

Podcast 125: Marriage, Part 1

This is Part 1 of a special series on Marriage.

READING FROM ANSWER AND COVENANT:

Marriage was, in the beginning, between one man and one woman, and was intended to remain so for the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve, that they may multiply and replenish the Earth. I commanded that there shall not any man have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none. I, the Lord your God, delight in the chastity of women, and in the respect of men for their wives.

Marriage was established [in] the beginning as a covenant by the word and authority of God, between the [wo]man and God, the man and [the] woman, and the man and God. It was ordained by my word to endure forever. Mankind fell, but a covenant established by my word cannot fail, and therefore in death they were not to be parted.

It was my will that all marriages would follow the pattern of the beginning, and therefore all other marriages would be ordained as at the first. But fallen men refused my covenant, did not hearken to my word, nor receive my promise, and marriages fell outside my rule, disorganized and without me, therefore unable to endure beyond the promises made between the mortal man and the mortal woman, to end when they are dead.

Covenants, promises, rights, vows, associations, and expectations that are mine will endure, and those that are not cannot endure. Everything in the world, whether it is established by men, or by Thrones, or by Dominions, or by Principalities, or by Powers, that are not by my word and promise, shall be thrown down when men are dead and shall not remain in my Father's Kingdom. Only those things that are by me shall remain in and after the resurrection.

Marriage by me, or by my word, received as a holy covenant between the woman and I, the man and [the] woman, and the man and I, will endure beyond death and into my Father's Kingdom, worlds without end. Those who abide this covenant will pass by the angels who are appointed, and enter into exaltation. Concerning them it shall be said, You shall come forth in the first resurrection, and if they covenant after the first resurrection, then in the next resurrection, and shall inherit in my Kingdom their own thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, all heights and depths, and shall pass by the angels [and] receive exaltation, the glory of which shall be a fullness and a continuation of their posterity forever.

Marriage is necessary for the exaltation of the man and [the] woman, and is ordained by me through the Holy Spirit of Promise, or in other words, by my covenant, my law, and my authority. Like the marriage in Eden, marriage is a sacrament for a sacred place, on holy ground, in my presence, or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister. But rebellion has kept mankind from inheriting what I ordained in the beginning, and therefore women and men have been left to marry apart from me. Every marriage established by me requires that I be [a] part of the covenant for it to endure, for Endless is my name and without me the marriage cannot be without end: for so long as I endure it shall also endure, if it is made by my word and covenant.

But know also that I can do my work at any time, for I have sacred space above, and can do my work despite earth and hell. The wickedness of men has not prevented my will but only kept the wicked from what they might have received.

Whenever I have people who are mine, I command them to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where my presence can dwell or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister, because it is in such a place...it has been ordained to recover you, establish by my word and my oath your marriages, and endow my people with knowledge from on high that will unfold to you the mysteries of godliness, instruct you in my ways, that you may walk in my path. [And] all the outcasts of Israel will I gather to my house, and the jealousy of Ephraim and Judah will end; Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not provoke Ephraim.

And again I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah's covenant with him; Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca's covenant with him; and Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel's covenant with him; and all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom.

Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established. (T&C 157:34-43 RE)

DENVER: Can it be said concerning your own marriage that it is *not* good for the man to be alone? Are the two of you, together, better than what each of you are alone? Is your marriage a source of joy, of happiness, of contentment, of companionship? The Lord told them to “*multiply, and replenish the earth*” (Genesis 2:9 RE and T&C Lectures on Faith 2:8 RE). Do you find within your family relationship that there's joy and rejoicing and happiness, as a consequence of the environment that you and your wife put together?

Is your relationship— As a woman, is your relationship in the image of God? Is there godliness about the way in which you and your husband interact? If you had to reckon whether or not someone, looking at the two of you, would see within you the image of God, would they do so?

These aren't just happy notions for the afterlife; these ought to be descriptions of what *your* marriage could and should look like. Can you sense the glory of God in your marriage? Remember, we looked at this in 93:36: *The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth* —“glory of God” being light; the “glory of God” being truth (D&C 93:36; see also T&C 93:11 RE). Is that something that is present within the marriage that *you* have? Is your marriage filled with life, with light, with truth, with understanding?

