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Made in Heaven, Destroyed on Earth

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**Series: Why Do You Run When I'm Crying
(The Caring Church in a Hurting World)**



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Everything was perfect. Well, almost. A big June bug did fall in the punch bowl and two of the bridesmaids got lost on their way to the chapel and ended up in Pittsburgh. Oh, yes, and one of the candles fell over during the ceremony and nearly set the place on fire. But barring those minor incidents, the 6,325 hours Janet and her mother spent preparing for this wedding produced an extravaganza that paralleled perfection.

The 100-voice choir was magnificent. The seven-layer cake didn't even lean from the heat. The video camera whirred and the tape recorder purred, and the 2,000 people who were watching ooh'd and ahh'd. Two quite proper, perfectly dressed women were heard whispering as they made the trek from the chapel to the reception hall, "Now this is a marriage made in heaven." And indeed, from all indicators, it was.

Tom had just finished his last year in law school. Janet had just completed her Masters Degree in Special Education. He had been all-state quarterback on his championship high school football team. She had been head cheerleader. Both had nearly 4.0 grade averages at City High, and both were active in their church's youth program. He led the young people on youth-led evangelistic teams, and she taught choir to the grade schoolers, as well as playing the piano at the old-folks home. Both were grounded in the Scriptures, sensitive to the Spirit, and basically available to people. They had prayed for a full year before they became engaged, and both sets of parents had fully agreed to the wedding.

I'd have to agree with Mrs. Maloney and Widow Fitzimmons. This really was a marriage made in heaven. Now, ten years have passed and as we return to Batesville for a high school reunion, we are excited to see how this picture-perfect marriage has held up. They what? They're getting a divorce? No, you must have misunderstood who I said. You didn't? Why, that marriage was made in heaven! I see, she did what? He did what? They what? Oh, my. It may have been a marriage made in heaven, but it appears to have been destroyed on earth.

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What a grievous disappointment. What a devastating blow to the testimony of God's picture book of marriage. And the church of Jesus Christ on planet earth today seems to be beset at every turn with stories of grief and hurt and pain, where for years the home has served as a little fortress of hypocrisy to shield the world from the fact that what they see on Sunday morning isn't the real thing. Monday through Saturday, tensions are building, cruel words are flying and walls are being built that only God will ever be able to break down. And all too often the world has its way and many take what appears to be the easy way out—divorce, only to find as the years pass that to bypass God's way is never the best way and is not really the easy way after all.

Marriages made in heaven are being destroyed on earth. And men and women, boys and girls are being destroyed in the process. Marriage is not an institution, marriage is an eternal relationship. You can abolish institutions with little or no lasting consequences. It takes major surgery to try to put asunder what God joined together, and the scars left behind never fully go away.

This is not a lesson designed to add guilt or anger to the hearts of those who are divorced. God forbid. In fact, divorce is not even the subject of this lesson. The subject is hurting people. And if you have done any counseling at all, you will know as certainly as you are alive that without a doubt, the single greatest cause of hurt is the hurting home. It is there that lives are shattered, confidences broken, children crushed, dreams blown apart, and oftentimes, irreparable damage is done to broken hearts.

Hurting hearts in hurting homes. This is the subject of today's lesson. It is the fourth in a series of lessons on why people all about us are crying and what we as a church and as individual Christians are to do about it.

I - THE CONCEPT

We will be spending much of our time in this study in Genesis 1-3 because to get to the root of hurting marriages, I believe we must go back to the beginning of marriage itself. The very concept of why God created this unique expression of His nature is, in itself, reason enough for the church to get involved in drying the tears of crying couples whose hearts are breaking.

After God had made the earth and the lights and the fish and the birds and the animals, God took a part of Himself and placed it on earth to rule and subdue it. He called that part of Himself man.

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Proof of that statement is found in Genesis 1:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

(Genesis 1:26-28 NKJV)

That little phrase, "male and female created He them" needed more explanation. So the Holy Spirit gave us that explanation in these verses in Genesis 2:

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

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."

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

(Genesis 2:20-24 NKJV)

So there you have the first marriage. It was made in heaven. No one could doubt whether or not they were "right" for each other. They had the only perfect matchmaker in history to make the arrangements. This marriage was of God. It was a marriage soon destined for problems, but it was of God.

