

Marriage? Isn't All we need "Love"... and Massive Sex

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Preacher: Tobin Miller

[0:00] We are the Yee family. I'm Bernard. I'm Angeline. I'm Abby. I'm Isaac. And I'm Elizabeth. This is the first Sunday of Advent. The word Advent means coming.

And today we are prepared for the coming of Christmas, God's gift of Jesus to the world. Each week we prepare by lighting a candle and focus on different themes of Christ's coming.

This week we light the candle of hope. From the beginning of its history as a nation, Israel, God's chosen people, has experienced great trials, slavery, oppression, war, famine, exile, and despair. In the midst of this despair, God whispered hope, one who was coming to rescue his people. Then, one night in a manger, the most unlikely of places, in the town of Bethlehem, before a crowd of sheep and cows, a poor peasant girl gave birth to a son.

And on that night, hope was born. That same hope that humbly came across as a child is ours today.

[1:32] In a world so full of despair and hopelessness, Christ is our undeserved hope. He is the hope for our friends and neighbors.

He is the hope for Hong Kong. He is the hope for the nations. Please join us in reading from Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 to 7, which you'll find on the screens.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it, with justice and with righteousness, from this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Let us bow our heads and pray. Restore us, O Lord, we pray. Bring us back to that place where we once met, as shepherd to the stable after hearing angels sing.

[3:04] Bring us back to that place when our love was fresh. Not embarrassed to express itself in praise to our heavenly King. Restore us, O Lord, we pray.

Good morning, Watermark. This morning, Tobin continues on with his guerrilla sermon series. If you recall, the last couple of weeks we've had a chance to SMS questions that we may have always wanted to ask in church, but we were a little afraid to ask them.

And so we've taken those questions and we've been putting them into specific buckets, and we've been addressing those. So last week we talked about money and finance and stewardship. And today we talk about marriage and relationships and, to use a Tobinism, massive sex.

So we've had the children and students go to their classes today, and if your kids have chosen to stay back, we just wanted to let you know that it may be a little bit more of an adult conversation, but if you have those conversations with your children, you're welcome to stay with us as well.

So we've been giving these letters, and one of the letters that we got is probably from one of our university students. It says, Pastor Tobin, I was told in my uni that marriage as an institution is something from the Middle Ages and that it's not really relevant to our day and age.

[4:18] Living together is a much better option. What are Watermark's thoughts on this? Please take a listen to a few more letters. Pastor, I'm pretty confident that my spouse is having other affairs as he travels to different countries for business.

What should I do? Do I have him followed? Should I ask him about this and risk everything falling apart, or should I just shut up and live my comfortable life in Hong Kong?

I'm desperate for your thoughts, as my friends all say it is common, and I should just swallow shame and live with it. Pastor T, as a single person, I really struggle with this idea of being single.

Or should I say, sometimes I struggle, and other times I say, who cares? And that married people are just not that happy anyway. Actually, I have not found that right person to complete me yet. I'm still looking for a person who can fulfill my emotional, sexual, and spiritual needs without asking too much from me. A person who can fit into my lifestyle without slowing me down and making me distracted from my goals.

[5 : 32] I guess my question is, should I be bothered by this? Should this concern me? Pastor, how often should a couple have sex each month?

And no, I'm not a man asking this. I just want to have it more often than my husband. My husband is always so tired, distracted, or busy with his work.

Would God make me with this desire for my husband that cannot be fulfilled by him? Help. Help. As a wife, I'm really struggling with being married in Hong Kong. I feel like I've lost my best friend, my husband. Because of his work, he is often gone, and I have to celebrate major events in our family's lives without him.

I feel like we don't connect anymore on a heart level, and that often I go to bed with a person who no longer knows me or cares to know me. I mean, we've changed so much as people since being married, and each stage of life brings us further apart.

[6 : 42] During the week, I manage the house and the family, and we have our own schedule that works. But when he returns, he wants us to drop everything and to try and fit him back into our lives.