Turn back to D&C section 121. There's a couple verses there that I want to suggest, particularly if you view the man and the woman together as one. Read these verses as if it's descriptive of the “one,” which is you and your wife:

Many are called, but few are chosen. [This is beginning at verse 40 of section 121.] *No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood; only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, By kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul; without hypocrisy, and without guile.* (D&C 121:40-42; see also T&C 139:5-6 RE)

Within your family, within your marriage, are you and your wife learning to use persuasion? Within your marriage are you and your husband learning to use gentleness in dealing with one another? Are the two of you, together, facing one another in all of the difficulties that come as a result of being married? Are you facing that together in meekness? Do you find that in all the relationship troubles, turmoils, and challenges, what predominates is kindness? Is there a search for understanding that results in pure knowledge when it comes to a dilemma?

So far as I can tell, Joseph Smith *greatly* respected women—in what he said, and what he taught, and how he taught it. And I know all the arguments: I've read all the histories; I've read what the people say; I've read what the accusations are. The fact of the matter is that they are not accurate. And the histories that they are based upon and much of the information was ginned up, in consequence of litigation in which Joseph F. Smith went around gathering affidavits, in the two affidavit books from which we draw most of the information, to redefine what Joseph Smith was doing in Nauvoo, and earlier, with plural marriage.

Plural marriage was denounced by him as an abomination. And He got up and said before a crowd, “I hear all the time that I have wives; I've got seven wives. I'm looking out in the audience and I can only see one,” meaning Emma. (See *History of the Church*, vol 6, pg 411.) If you read the letters that Joseph sent to Emma, and you read the letters that Emma sent back to Joseph (and they are preserved in the correspondence and the documents of the Joseph Smith History), you realize that those two, whatever else was going on around them, those two were in love with one another. And Joseph relied on her, respected her, and she loved him. They had a fabulous relationship between the two of them. And I don't care what *In Sacred Loneliness* (Todd M. Compton, 1997) wants to portray otherwise. A fair reading of Joseph's life was that he was a man who was faithful to his wife.

The account continues and describes the creation of the woman. Here the parable distinguishes between the process of creating the man Adam and creating his spouse, the woman Eve:

And I, the Lord God, said unto [mine] Only Begotten that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make [an] help meet for him.
([Emphasis added.] Genesis 2:13 RE)

God the Father said to the Only Begotten that He, God the Father, will be the one to make Adam's help meet. It was not good for Adam to be alone because he was not complete without a suitable companion to help him progress and develop. The Creation Parable continues:

And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And I took one of his ribs...closed up the flesh in the stead thereof. And the rib, which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, [I made] a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This I know now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She [should] be called woman because she was taken out of man.
(Genesis 2:14 RE)

The parable of the creation of the woman, therefore, differs from the creation of the man. She was not formed from the dust of the ground; she was formed from a *rib*, from an already-existing part of the man. She was born from something equal to him and able to stand beside him in all things.

But the parable about the woman Eve means a great deal more. She was at Adam's side before the creation of this world. They were united as one in a prior estate, when they progressed to become *living souls* with both bodies and spirits. They were sealed before this world by the Holy Spirit of Promise and proved to be true and faithful. They once sat upon a throne in God the Father's Kingdom. In that state, they were equal and eternally joined together. She sat beside him and was a necessary part of his enthronement. Her introduction into this world, to join her companion, was needed to complete Adam; it was not good for him to be alone. They were one, and therefore Adam without Eve was not complete—or in the words of the parable, "*not good*" to "*be alone*."

READING FROM THE TESTIMONY OF ST. JOHN, CHAPTER 12:

The first day of the week Mary the Elect Lady went in the early morning while it was still dark to the burial sepulcher. She saw the stone was rolled away from the sepulcher, and two angels sitting on it. Then she ran to Simon Peter, who was with the other disciple Jesus loved, and said to them, They have removed the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we do not know where he is now established. Peter and the other disciple departed for the sepulcher, running together. The other disciple outran Peter and arrived first at the sepulcher. And he bent down, and looked in, and saw the linen

burial cloths. But he did not enter the tomb. Then Simon Peter joined him, and he went into the sepulcher and saw the linen burial cloths, and also the shroud that covered his body. It was not lying with the other burial cloths. Instead it was folded and set down alone. Then the other disciple who arrived first, also entered the sepulcher, and he saw the empty tomb and believed. They still did not understand the prophecy that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples departed to return home.

