God's provi-

sion to meet our deep longing for close, intimate relationships. Self-centered individuality destroys oneness and companionship, Jas 4:1-5. God's view of marriage is mutual loyalty; mutual learning, where rough edges are smoothed and the couple grows together in Christ; mutual commitment; and mutual submission, Eph 5:21-25, 33; Col 3:18-19, where both show respect and love. The goal is completion, not competition. Now sometimes we make a mistake by thinking like this: "Well, God created us that way, then later He sent His Son to die for sinners and created a people for Himself by His own blood (a church), and He thought, 'Now I want to make this understandable. I will look for an analogy that might work. Oh, look, there's marriage. That works. I will apply marriage to the meaning of what My Son has achieved.'" That's not the way it happened, and there's a reason we know that's not the way it happened. **Created to Display Christ's Glory.** When God designed in His own eternal mind how He would make a creature called a human in two varieties—male and female—He already had the cross in His mind. Here's why we know that: because Paul quoted Gen 2:24, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh,"* Eph 5:31. This is reaching back before the fall, all the way to the first marriage. Paul quoted God, then added this spectacularly important interpretation. *"This mystery is profound,"* 5:32—namely Gen 2:24—man leaving, cleaving, new flesh, *"This mystery is profound, and I am saying it refers to Christ and the church."* Thousands of years before there was
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Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

Marriage and the Church from p. 2 any cross, God said about manhood and womanhood, "Marriage concerns the most important event in history. That's why I made mankind this way. I mean for this manhood and womanhood choreography, in marriage mainly, and also in singleness, to be a display of the most important thing in the universe—My Son, showing My grace in sacrificing His life as a husband for His wife."

So here's the **main point**: What is the ultimate meaning of true masculinity and femininity? It's this: True marriage is a distinctive calling of God to display the glory of His Son in ways that would not be displayed if there were no marriage. Again. Marriage is a distinctive calling—a distinctive calling of God to display His glory, the glory of His Son in ways that would not be displayed if there were no male-female marriage union.

When God described the glorious work of His Son as the sacrifice of a husband for his bride, He was telling us why He made us male and female. He made us this way so that our maleness and femaleness would display more fully the glory of His Son in relationship to His blood-bought bride. This means—this is huge now in our egalitarian world—that if we try to reduce manhood or womanhood to mere physical features of biological functions and then determine our role

Discipleship Here At Home

in life purely on the basis of competencies, we not only miss the point of manhood and womanhood, we also diminish the glory of Christ in our own life. Our distinctive male or female personhood is indispensable in God's purpose to display the fullness of His glory. Sex not incidental to our personhood. It is God's design for the marriage relationship to demonstrate the central event of history—the death of His Son. Headship and submission, and the dynamic that exists between mates in marriage, are meant to show the love between Christ and His church. That's the mystery. Marriage exists to display the covenant-keeping love and grace that exist between Christ and His church.

Same-sex marriage is on the march, even apart from the Court decisions last week, and it is headed to our community, regardless of whether we are sitting on Capitol Hill or in a rural hamlet in southwest Colorado. This is an opportunity for proclaiming the gospel—the central message of the gospel, Christ's love, including Lordship and submission.

For a long time in American culture, we've acted as though we could assume marriage. Even people from what were once called "broken homes" could watch stable marriages on television or movies. Boys and girls mostly assumed they had a wedding in their futures. As marriage is redefined, these assumptions will change. Let's not wring our hands about that.