It wasn't that Adam didn't have enough to keep him busy. He had a whole planet to run, and you may have at some time felt you were all alone, but, Beloved, no one who ever lived was as alone as Adam. He had more pets than anyone ever has, but he was still alone. I mean there's just so much fellowship you can get from an alligator or a peacock or a monkey. He looked around one day and

thought, “Gee, I wish I had someone I could talk to, someone who understands who God is, and what the deeper things of life are all about. Callie the collie is a good friend, but man’s best friend? I think not.” So God, who hurts whenever His children hurt, gave Adam the world’s first anesthetic. If you’re an anesthesiologist, incidentally, you come from good stock. God Himself was the first to practice your profession and apparently was the first surgeon as well. I can remember, incidentally, many years ago, struggling with a decision on whether or not to allow a doctor to put me to sleep to perform surgery. This particular surgery could be done under a local or a total anesthetic. This verse convinced me that it is godly to be put to sleep for surgery. So Adam went nighty-night and God made an incision in his side and operated. I guess, in a real sense though, it also meant Adam was the first guy who ever slept through his own wedding. Oh, well, nobody’s perfect.

God brought Eve to Adam, and Adam responded, “Bone of my bones,” which literally means, “This is the one!” God put them together. It was, indeed, a marriage made in heaven. Scripture goes on to say, “Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh.”

This is an interesting statement. Adam didn’t have a mother or an earthly father, but God’s Spirit revealed to Adam a plan so intricate, so incredible, and so complete that it would be generations before the full reality of what was happening would be known. One thing, however, that God made sure Adam understood, even if he had no cause to understand humanly speaking, was that the family was to be the center of life and thus the relationships therein must follow exacting patterns if God was going to be glorified.

I believe God was defining for man the five basic spiritual principles of marriage, and Satan was, at the same time, beginning his attack on those very principles. We need to learn those principles to become better equipped to deal with Satan’s attacks on our own marriages and better equipped to counsel those whose hearts are breaking. Those five principles are these:

The first principle is having non-competitive relationships. This is the “leave-cleave” principle. A man was to leave his father and mother, and a woman was to leave her father and mother and the two were to become one. Now go deeper. What it means is that any relationship that threatens to compete with or conflict with the husband-wife relationship is sin. It means that husbands had

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better be careful about becoming close friends with women where they work or about becoming spiritual counselors to other women. It means that Christian women had best be careful about spending time even with other women who verbally tear down either their husbands or the Scriptural concepts of marriage. It means that you don't spend one second of your life comparing your mate with someone else's. Your wife must be number one in your life no matter what. Your husband must be number one in your life no matter what. And the man or woman whose emotional ties with their families are never broken are breaking the first law of God for a successful marriage. Love your parents. Honor them. But only in a non-competing fashion. Leave and cleave. That's God's plan.

The second principle is man's responsibility in the home. Woman was taken "out of man" to demonstrate not only man's role as leader, but also his responsibility as provider. Adam was given the responsibility to care for the garden. Then God gave him Eve. If you are a husband and you are not fulfilling your responsibility to provide for your family both economically and spiritually, you are, according to Scripture, worse than an infidel. It is your job, husband, to provide for your family. Only then is it God's job to provide for you.

The third principle is the principle of the eternal permanence of the marriage vow. What God has joined together let not man tear apart. Moses agreed to allow divorce, Jesus said, "But from the beginning, it was not so." God intended marriage to be just as permanent as salvation. And it's funny that those who are so quick to dissolve their families are so quick to claim God's eternal security. When you accept the fact that marriage is forever, two things happen: 1) you don't rush into it and 2) you develop staying power. You learn to stand instead of running. Only then can God do His miracle work in your life.

The fourth principle is that in that first divinely-ordained marriage, God was demonstrating the concept of spiritual authority. Paul clarified it in I Corinthians 11:3 and 8-9:

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ,
the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

For man is not from woman, but woman from man.

Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the
man. (I Corinthians 11:3, 8,9 NKJV)

In other words, God made man and woman in the order He did,

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in the way He did, to develop a spiritual chain of command that would stand the test of Satan's every onslaught. Eve fell because she violated it. Adam fell because he violated it. Marriages still fall when this principle is not understood. It is not a principle of superiority and inferiority but of God-ordained roles and responsibilities. The question isn't whether or not you like it but whether or not you obey it.