But Mary stood outside the sepulcher weeping. And as she wept, she bent down and looked into the sepulcher. She saw two angels in white, the one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her, Woman, why are you mourning? She answered them, Because someone has removed the body of my Lord, and I do not know where he is now. After she said this, she walked away and then saw Jesus standing in the garden area. She failed to recognize that it was Jesus. Jesus asked her, Woman, why are you mourning? Who are you looking for? She assumed he was tending the garden, and answered, Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where he is, and I will claim him. Jesus said to her, Mary.

She raised her face, recognized him, and addressed him, Greatest of Teachers, which is to say, My Lord. They embraced and Jesus told her, You cannot hold me here. I need to ascend right now to my Father. Go to my followers and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

Mary the Elect Lady came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. (T&C 171 Testimony of St. John 12:1-4 RE)

DENVER: John wrote that Mary Magdalene saw, even embraced the risen Lord, and related to the others *her* testimony of having seen Him returned to life, resurrected from the dead.

These accounts differ in details. They have similarities and differences. They are universal in the fact that Christ was seen by the women, or *a woman* first and not by His Apostles. John's account records that Christ told Mary: "*Touch me not*" (John 20:17). In the Joseph Smith Translation the words are changed to read: "*Hold me not.*" (John 11:2 RE.) Joseph's change of the text was warranted. I tell you that when Mary realized it was Jesus, she embraced Him joyfully. She did not timidly reach out her hand, but she readily greeted Him with open arms, and He in turn embraced her.

It is difficult to describe what I saw of the incident, apart from saying that the Lord was triumphant, exultant, overjoyed at His return from the grave! *She shared His joy!* I was shown the scene, and do not have words to adequately communicate how complete the feelings of joy and gratitude were which were felt by *our* Lord that morning. As dark and terrible as were the sufferings through which He passed, the magnitude of which is impossible for man to put into words, these feelings of triumph were, on the other hand, of equal magnitude in their joy and gratitude. He had attained to the resurrection of the dead! Just as He had seen His Father do, He likewise held the keys of death and hell! I do not think it possible for a mortal to feel a fullness of either. And having felt some of what He shares

with His witnesses, I know words are inadequate to capture His feelings on the morning of His resurrection.

He had the deep satisfaction of having accomplished the most difficult assignment to be given by the Father, knowing it was a benefit to all of His Father's children. *And it had been done perfectly.*

Mary and Christ embraced. There was nothing timid about the warm encounter she had with Him. Then He said to her, "*Hold me not*" because He had to ascend, return and report to His Father. Joseph Smith was correct when he changed the language.

I then saw Him ascend to heaven. I saw the golden heavenly light glowing down upon Mary as she watched His ascent. All this happened while it was yet dark on the morning He rose from the dead. He has shown this to me and I can testify to it as a witness.

Before this Creation, the Mother in Heaven was *with* the Father. She was beside Him when His work began. She was there when the plan was laid, the boundaries established, and the compass applied to establish order for the Creation. All the Father knows, the Mother knows. All the Father established and ordered, the Mother established and ordered. *They* are one. She is the Father's *delight*, and the potential of Her sons to be like Her Husband brings Her delight.

To be like their Father, Her sons must become one with Her daughters; for it is not good for man to be alone. The Father and Mother are one, and Her sons and daughters must likewise *become* one. Only when the man and woman were together was the Creation *good*. When men rebel, disobey, act cruelly, or mistreat Her daughters, we are anything but a delight to the Heavenly Mother. When we offend *Her*, we also offend Her Husband.

Before any of us will plan, measure, set a compass, and apportion the foundations of another earth, we must grow together and become like *Them*. Their work is glorious. They possess love—the power that creates and organizes. Love is the power behind all that They do. *We* cannot be like Them without a loving relationship that mirrors Theirs.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant," given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho, on September 3, 2017;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family," given in St. George, Utah, on July 26, 2014;
- A regional conference Q&A Session, held at Big Cottonwood Canyon, Utah, on September 20, 2015;

- Denver's conference talk entitled "Our Divine Parents," given in Gilbert, Arizona, on March 25th, 2018;
- The Testimony of St. John 12:1-4, in the Restoration Edition of the scriptures; and
- Denver's conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, Idaho, on September 11, 2016.