

The theme for our morning's meditation is 'The family; husband and wife'. If we go back to the beginning of scripture the idea of male and female originated from God himself. Human sexuality is part of God's good design for making mankind in his own image. The Genesis account tells us that he had made Adam and Eve in his own image so that they would be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it. In Genesis 1:31 God's comment on all that he had made was that it was 'very good'. However we come to chapter 2:18 the Lord God says that its not good for the man to be alone and that he would make a helper suitable for him. The narrator tells us that while Adam was asleep God took one of his ribs and formed a woman and brought her to the man. The man said, "this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man." And the final comment is, "that is why a man leaves his father and mother, and is united to his wife and they become one flesh. The purpose of God's plan in marriage is for companionship, mutual love and care and for being fruitful and increasing in numbers.

In the Old Testament reading from the book of Malachi the prophet confronts the people of Judah about their unfaithfulness to their wives. Even though they had married their spouses through a covenant, they had run away with foreign women and married them. It appears as though in some cases that the men who had come back from exile divorced their Jewish wives in order to enter into new partnerships. Divorce as not viewed seriously by the people of this time. The prophet gives a clarion call to see things from God's perspective. Jesus reemphasises this and raises the value of marriage by a high estimation of its value and as part of Gods good design in creation. Marriage was important in Gods sight but the people of Judah were unfaithful to their wives and were wanting to divorce them for frivolous reasons. In our own context God cautions us to take our marriages seriously to be faithful to our spouses and not to take divorce lightly.

In the gospel passage some Pharisees come to Jesus and ask them whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Jesus asks them as to what Moses had commanded them. They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." Jesus tells them that Moses wrote this law because their hearts were hardened and they were not willing to reconcile with their spouses. Jesus however tells them what the purpose of Marriage quoting from the creation account that God made them male and female and that for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together let no one separate. The problem again during the time of Jesus was divorces were made for very frivolous reasons. There was no insurmountable problem which could not have been overcome.

Many marriages today also head towards divorce because of an unforgiving heart and for frivolous reasons. God cautions us to view our marriages as a covenant and to work at our marriages to make it work. There is no such thing as a perfect marriage. Every marriage has to be worked at till the end of our days. Paul writing in Corinthians chapter 13 reminds us that the key ingredient for any marriage to work is love. It is important to understand what this love is all about. It is not just an emotional feeling but it's all about doing. Paul defines love as following; "love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight but rejoice with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. We need Gods empowering presence and his eternal love to make this happen through his indwelling Holy Spirit.

May God help each one of us to be faithful to our spouses and to work at our marriages so that we may bring glory to God.