



## Sermon Notes from 22 September

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### Why is my marriage like this? (Ephesians 5:22-33)

by Pastor GL Wong

Inspired by God in prison, Paul wrote this letter in Ephesians. When you look at the Bible as a whole, it is evident that the Christian understanding of marriage is between one man (the husband) and one woman (the wife). “*Why is my marriage like this?*” Such a question implies there are some things that are not right about one’s marriage and we can draw out key ideas from Ephesians 5 to find the answers.

#### 1) The obvious answer

This answer is obvious, but wrong: *my marriage is like this because my spouse is the problem.* According to a report made in Singapore a few years ago, 1 in 4 married couples in Singapore were thinking of getting a divorce. Clearly almost everyone, Christians included, understands the obvious answer: if your spouse is the problem, then your impulse is to just end the marriage. This is not God’s answer! God’s desire for us is not divorce.

#### 2) The biblical answer

#1 Both you and your spouse are sinners in need of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

Ephesians 5 cannot be read properly without understanding the earlier chapters in Ephesians. Paul was specifically giving instructions to married couples who recognise clearly how sinful they are and how they have been saved.

Eph 2:1-2 – If you are without God, you are dead and hopeless in sin. The sinful flaws you see in one another in marriage is not just about the two of you; each of you have sinned and continue to rebel against a holy God. Every human being has a vertical relational problem with God, and this problem creates a horizontal relational problem with others. Sins are sins against God before they are sins against your spouse. A holy God is far more offended than your spouse by your sins.

Eph 2:5, 8-10 – Even when you were dead

in your trespasses, God made you alive together with Christ. By grace, you have been saved! You are saved when you recognise that Jesus took the offence of your sins upon Himself and died on the cross to save you from your deadness to sin. You are made spiritually alive! You are empowered to reject the dead patterns of a sinful world and walk instead in the new patterns of your God given life. You can only forgive and forbear with your spouse according to God’s way when you deeply appreciate how gracious God has been to you.

#2 God’s plan for marriage is a holy matrimony. You need holiness before you can arrive at God’s intended happiness for your marriage.

The text is heavily Christ centered; far more so than about husband and wife (Eph 5:23, 24, 25-27, 29-30, 32). Your focus must be on Christ and the church before it can be on your husband and wife. God’s desire for the church in marriage with Him is sanctification; that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:25-27, Le 20:26, 1 Pe 1:15-16). His desire is for us to grow in our personal holiness; becoming more like Jesus Christ. God’s plan for a holy marriage includes a repentant husband and wife, continually growing in holiness, becoming more like Jesus in character. Put holiness before happiness!

#### 6 Applications

##### Charge to husbands

1. Love; do not lust
2. Lead; do not be passive

##### Charge to wives

1. Submit; don’t quarrel
2. Respect; don’t nag

##### Charge to both husbands and wives

1. Treat your marriage as a calling, not as a coincidence
2. Emphasise grace, not expectation

Re 19:7-8 – The ultimate marriage will come when Christ comes again. As we await that day, let us prepare our hearts for the eternal marriage to come!