

The Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost – 2021

Genesis 2:18-25

Hebrews 2:1-18

Mark 10:2-16

There is a higher law than the Supreme Court of the United States. Freedom comes from God. All men are inherently free; we are free because the Son of God allowed Himself to be captive to the tomb. Freedom in the civil domain is to reflect what God has made us to be. Wisdom and courage and justice will ever strive to bring the air of freedom to the lungs of society. In a very real sense, what God has given to humanity man is not capable of taking away.

“Endowed by their Creator...” Now there’s a phrase for our day. A timeless document of declaration boasted of God-given rights, unalienable rights. The purpose of government, says this document, is to secure, protect, and defend these God-given rights. It is a brilliant principle. What God has given, man must not even think about taking away. The highest law of any land is based on God’s governance, those things which are unmistakably true. Human authority is, regardless of what anyone proposes, a derived authority. Justice is justice because it aligns with God’s judgment. Injustice is injustice precisely for the same reason.

Marriage will forever be one man and one woman. Any other “law” regarding marriage, because it is a violation of God’s active design and blessing, will be null and void. People may pretend on levels minor and major, but reality cannot be molded to fit a political agenda. I have pretended much in my life – all to no avail. Laws have I broken, and more than once paid a price. But whether I was apprehended or not, the law was broken. God sees. God knows. His law is objective and unchanging and higher than the constructs of man.

Marriage is in view this morning. Marriage forms the state, not vice-versa. God established marriage and man is incapable of changing the reality of it. God’s law, embedded in creation, is to form our understanding of both reality and societal law. When we depart from God’s law we sail into a cyclone of human innovation. I do not wish to have the mind of sinful man as my captain, which is to say that I do not want to follow myself. It is not intolerant for Christians to say that we don’t want to follow pretend laws, law that divorces itself from reality, divorces itself from creation and, implicitly, the Creator. An ill-conceived game is being played presently and the extent to which some will go in pushing the boundaries of this game are, as yet, unknown. What is known is that, humanly speaking, much has been lost and much is presently being lost. What is also known is that God does marvelous things in dark times. What is known is that His kingdom is more important than any other. What is good and beautiful and real is not going to go away. We have been and we ever shall be the beneficiaries of what is good and beautiful and real.

Man and woman were made for each other. How delightful! The man was alone. God’s good creation was imperfect because it was not good for the man to be alone. An alone man does not reflect God and His self-giving love. Make no mistake, Adam was never intended to be alone. Suspense, tension, and *anticipation* is the preface to the woman’s creation. She is the last thing created. She is sublime; she is the Creator’s exclamation point; she is the completion to a flawless design. All that is good and holy and beautiful and valuable were embodied in Adam

and Eve for God had invested Himself in them. Adam was magnificent and autonomous but he was not made for himself; he was made for her. Eve was superlative and independently good, but she was not made for herself; she was made for him.

Did God really say? Doubt; a shadow of doubt clouded the good woman. Satan prowled around like a roaring serpent, seeking someone to devour with his pride, his avarice, his idolatry. “Did God really say?” It was enough to elicit an act of rebellion against God. After Eve ate of the tree that she was commanded not to eat, God posed a question to her that was laden with loss. “What is this that you have done?” God’s law was rejected and man suffered the just recompense. Sin and death had been unleashed. Sin and death and all the chaos of man betraying God, man betraying woman, woman defying God and slandering man – we are sick.

Have you been hurt in your heart? Have you felt the sting of betrayal, the shame of your own lack of fidelity? Have you wept at the estrangement of a child, the loss of friends, the fracturing of love, the dreary night of loneliness? We hurt each other. Even the most intimate relationships get damaged because we are sinners.

Religious know-it-alls came to Jesus with a question, a question that betrays their lack of understanding. “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” (Mark 10:2). Lawful? Abuse is among us. Adultery is among us. Desertion is among us. Are those things lawful? They are not lawful; they are tragic. Divorce is a tragedy; one flesh being fractured back into two is not God’s design. Jesus is unimpressed with the tact taken by his inquisitors. “Hardness of heart.” That is why divorce is sanctioned; so that man, with his hard heart would not do greater harm by not divorcing. We fail. Husbands fail. Wives fail. Marriages fail. Hard hearts led to God’s allowance – not His stamp of approval. The failure of a marriage is a tragedy. It is painful. Guilt, loss, and bitterness are the unwelcome houseguests in a broken home. Hard hearts are a worse problem. Living for yourself is a horrendous problem.

God fixes problems. God fixes strained marriages. God fixes hard hearts. God fixes sin. The Lord could easily make a case for divorcing us, each of us individually, and all of us corporately. It would be, for His part, a legitimate divorce. But that is not His way. Man may divorce God through unbelief but God will never divorce man. Christ is our Adam. We are His Eve. The eternal Son of God became bone of our bone for He was compelled by His Divine Love to pursue us. That is the highest Law – Love. It was impossible for Christ to imagine life without His bride. So as Man, God came into this world to unite us to Himself, to marry us to His person.

Looking at His cross, we cannot degrade ourselves by asking what is lawful. As Man, God prepared your wedding chamber by dying on the cross. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). That is the divine love with which you have been loved. That is the love to which you have been called. You are an agent of peace. You are an agent of love. You are an agent of reconciliation. You are inherently all this for you are a Christian. God has literally caused His Spirit to live in you. The Lord Christ has loved you not just with His heart, not just with the words of His lips, but with everything that He has to offer. On the cross, this singular Man was *supremely* alone, and God saw that this Man being alone was very good. This alone man was the epitome of self-giving love. In Jesus’ broken body, God

fixed broken humanity. All of our unfaithfulness was put on Him; all of our betrayals, all our hardness of heart, all our sin. He took it away. He took it into His death.

Redeemed, restored, made new – Jesus' death and resurrection gives us (day by day) what we could never manufacture. On Good Friday, the heavenly bridegroom laid down His life for you. In the deep sleep of death on a Roman cross, God the Father opened up a place in the side of the second, greater Adam, and from His side came a flow of blood and water. From Jesus' pierced side came the Church, His bride, who is washed in baptism, washed in blood and water. Union, there is union – two becoming one flesh – at this altar as the church receives the body of Christ. Marriage is what brings us together today; the marriage of Christ and His bride. That marriage is heavenly. Heaven's joy breaks in here, in this mundane assembly and we taste the sweetness of our future, heaven's banquet, all that is good and valuable and holy and beautiful. What God joins together will never be put asunder.