

Podcast 126: Marriage, Part 2

This is Part 2 of a special series on Marriage.

DENVER: I have been thinking a lot about Abraham and Sarah and their relationship. Their story is one of the greatest in history.

Little details in the story are touching. The ten years that Sarah waited, in Genesis 16:3 (Genesis 7:25 RE), before urging Abraham to father a child with Hagar, is based upon a custom at that time. Abraham's willingness to follow the custom was because the Lord promised *him* children. Sarah could not conceive, and *Sarah* urged him to do so. In fact, of the three, Sarah's urging was what seems to persuade Abraham. Her urging is tempered by making it seem she is looking out for her own interests: "*It may be that I [Sarah] may obtain children by her.*" This softens the request, makes it a blessing for Sarah, and casts it in terms which do not belittle or dismiss Sarah. Then the account reads: "*Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.*"

Abraham was willing to wait on the Lord's promises of children. He was willing to forego the customs that allowed a man to take another wife. It was *Sarah's* gentle persuasion that convinced Abraham to take Hagar. Sarah was loved by Abraham with his whole heart. It was this great marriage relationship that allowed the Lord to preserve them as the parents of "all righteous"—a new Adam for the Lord's covenant people. And, of course, there cannot be an Adam without an Eve—Sarah becomes the "Mother of All Righteous."

This is more critical than most people recognize. It was because of this important relationship that the tenth parable in *Ten Parables* (Denver C. Snuffer, 2008) begins with the marriage relationship. Without this, there is no reason to save the man.

Marriage is separate from its two parties. It has a life of its own. The husband and the wife may be parties *to* the marriage, but the marriage itself is a separate, living thing. It is distinct from the two partners in the relationship and greater than either of them. It lives; it is real.

The only people whose right to eternal life has been secured, to my knowledge, came as a result of the marriage relationship and its worthiness to be preserved into eternity. "*Neither is the man without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 1:44 RE). Therefore, if you are interested in eternal life, the very first place to begin is inside *your marriage*.

In Doctrine and Covenants section 130 it says, beginning at verse 18 (we've looked at these verses in several contexts, but we need to look at them again today in this context):

Whatever principle of intelligence [and understand that means light and truth] we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains

more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he'll have so much the advantage in the world to come. [There's] a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundation of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, [it's] by obedience to the law upon which it is predicated. (D&C 130:18-21)

Think about those verses and that admonition as an invitation to work this out inside your marriage first; to work out—inside the relationship between you and your wife—the principle of intelligence that gives you the opportunity to be diligent, the opportunity to be obedient, the opportunity to gain experience that will make you more like God. Your marriage is a laboratory to prove you up and to let you be intelligent.

And in that day, Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying, Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again, in the flesh I shall see God. (Genesis 3:4 RE)

That's Adam prophesying what is going to befall the future generations. That's what Adam is doing; now look at what Eve does:

And Eve his wife heard all these things [The prophecy comes through Adam; Eve hears them. Eve hears all these things] and was glad, saying, Were it not for our transgression, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God [giveth] unto all the obedient. (Ibid.)

There is a *profound* difference between the response of the power of the Spirit unfolding upon these two, with respect to its effect upon Adam, on the one hand, and its effect upon Eve, on the other. These are remarkably different reactions. To the man it is that he prophesies; that is, *he* declares the truth—the 'truth' being a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. That definition is given to us in the Doctrine and Covenants. This is the *role* of the man, and this is the role that he fulfills.

But to Eve, on the other hand, she obtains wisdom. The role of the man is knowledge; the role of the woman is wisdom. And you see that on display right here in these verses. It is the role of the woman to have the understanding, to take the prophecy that has been delivered now by Adam and to process it, and to say, "Here is what it means." This is the role of the woman. This is the *gift* of the woman. This is *eternally* the role of the woman.

This is why there is a male and why there is a female. Because in many respects, the gift of wisdom eludes the male, and in many respects, the gift of knowledge eludes the female. And together the two of them— And I'm not talking about 'knowledge' in the sense that a woman can't have a Ph.D. Two of the brightest people I know are daughters of mine. It's not *that* that I'm talking about. I'm talking about knowledge in the godly sense, knowledge in "the gift of God" sense, and I'm talking about wisdom in "the gift of God" sense, and in the scriptural sense.

This is an example: Now, *together*, (look at verse 12):

And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God [And how did they do that? They did that by a ritual; they did that by offering sacrifice. They did that by observing what they understood, but they did it together], *and they* [it is “they” —*they*] *made all things known unto their sons and daughters.* ([Emphasis added.] Moses 5:12; see also Genesis 3:4 RE)

This isn't Adam preaching repentance; this isn't Eve preaching repentance. This is *they*; this is the two of them. They are equally yoked. This is the two of them joined together to make the declaration—*they* together.