I'm trying to do this, but it's getting harder and harder to fit the stranger we call dad back into our family. My friends at the club tell me to just make sure I get enough resources before I leave him to start over.

I do not want to do this, but he is no longer the person I married, and I worry for our children. So, what hope does Watermark and Jesus bring to me in this situation?

Good morning. The scripture reading today comes from Genesis and the book to the Ephesians. Please follow along in your bulletins. Then God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[8 : 06] God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope. Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

So then, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father, and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is also the head of the church, he himself being the Savior of the body.

[9 : 30] But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her, so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of his body.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Nevertheless, each individual among you is to love his own wife even as himself. And the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. This is God's word.

Thanks guys. Great music today. Worshiping. How you guys doing?

[10:59] Wow. That's pretty good, good, great. Better than normal. Hey, we are, as I get all my stuff organized up here, we are doing a sermon series.

Actually, this is the last one for a while as we enter into Advent, and we are going to have people text messaging us. I think the thing is still open if you want to try later on. And we are looking at questions that people want to ask, but they are afraid to ask, because they are afraid if they ask it, it is going to start this huge fight or argument.

I called them guerrilla Christians in my family growing up, because there are things that you know you shouldn't go there, but if you go there, just prepare to get your arms ripped off by the person you are talking to, in that conversation. And so last week, we talked about stewardship, money, finances, how much we should give, and we looked at the passage in Luke 16, and at the end, we said, hopefully, you heard me say, that the whole story of the steward only worked as long as the master was good.

The story of stewardship that we read, the story of the guy trying to cheat and trying to fix and focus on his future only was going to work if the master was good and gracious and kind.

Because no matter how clever he was in trying to figure out his future and what was important in his future, if the master called him on it, he would be lost. So today, and I think that's a theme we need to carry through all of our talks, today we want to look at questions that you've heard talked about.

[12:42] We want to look at the idea of marriage, love, sex, maybe a little dating. We'll probably do another one for dating, for singles. And I think this is probably a topic that is, I've actually never heard this in church before, hardly ever growing up.

I mean, I never heard a topic on marriage or a sermon series on marriage. I've never heard a sermon series on relationships, guys and girls, roles. I've never heard a topic for sure or a sermon on sex.

But I think that, and you can say that word in church, sex, okay? So some of you are going to, we'll edit it out when people listen on it, but that's okay because God created that. But I think that was one of those things that I'd never imagined that we could talk about in the church and yet the church needed to talk about it so much.

It seemed like the church throughout the ages was quiet when it needed to speak up. And it seems like it, when it spoke up, it didn't necessarily say the right things.

It said things that kind of got changed as cultures and time and was not good and basically ended up putting people in bondage and legalism as opposed to grace and mercy and love.

[13:56] My family never talked about these things. I can remember when it came time to talk about sex, my dad gave me this book. And the book had two people walking their dogs.

And it said, look, the masters are walking the dog. There's a daddy dog and there's a girl dog. Oh, next page. The daddy dog and the girl dog, they fall in love.

Isn't marriage great? Next page. Daddy dog and the girl dog go into a room. The door shuts. Next page. The door opens, daddy dog and the girl dog walk out and there's a whole bunch of little puppies behind them.

Isn't sex wonderful? And a week later my dad came back to me and he said, are there any questions you have on marriage, love, or sex?

And I was like, there's no way I'm going to ask a question to my parents on this topic. And I just think it was just, I just remember that. And even to this day as siblings when we talk about kids and growing up and a sex question comes up, we say, okay, you better bring out the puppy book and let's open up the puppy book and see what the puppy book says.

[15:13] But I think that, you know, you can learn a lot about, hey Charles, can I ask you a quick favor? Could you shut that door so we can, for the outside for the kids? I think you can learn a lot about how a culture talks about marriage, love, and sex.

And you can look at our culture and look at how it's portrayed on movies and on videos and songs and you can learn a lot about the values and things that we put in that. In the Old Testament, whenever you talked about relationships and marriage and sex, the word that always came out was this word yada.

