

Marriage

As mentioned from the very beginning of this series of sermons on “The Voting Christian”, we have been blessed to be in a country where we can choose our leaders. With it come blessings for the right choice and curses for the wrong choice. There is a tendency to vote our feelings rather than voting the facts when selecting these leaders. Some of the criteria that I have heard from the lips of those that would choose a leader have been the following:

- I like the way the candidate gives a speech.
- I like the way the candidate looks.
- I like the way the candidate is a woman or black or white or young or old.

These may not be issues for the non-Christian, but for the Christian, we must choose the leaders that best represent the God of the Bible, after all we claim to represent God and His Word. We have systematically covered areas of importance for the voting Christian to be abortion, education and fiscal responsibility. We must be a people of life, a people of a Christian-friendly education and a people who watch our spending. The Bible is clear on those issues. We must also be a people that value the covenant of Marriage, something that the politicians have done quite well in trashing over the last few decades.

The Importance of Strong Marriages in Society

If you think that the issue of marriage is not important to the success of a civilization, you could not be more wrong. Countless studies all indicate that the marital union of one man and one woman is a key to the stability of a nation.

- Marriage is the greatest social educator of children. It is the institution that most effectively teaches the civic virtues of honesty, loyalty, trust, self-sacrifice, personal responsibility, and respect for others. The virtues cultivated between men and women in marriage, and between parents and the children, radiate outward into civil society. They deepen in married men and women strong habits of devotion to civic life. (Wilcox, Sacred Vows, Public Purposes: Religion, the Marriage Movement, & Marriage Policy, The Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion, p.3,28, 2002)
- Children raised in intact families are more likely to attend college, are physically and emotionally healthier, are less likely to be physically or sexually abused, less likely to use drugs or alcohol and to commit delinquent behaviors, have a decreased risk of divorcing when they get married, are less likely to become pregnant/impregnate someone as a teenager, and are less likely to be raised in poverty (Why Marriage Matters: 26 Conclusions from the Social Sciences, Bradford Wilcox, Institute for American Values, 2004)
- “Marriage is a wealth generating institution.” The commitment of husband and wife fosters economic specialization and economies of scale (two can live as cheaply as one). The link between divorce/unwed childbirth and child poverty, as well as the rising government expense for welfare programs, testify to the economic benefits of marriage. (Whitehead & Popenoe, The State of Our Unions 2006, p.27)

- As of 2004, only 68% of children lived with two married parents (Family Structure and Children's Living Arrangements, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, <http://childstats.gov/amchildren05/pop6.asp>).
- Children in single-parent families comprise 27% of all American children, yet they account for 62% of all children in families below the poverty line. (The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts, Patrick Fagan)
- The negative effects of divorce fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable members of society (Patrick Fagan & Robert Rector, The Effects of Divorce on America, The Heritage Foundation, 2000).
- Marriage particularly benefits the weakest members of the community. An analysis of recent social statistics concluded that "the preferential option for the poor begins in the home." (B. Wilcox, The Facts of Life & Marriage, Touchstone, Jan/Feb 2005)

Study after study, expert after expert and research grant after research grant typically come to the same conclusion, MARRIAGE IS EXTREMELY AND ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO A SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY. This is what the experts have been saying for years, yet our politicians have been allowed to govern otherwise. This cannot be tolerated for the followers of Christ.

A) We must observe how the politician lives concerning marriage.

Politicians are good with their mouths, but not always in their lives. You can tell a lot about a politician and how they approach their own marriage and the way they carry it out.

1. Infidelity:

When a politician cannot remain faithful to his or her spouse, there is something fundamentally wrong with their marriage, for their view of marriage at the time is warped. God was clear in the OT when He said in *Exod 20:14* "You shall not commit adultery." Jesus reinforced that in *Matt 5:27-28* "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." When it was King David from 2 Sam 11 or a President from a White House, ongoing infidelity identifies a weakness in this area.

2. Children:

You often can tell a lot about a person's marriage by the damage it might have afflicted on the offspring. Many of the children that are in the family of weak marriages tend to grow up with dysfunctions that otherwise might not have occurred had the parents taken it seriously. I have run into many parents over the years that live in regret and sorrow because they lost their kids to the world because of carelessness in the marriage. The same is true concerning politicians. If a politician has children that are wrapped up in shadiness, pettiness and rebellion, that politician probably has some serious weakness in the marriage. Not always, but usually.

3. Divorce:

One of the great indicators of a strong perspective of marriage by a politician can be demonstrated in whether or not they can keep their own marriage together. We all

know that sometimes people do not have a lot of control concerning the topic of divorce, but it does take two to make a marriage. The Bible says that you need to select the elders of the church partially based on their ability to hold together a strong marriage. That is what God expects in our church decision of leaders. Any man or woman that is running for elected office should also have that weighted in on concerning your selection.

B) We must listen to what the politician is planning about marriage.

Homosexual-marriage: Make no mistake about what the Bible teaches concerning homosexuality, it is a sin against nature, society and God.