The fifth principle is the principle of unbroken communication. We'll discuss this further a few lessons from now. Man's relationship with his wife was to depict Christ's relationship to the church, and that relationship is based on abiding. It is unbroken fellowship. It is constant communication. Stop communicating and you stop loving. Because love is a commandment, communication is the springboard for obedience.

These are the pillars that held up that first union between two of God's own. Memorize them. They will hold you in good stead. They would have held Adam and Eve in good stead had they heeded them.

II - THE CURSE

So much for the beginning of the home. It was a paradise on earth, a symbol of God's love for man, and a demonstration of God's plan of authority to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. It was, in effect, the essence of what God had planned for His creation. Enter the enemy. Enter disobedience. Enter sin. Exit the happy home. It all happened beginning with the next verse. Genesis 3, you see, graphically explains how Satan took and removed from the home the ingredients necessary for it to function as God intended.

Now let's look at that scenario one more time. Look first at the title and the cast of characters. There were basically only four: Adam the husband, Eve the wife, God the Creator and Father, and Satan the deceiver and destroyer. No one else existed. We have already read of the first three. In Genesis 3:1 we have the entrance of the fourth:

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field
which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman...

(Genesis 3:1 NKJV)

Satan appears in the form of a serpent to have a heart-to-heart conversation with Eve. It was just a friendly kind of chat with a not-so-friendly kind of motive. Satan's motive was to destroy what

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God had joined together. He knew that if he could undermine God's authority in the home he could throw the entire universe into chaos.

Now I know that the story is so familiar to you that you could possibly recite it from memory. But familiarity does not always mean understanding. So let's look at it from one more vantage point, the vantage point of marriage. Because Satan has not changed his tactics in all these years, still he moves in, in exactly the same way. He still deceives man and woman into allowing what God intended to be the center of life to be splintered by spiritual compromise.

Let's look at the principles Satan attacked to destroy the first home.

1- He caught Eve out from under Adam's authority. He appealed directly to her disregarding God's chain of spiritual authority. Why Adam had not warned Eve of such dangers we do not know. But Satan approached her in an effort to reverse their God-ordained roles. He appealed to her sense of fairness knowing that she had been designed by God to be the responder and the more emotionally sensitive of the two.

2- Once he had Eve's attention, he began to plant seeds of doubt about the very principle of authority itself. Having by-passed Adam completely as though he did not exist, the devil approaches Eve and questions her about God's right to tell her what to do. Eve was about to become the first liberated woman, liberated unto bondage.

3- Notice now the lack of communication between Eve and Adam. Eve takes and eats of the fruit before she even discusses it with Adam. This is a major decision to defy God's authority and listen to the voice of God's enemy. No family conference. No common prayer time. Nothing. She is now totally out from under Adam's authority and doesn't even ask the one God has placed over her whether or not she is making the right decision.

4- Now look at Adam, the world's first wimp. He arrives on the scene, sees his wife defying God, and rather than confront her with her disobedience, he relents and eats of it too. His spinelessness is further portrayed when God finally confronts the two of them and big daddy squirms like a snake himself and whines, "Lord, it's not my fault. The woman You gave me, she made me do it." Now I don't know how big Eve was, but I doubt that she threw ole hubby

to the ground, gave him a hammerlock and stuffed an apple in his mouth.

5- Now look at Eve. She responds, "I couldn't help it, Lord, the devil made me do it!" In other words, no one was responsible. It was just one of those things.

6- Satan has, in the process, accomplished the one thing he must do if he is to destroy the home. He has destroyed the authority of God in the home.

Do you see what he has done? He has reversed the God-ordained roles, broken down the lines of communication, caused a relinquishment of responsibility, and caused husband and wife to come out from under God's authority and thus out from under His plan of authority.

The rest is history. Sheer pandemonium broke loose. Sin had entered the world and through sin, spiritual death. Our rebellious couple was evicted from paradise and had to go looking for another place to live. They had children, but pain entered the picture. Cain and Abel were born. The story goes downhill from there. One son murders another and becomes a fugitive. This was not at all the way Adam and Eve had pictured it all when they walked down the aisle at the Paradise Chapel and had the God of Eternity pronounce them husband and wife. Since that time, Satan has determined that the very best way he can destroy the church of Jesus Christ is to destroy the picture Christ painted of His relationship with His own. If he can destroy the concept of marriage, he has destroyed the picture of the church. And if he can destroy the picture of the church, he has so maligned the character of God that God's best witness on earth is buried beneath an avalanche of broken homes and broken hearts.