Yada. Y-A-W-D-A-H. Can you say it with me? Yada. Yada. And sometimes you hear people say yada, yada, yada. But that is the word that was primarily used in the Hebrew culture when it started talking about sex, marriage, and relationships.

It's used over 500 times in the Old Testament. And when you look at its usage, some guys have done extensive studies on yada, you see that it means to know, to observe, to study closely, to be a servant of, to have a relationship with, to have marriage, to have sexual relationships.

It's not just this abstract idea, yada, oh, I know that person over there. But when you say yada, it means intimacy. It means coming together. It means knowing that person very, very well.

[16:39] It means being a student of that person. It means knowing what that person is thinking before they say it. in a relationship, as you walk into a relationship with a man and a woman, it's this yada, it's this intimacy that happens.

Now, sometimes you see somebody and you say, I see my wife over there and I go, yada, yada, yada, which has other meanings to that. It means beyond, I just want to know her, but I want to spend time with her in the puppy room, right?

So that's what that means. But we're going to talk about that today and it's important to remember that when the Bible talks about marriage and sex and love, that it's always done in this aspect of caring.

It's always done in the aspect of commitment. It's always done with this understanding of a personal knowing. It's always done with this idea of sacrifice.

there's always the word covenant that is after it. And we're going to talk about what that covenant means because there is a huge meaning behind the idea of covenant and what it means when a man and a woman covenant together.

[18:02] And so we're going to talk about what does it mean to be sacred. We're going to talk about yada. In 60 AD, the passage that you have here right now, Paul was in prison. Well, he wasn't really in prison.

He was in chains. He was in chains between these Roman soldiers and they kept him in his house because he paid for his house. So he's paying for his house, paying for his prison. He's been chained up and he hears this news and the news is that this young church that he started in Ephesus was having trouble and he became very concerned about it.

And this church was very interesting. He planted it about two years before and this church was planted in a culture that was surrounded by at least three other cultures. It was surrounded by the Roman culture and it was Roman by the Greek culture and it was Roman by the Hebrew culture and Jewish culture and all of these cultures came in and started to influence God's people in a very, very negative and harsh way.

And so, as Paul started to see this church start to fall apart and struggle with what does it mean to yada? What does it mean to have relationships? What does it mean to be married? What does it mean to know people? What does it mean to serve people?

He penned this passage in this book of Ephesians and I think when we read this for me personally it is something that we just kind of read and we forget about how powerful and meaningful it is because when Paul wrote this passage things were very different than it was today.

[19:28] In Paul's day and age in Roman, Greek, in Hebrew society a woman meant nothing. A woman was property. She had no rights whatsoever.

She could not divorce her husband no matter how bad he treated her and if he disappeared for 20 years there is no way that she could get rid of him. But in these cultures the man could divorce a woman in an instant.

I was reading some old text and it said basically this guy divorced his wife because she made the food too salty. and that's the culture that Paul was writing to and this is the culture that the people were struggling with.

Men in this day they were gods. They were rulers. They were the king. They were under no obligation. They had no responsibility to their wife or to their family. They didn't have to care.

The passage says as you read history that most men had four to five to six mistresses, concubines, and other wives. The only reason they had a wife was to take care of the children while they were out traveling.

[20:35] But when it came to ideas of love and relationship, Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, the play writers in Greek and Roman history, none of them would ever say that that happened within the family.

None of them would ever say that it happened between husband and wife. They would always say that it happened outside of the marriage thing. Love was seen purely as an emotion there was no

commitment behind it and most of the time love was lived outside of marriage. You would never say that you loved your wife. You would say you loved your concubines. You loved your mistresses. But you never loved your wife. Sex was either seen as something that you needed to do like breathe or eat or it was seen as something dirty and terrible. And marriage was merely a social transaction. The women and men would go down to the forum after work at night. They would have a couple drinks. They would look at the guys who walked in and they would see who was the most handsome, who was the most in shape, who wore the best togas, who drove the fastest chariots, and they would say that's the guy I want to hook my trailer to. And that's what marriage was all about. Marriage was seen only as a contractual agreement to elevate one family to a higher position socially. So you never saw people marrying for love because the women couldn't do that.