- 1) Homosexual-marriage is a sin against nature. It does not take a Solomon to figure out that biology teaches that males breed with females as the means of producing offspring. For any candidate to promote “Gay-Marriage” as a viable choice for a healthy America would be teaching against the very laws of nature and of nature’s God. Just to make sure, what does the dictionary say about reproduction? Homosexual-marriage defies nature.
- 2) Homosexual-marriage is a sin against society. All the studies show that homosexual marriage is not healthy for society.
 - The 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) inquired about sexual orientation and results showed that spousal violence was twice as common among homosexual couples compared with heterosexual couples: 15% and 7% respectively. (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/85-570-XIE/2006001/findings/risk.htm>)
 - A new study published by the Institute For Marriage And Public Policy (IMAPP) in May, 2004, sheds light on the high incidence of legal "divorce" among gays who entered into a registered same-sex partnership in Sweden. The survey revealed a high rate of legal divorce among homosexual couples in Sweden. Gay male couples were 50% more likely to divorce within an eight-year period than were heterosexuals; and lesbian couples were 167% more likely to divorce than heterosexual couples.
 - James Dobson cites Stanley Kurtz study concerning the subject to argue that the motivation of those advocating same-sex marriage is not to secure the benefits of marriage for gay couples, but to destroy the institution of marriage itself: “...most gays and lesbians do not want to marry each other. That would entangle them in all sorts of legal constraints. Who needs a lifetime commitment to one person? The intention here is to destroy marriage altogether. With marriage as we know it gone, everyone would enjoy all the legal benefits of marriage (custody rights, tax-free inheritance, joint ownership of property, health care and spousal citizenship, etc..) without limiting the number of partners or their gender. Nor would "couples" be bound to each other in the eyes of the law. This is clearly where the movement is headed. (<http://www2.focusonthefamily.com/docstudy/newsletters/a000000771.cfm>)
- 3) Homosexual-marriage is a sin against God.
 - Homosexuality is clearly a sin against the God of the Bible.

- *1 Cor 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor {the} covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*
- *Rom 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*
- Any questions as to whether the God of the Bible says it is wrong. Any politician that endorses the acceptance of “Homosexual Marriage” does not value marriage in a Biblical way. Christians are supposed to support marriage, not assault it. When we fail to include this issue in the selection of our leaders, we are playing politics and are no better than the politicians.

C) We must know how the politician voted concerning marriage.

1. No-fault divorce: Where did they weigh in on the no-fault divorce issue? Years ago, when a couple would seek divorce, they would have to have a very good reason and there would be a guilty party. Once the guilt was fastened on the one that wanted to get out of the marriage, he or she would pay dearly for the decision. This is because marriage was to be viewed as for life by the governing officials. The term “No-fault divorce” came out of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. When Communism swept the land, the government led a great assault against the churches of the country. Since they were the torch-bearers of religion and tried to follow the rules of the “guilty-party” concerning divorce, things had to change. The government in 1918 said no longer is marriage religious, but state-run; therefore you could divorce for “no-fault” reasons. Marriage was cheapened. The idea worked “so well”, that liberal politicians in California decided to also shun God’s word from being in marriage and on January 1, 1970, it became the law of the state. Over the course of 15 years, God-hating, unfaithful politicians influenced the laws and now it is the law of the land through the United States.
2. Welfare Entitlements: Look at the laws that are passed, empowering and glorifying motherhood outside of marriage.
 - When the government creates an entitlement system that cushions the blow of sin, the people will sin more. All sin has a natural consequence and we are to really reap what we sow (Gal 6:7). In the real world, when a child is born out of wedlock, there is great suffering. The mother and child will face great adversity for the world is cruel. She will seek out the people who care for their souls, like her family and the church. She will probably marry the father or find someone supportive to marry for her sake and the sake of the children.
 - However, in America today, if you choose a path of having children out of wedlock, instead of having to work hard to take care of the child, the woman and

child become a ward of the state, for they must wait at the mailbox for the monthly check, the food stamps, the medical card and rent assistance. Why should she go out and get a job when it is much more profitable to not have one? The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world and the children learn an entitlement way of life. If marriage was not promoted and important in that generation, then it will probably not be in the generations to come for that family.

- The problem isn't low wages, but a high welfare! The problem isn't a lack of the value of money, but the values of Jesus in the family! We have had a "War on Poverty" since Lyndon Johnson announced it in 1964. Since then we have thrown over five trillion dollars into it and we are worse off now than ever. The lack of money is not the source of poverty in America, but the lack of good morals and common sense.

The issue of marriage is key to the selection of our rulers. If you choose leaders that are pro-marriage (one man and one woman), then it could begin to reverse the direction of the nation. If you ignore what the scriptures teach concerning marriage, then be prepared to accept the consequences.

How does the politician live his marriage? What does the politician endorse concerning "homosexual-marriage"? How has the politician voted concerning marriage? These are three great marriage questions about a topic that should make a difference for the Voting Christian.