Then in the book of Moses, the children of Adam and Eve married two by two, male and female. One of the clarifications that we now have is that the divine purpose of marriage is to multiply and replenish the earth. That answers the question about relationships between the same sex, because you cannot multiply and replenish the earth in any other form than that.

Marriage was instituted by God in the beginning. It's an ordinance. It involves the man and the woman. And it doesn't matter what other kind of social relationship you want to form; it's not marriage. Because at its heart, marriage is from God and confined to that relationship.

When you define marriage as 'given by God,' keep in mind the definition of an abomination. An abomination is something that you practice that is wrong, done as a religious belief. So, marriage that doesn't conform to the pattern of God is, by definition, an abomination. Its result is not only to defile the definition of marriage, but it absolutely precludes multiplying and replenishing the earth. It renders the marriage bed devoid of progeny, incapable of producing offspring. It is desolate.

An abominable practice that produces desolation is something that we all ought to take note of. It's not a social issue; it's not a civil rights issue. In a secular society, I don't care what people do in the privacy of their own homes. But when you begin to say that that is not merely the right of privacy and the right of association, but is a religious right involving marriage, and it produces nothing but desolation, we ought to stop short of that. We ought to say, “Go and do as you will do.”

“Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord,” wrote Paul in First Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:44 RE). You cannot have an eternal marriage without both. In the relationship, the woman's role in creating a king is central, for it is the woman who will establish *him* on his throne. In turn, it is the man who will then establish her on *her* throne. Her act precedes his, and his act confirms and blesses the new government, or family unit, as his first act as king, for king without consort is doomed to end. Together they are infinite because in them the seed continues. They may still be

mortal as the events take place, but because they continue and produce seed, they are as infinite as the gods.

Fidelity to your spouse is foundational to righteousness. Immorality is disruptive of marriage, destructive of families, and has no place in a City of Peace.

Group sex, immoral relationships, and free intercourse is offensive to God, a violation of the Ten Commandments, and the means of spreading disease. God does not justify carnal relations except between one man and his wife; they two are the image of God. Anything else degrades and corrupts. Participants in immoral behavior become laden with sin.

Those foolish enough to be misled by this darkness deserve to be taken captive and destroyed, as will *certainly* come to pass.

Jacob chapter 3—this is a remarkable, remarkable passage—3, beginning at verse 5:

Behold, the Lamanites, your brethren whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursings which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord which was given unto our father, that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them...now this commandment they observe to keep. Wherefore, because of this observance in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them, and one day they shall become a blessed people. (Jacob 2:11 RE)

It was the fidelity of the Lamanites to one wife. They rejected the prophets. They rejected Nephi. They rejected the Gospel. They turned to their *loathsomeness*. They were a wild and a ferocious people. But *this* preserved them in the eyes of God. *This* was important enough that *they* deserved to continue on—unlike the Nephites who had the Gospel, unlike the Nephites who had the prophets.

Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands, and their husbands and their wives love their children; and their unbelief and hatred towards you is because of the iniquity of their fathers. Wherefore, how much better are you than they in the sight of your great Creator? (Ibid.)

God doesn't judge righteousness the way *we* do. If you've read the Tenth Parable (*Ten Parables*, Denver C. Snuffer, 2008), what was it that attracted the attention of the angels? They looked at the marriage, and they said, "This! This looks like what *we* come from! *This!* This relationship, this marriage, the man and the woman—*this* is what heaven itself consists of. And look! Look, it's on the earth!" And the angels go, and they bring the Lord, and they say, "Behold the man and the woman!" And the Lord sets in motion everything that was needed.

What more do you need to see from the theme of the Book of Mormon than *this* passage, in order to realize that when it comes to the relationship of marriage, *this* is the image of God.

This is what God would like to preserve into eternity. It is so much easier to take people who have this kind of a marriage and to preserve them into eternity, than it is to take someone who may know all mysteries, but whose marriage is a tattered ruin, and attempt to preserve *them*.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's blog post entitled "Abraham and Sarah," posted April 29, 2010, and subsequently recorded by Denver on October 4, 2020;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family," given in St. George, Utah, on July 26th, 2014;
- His comments at the "Unity in Christ" conference in Utah County, Utah, on July 30, 2017;
- Denver's blog post entitled "D&C 132, Part 5," posted April 9, 2010, and subsequently recorded by Denver on September 27, 2020; and
- Denver's blog post entitled "Fidelity in Marriage," posted October 31, 2015, and subsequently recorded by Denver on September 27, 2020.