[22 : 05] The dad would always marry the women off to benefit their family and to make a better thing happen. So this is the world that Paul is living in. This is the world that Paul is writing this book of Ephesians to and that's why when you read it, you have to say, wow, he's making some amazing changes.

Because for thousands of years, this is how people saw men. For thousands of years, this is how people saw women. For thousands of years, this is how people saw marriage. For thousands of years, this is how people saw love and sex and they saw it very different than the way Paul taught, the way the Scripture points to, the way that Jesus talked to. In the book of Ephesians for the first time, as we see, Paul writes and he pens out there that women, they're no longer just material items. But they have equal value and worth within God's family and kingdom.

To be single was looked at as something terrible in the ancient world. No one would ever want to be single. It was terrible. You should never do that because everyone knew that your worth was dependent upon the children that you passed down from generation to generation.

[23 : 18] But for the first time in the church, singleness was elevated to this high place and this high standard. Paul didn't take a wife. Jesus didn't take a wife.

Some of the greatest leaders in the church said it's okay because you're elevated and you're pushed off maybe not by your physical children but by your spiritual children.

And the people who would have been disturbed the most by the passage today would be the men. Because when the men heard words like love your wives and it was commanded to them to love their wives it was about an action.

And in that day and age no one ever loved their wives. The idea of loving your wives unconditionally to be a servant to sacrifice to give of yourself to seek the highest good for your wife to be unconditional to be selfless to be sacrificial to not live for yourself to be a servant leader.

This is the first time this was ever said in the history of the world. And so when the church heard this and they were being influenced by the Greeks and the Romans and the Jewish culture it was outstanding and amazing and hard and difficult because of where they came from.

[24 : 42] Marriage was lifted up and was shown to be a mystery and it was shown to be this idea of God's redeeming story being played out throughout the world. So now instead of just being a contractual agreement it was something that God blessed he ordained and he showed that I'm going to show the world what it's like to have a relationship with Christ as they look at you and your wife and live out this story of two sinful people coming together and working together.

Love is a commitment it's not a feeling and all of these things God tells us Paul tells us is based on God's relationship with himself. All of these things are based on Jesus and how he lived in the world because we know from eternity past that God created and existed in three people God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and there was never a time that there wasn't a Trinity and there was never a time that these three people didn't defer didn't care for didn't think more of didn't serve didn't selflessly give to the other person and Paul is saying in the midst of all of these things as we look at Jesus as we look at how God is that is how we are also to be now when everybody heard this again it would have been counter cultural because Paul is saying that even within the character of

Jesus there's always an other orientation that Jesus was always thinking about other people that Jesus was always serving other people that the Godhead was always deferring to each other and they were serving and giving to each other and he basically encourages the church in Ephesus he encourages us that we're to do the same that we're to do the same Paul's basically telling the

church here that the basis of their problems is self-centeredness the basis of their problems is an unwillingness to serve and he's telling them that as we go on this journey with God that every day each one of us have a choice of how this story is going to play out we can play it out according to what God has said in his word and we can trust him to be good and trust him to be in control and trust him to be holy and gentle and gracious and forgiving or we can play it out according to what the world says this is how you should live this is what you should do and in the midst of all of these themes that we can play out as we live out our lives the scripture is really clear that in the midst of it you and