This gives churches the opportunity to do what Jesus called us to do with our marriages in the first place: to serve as a light in a dark place. Permanent, stable families that have both a mother and a father may well make us seem freakish in 21st-century culture. But is there anything more "freakish" than a crucified cosmic ruler? Is there anything more "freakish" than a gospel that can forgive rebels like us and make us sons and daughters? Let

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PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Margie Szymanski, Dale's mother—ever lowering O2 levels, serious; **Dale, Lynda, Megan Aki** and girls to see her this week

Gary Boyd—recovering from inhaling fiberglass dust

Mark Campbell—seizures; ICU at Glenwood Springs

Judy Sartin—recovering from double pneumonia; acute bronchitis

Ruth Hice, Pat Campbell's mother—invasive colon cancer; in rehab at: Legacy Heights Nursing and Rehab, Rm #15, 900 W. 12th St, Russellville, AR 72801

Frank Savarese—recovering from flu

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes;

Virginia, now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Directory update **Mark Reingrover**, 4615 Simms St, Wheatridge 80033

Job concerns **Andrew Tope, Lorenzo Gonzalez**, and **Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

Traveling **Patricia Ward** is vacationing this week. **Kaysha Howell** left Fri for 3 weeks in NY. **Kim Howell** is in Ohio. The **Lorenzo Gonzalezes** are in Wisc for 2 weeks.

REJOICE **Justin and Marie Carlson** are the parents of baby girl, **Emma Elizabeth**, born 6/23.

Expecting **Amy Vander Kooi**—August

Same-Sex Marriage and the Church *from p. 3*

us embrace the freakishness, and crucify our illusions of a moral majority. That means that we must repent of our pathetic marriage cultures within the Lord's church. For too long, we've refused to discipline a divorce culture that has ravaged our local churches. For too long, we've quieted our voices in teaching of the distinctive missions of fathers and mothers in favor of generic messages on "parenting." For too long, we've acted as though the leaders of Christ's church were Justices of the Peace, marrying people who have no accountability to the church and in many cases were forbidden by Scripture to marry. Just because we don't have two brides or two grooms in front of us, that doesn't mean we've been holding to Biblical marriage which glorifies God.

Opportunity. The dangerous winds of religious liberty suppression mean that our nominal Bible-Belt ways are over. Good riddance. This means we have the opportunity, by God's grace, to take marriage as seriously as the gospel does, in a way that prompts the culture around us to ask why. Our opportunity is to show marriage as central to gospel preaching. The increased attention to the question of marriage also gives us the opportunity to love our gay and lesbian neighbors as Jesus does. Denominations will capitulate on a Biblical sexual ethic, but the church will stand, the gates of hell will not prevail against it, Mt 16:18, and the gospel that Jesus handed down will endure, 1 Pet 1:25, Is 40:8.

As we stand with conviction, we don't look at our gay and lesbian neighbors as our enemies. They are not. The homosexuals in our community aren't part of some global "Gay Agenda" conspiracy. They aren't super-villains in a cartoon. They are, like all of us, seeking a way that seems right to them. If we believe marriage is as resilient as Jesus says it is, Mk10:6-9, it cannot be eradicated by a vote of justices or a vote of a state legislature. Some will be disappointed by what they thought would answer their quest for meaning. Will the church be ready to answer? Will we teach the true gospel of Christ and the true meaning of marriage?

This means we must become "a servant to all, that [we] might win the more," 1 Cor 9:19-23. Our preaching must win them to Christ. Those with same-sex attractions who follow Christ will be walking away from what their families and friends want for them: wedding cake and married life. For them, following Jesus will mean taking up their cross and following a hard narrow way of celibacy, Mt 19:4-12. Following Jesus always means a hard, narrow way. If we're going to preach the gospel, we must make it clear that this cross-bearing self-denial isn't just for homosexually-tempted Christians. It is for all of us, because that's what the gospel is. If our churches have been preaching the "American Dream," with eternal life at the end and Jesus as the means one uses to get all that, we don't have a gospel that can reach our gay and lesbian neighbors—or anyone else, for that matter. Same-sex marriage is headed for our community. This is no time for fear or outrage or politicizing. It's a time for forgiven sinners, like us, to do what the people of Christ have always done. It's time for us to point beyond our "family values" and our culture wars to the cross of Christ as we say: "Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world," Jn 1:29. And that's good news.

Westside church of Christ

meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 972-0087

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: "The Magnificent Mercy of God," Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

A Walk in Their Sandals Series

"Abraham," by Kenny Boyd

Vacation Bible School July 15-19