III- THE CRIES

And so today, in the aftermath of generations of defiance of God's principles, the church of Jesus Christ is filled with hurting people whose hearts are breaking because the enemy has established the same kind of foothold he established in the garden. All about us, people are crying out for some answers, for some meaning to it all, for some comfort from their hurts. What can we do?

1- We can listen. We are not to listen to gossip. We are not to listen to vindictive charges against their mates. We are to listen to their tears and care. So often we tune them out because we don't

want to get involved. Beloved, if you are in the body of Christ and someone is hurting, you already are involved. If your hand was broken, would your arm not be involved?

2- We can fast and pray. When a marriage is in trouble, we must realize that there is a spiritual battle going on in that home that is the equivalent of the invasion of Normandy. It is so much easier to gossip than it is to pray. It is so much easier to give advice than it is to pray. It is so much easier to run and hide than it is to pray. Real prayer is hard! It is the spiritual equivalent of being in the trenches while enemy gunfire whistles past you and the bombs fall all about you. But, Beloved, this is what saves marriages: God's men and women on their knees bombarding the throne day and night, fasting when need be, and praying without ceasing for the victory to be God's.

3- We can establish real counseling assistance for those whose homes and whose hearts are exploding in pain. Most churches know how to have seminars on happy homes (and that's good), but most don't know what to do when it all falls apart. The church's job is to train their people to know how to tenderly apply the principles of Scripture to crumbling marriages.

4- We can teach our young people from the ground up what the Scriptural principles of dating and marriage are all about. And we ought to teach them with such clarity and with such authority that if they choose to ignore those principles, then it is strictly a matter of choice, never a matter of ignorance.

5- We can reestablish the basic priorities of the home in every thing we do as a church. We must always seek to build up the home, never compete with it. It is never the church's job to supplant the home as the center of God's plan. Programs can never take the place of parents, and activities can never take the place of father-son or mother-daughter discipling.

6- Lastly, we can read and re-read the story of Adam and Eve in the light of what Satan was really trying to do. He was trying to destroy the home so he could, in effect, destroy the church. He sold the lie to Eve that she was her own authority, that no one need tell her what to do. He sold the lie to Adam that he wasn't responsible for what happened to his family. He sold the lie to both of them that they could live independently of one another without the bond of communication that holds two people in harmony and fellowship with God. And he sold them both the lie that they could

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compromise with the specific commands of God and no one would get hurt. They paid. Their children paid. Their children's children paid. You and I are still paying for it.

Marriages that are being made in heaven are being destroyed on earth. But it doesn't have to happen. You and I can fall to our knees and enter the battle at the level of deep warfare. You and I can enter into the fellowship of the suffering of those who are hurting and lovingly teach them to stand against the enemy. We can teach them that the real enemy is not their spouse. The real enemy is the one who has casually strolled into the garden of their lives and just as casually whispered into the ears of one in that family, "Hath God said?" We can be there to help pick up the pieces and put either the marriage or the individual lives back together when its over.

It isn't our job to ignore them. They're crying. Really crying. And they can so often, through their tears, be heard to say, "Why do you run when I'm crying? Where is the church when I'm hurting so? Why do they treat me like I have leprosy, when all I want to do is do God's will? Why do they run when I'm crying?"

May they never have to ask that question again.

Let's pray.

Our gracious God, we thank You that in Your incredible, beautiful design for man, You have created something as magnificent as marriage, and that You created it and placed it upon spiritual pillars so strong that the gates of hell could not prevail against them. But Adam and Eve did not listen, and so often neither do we, and so all about us the Enemy is having a field day. Casualties are everywhere. Spiritual hospitals are full of those whose hearts are broken, and those of us in the Body of Christ walk past those hospital beds without even noticing that broken homes lie therein. I pray Father that as we leave this place today, we will have a fresh understanding of Your plan, of Satan's plan, and of our responsibility.

In Jesus name, Amen.

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