I are radically self-centered you and I are radically self-centered and we need a hero to come into our lives and to change us I want to look at the questions that were brought in today my wife said I can't do it alone and so I wanted to ask Christina to come up and we're going to kind of talk about these really quickly and we want to look at some of these things and if we have enough time we will take some other questions but again we feel like this is just a foundation we're building on this foundation of marriage and relationships and sex as we live our life as a family and a church we believe that God has put us here to be a part of the community and to be with each other and to be as open as possible so my prayer is that there's never a time you don't feel like you can't ask us a question and there's never a time as a community that we're not dialoguing and talking about all of these things and so we're going to cut the video off now because we don't want to record this I'm going to close this up right now there's a couple things I want to share with you really quickly there's a book sale out there all the books are we're selling at a loss some of them 20% but there's some books here that I think are great on marriage actually they're the best books I've ever read and Christina and I have made a career of reading marriage books there's three of two of them first one is The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller it's one of the best books I've ever read on marriage this is a great book for single people if you're single I would I challenge you to read this if you don't like it give it back to me I'll give you the money back and the other book is Sacred Marriage it's by Gary Thomas it's one of the best books on marriage and relationships do we have sacred influence I'm not sure but they're all out there at the book table and then there's this devotion it just came out Christina and I started reading it it's 365 day devotion it's one of the best devotions I've ever seen and so I just went ahead and order if I were independently wealthy which you know by my salary [29 : 57] I'm not I would buy everybody in the church one of these books and give it to you as a gift for Christmas because I think they are significant and so they're on the book sale out there at the table so please check the books on the way out for you also we talked about being a successful steward last Sunday was using our money to give people an opportunity to hear about Jesus that's what stewardship is in scripture and so we have several neat opportunities and this one right here is December 15th we're having Michael Ramson come in for training in the morning and then at night we are giving out tickets we're having four turkeys a Christmas meal and an outreach at the community center and so these tickets are available right now outside so if you can't come for the dinner that night unless you bring a friend who is asking questions about Christianity and this will be the ticket to get you in so we want to encourage you to pray about who you're going to bring it's going to be a great night Michael's going to do a 20 minute presentation on Christmas and its meaning we're going to have a Q&A; time afterwards a lot of food and fun and fellowship so grab a ticket right there and also on your way out you can grab some of these these are we're sending out 19,000 of these this year to every

English speaking household in this area this part of Hong Kong Island it's basically an invitation to the Christmas celebration that we're going to do on December 25th so we want to encourage you to grab some of these and hand them out to your friends and people in your workplace and just use them to use your money wisely to invite people to hear and have opportunities about hearing about Jesus we didn't take an offering this Sunday we don't ever take offerings but you know that all the offering from the bulletins and the books they all go to outreach and so as you consider what Christ has done in your life we would just ask for you to tithe in that manner like we talked about last Sunday and with that you want to pray I'll pray let me pray by the way thank you please stand up yeah we'll just by the way thank you for this day thank you for your grace even as we bumbled through these questions but I pray as a church that we just cannot afford not to talk about these things so just give us grace and wisdom and how to move forward in relationships and in dating I pray for people who are here

Lord that if they want to talk to somebody immediately afterwards there'll be people up here to pray there's a men's fellowship that started up they can grab a hold of that there's a women's fellowship that started up and what I pray that we would not leave here without finding ways to connect and allow you to to change us what I pray for our church family here I know that we're all at different stages of life we're all struggling with different things and above all of these things we need your grace and mercy and so we become before you and we realize that you have to be the hero of our story you have to be the person who who leads it and if you're not then we're we're in trouble and so we come before you this beginning of the Christmas season and we just worship you we thank you for your amazingness as God that you sent your son for us and we come and we just we just worship in that sense pray that we would be different we pray that Hong Kong would be different because of what you've done in us today so Lord we come and we worship you and we love you in Jesus name amen God bless you next week next week we're back here there's donations wait one second there's already a

Christmas present underneath this tree oh man what's it say it says to uncle millen happy birthday from the miller kids millen you want to come get this millen is not on staff millen serves he serves he does an amazing job and my kids knew that your birthday was Thursday and you're 22 I am 21 21 and so they wanted to get you a present so this is from the miller family right here so bring your food in there's some business cards for the men's ministry happy birthday millen gather together with a man and we'll see you back here next Sunday love you guys have a good week hey I forgot to announce also there's the foundations class that we've been doing this morning and this evening so if you want to join that it's for one hour it's right out the door following Chris and there's a choir rehearsal right here in the back so foundation class for one hour we want everybody in the church to be a part of that it'll be next week also and then a choir right here thank you few O'neil meeting to AAA you