

116# Sermon @ Little Hocking, OH 8/8/2007 p.m.

Mark T. Tonkery

A Marriage like Aquila and Priscilla

Text: Acts 18:2, 26

Purpose: To teach the benefits of two Christians marrying each other.

Introduction

- A. A woman came to the minister and said, "Preacher, you keep talking about God's plan for one man and one woman to be married." "Yes," the preacher said impatiently, "That is God's plan and there is no need to try to change it." "I'm not trying to change it," she replied, "--I'm trying to get in on it!"
- B. With all the problems we hear about marriage it is still a popular things to do.
- C. This is the last lesson in this series on marriage for now. I would like to be able to speak on six easy steps to a great marriage. This would be wonderful. I could tour the country speaking and helping people with their marriage. But the reality of it is that marriage is often very complex. To some extend, my sermons these past weeks have just hit the high spots about things that need to consider and may help improve our marriage, but it is more complex than that.
- D. Marriage is a hard topic because it is impossible to say all that God says about marriage in few 30 minutes lessons. These lessons cannot address all the Biblical background to marriage. We need to continually study the depth of information God provides in his word about the family.
- E. The last couple that I would like to look at in this series is Aquila and Priscilla not a whole lot is said about them, but what is said about them is enough to teach us as Christians how a husband and wife in the Christian faith are to model their faith together.
- F. Lets reconstruct the story that we find in Acts 18...this couple was living in Rome, Italy. The name Priscilla is a Roman name, and secular history tells us she was from a prominent family of nobility living in Rome. Aquila is a Jewish name. So we can see that a young Roman girl has married a young Jewish boy, and that was not acceptable in those days...a huge wave of anti-Semitism had swept that land in those days, and the Romans hated the Jews. The Emperor Claudius had just issued an edict expelling all Jews from Rome. This was a family under pressure. It's always hard to have to pick up and move, especially when it's moving away from the place where you have grown up. But this couple wasn't choosing to move, they were being forced to leave! Yet with the pressures of life they stayed together in Christ and can teach us how we can keep our marriages together as well.

Body

I.

Christians work together.

- A. Aquila and Priscilla physically worked together, they were tentmakers, and this is how Paul introduced them Acts 18:3. Not only did they make their living together by making tents but they also worked together as Christians to teach Apollos, help Paul spread the gospel, and help the church.
 1. Aquila & Priscilla are always mentioned together in the New Testament. We see them together in their family tent making business, (18:2-3), they traveled together with Paul on his second missionary journey (18:18), they worshipped together (18:26),

they were together in ministry (18:19, 26), they were together in starting a church out of their home (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3-5).

2. A lot of people do not like to work with their spouse in the same company. They are less efficient in the same office or team together. They get in each other's business, way, space, hair and face. Guys, especially, are anxious that their spouse will show them up, put them down, or run the show before their superiors, peers or employees.
- B. However, it is different in the Lord and in ministry. We see husband and wife are to work together in the:
1. Eldership 1 Tim. 3:2
 2. As Deacons 1 Tim. 3:12
 3. Not specifically mentioned but preachers, missionaries, and teachers can work very well together as we see with Aquila and Priscilla. Some of the best teachers and preachers I know have been helped great by their wives working with them.
- C. Flying solo in ministry is difficult. When that encouragement and strength of the spouse is not there to help in Christian ministry whether that is raising children in the Lord, teaching a Bible class, teaching a neighbor, or other Christian service, it hurts our influence and effectiveness. What a lost person to think if you are trying to win them to Christ and you have not won your spouse? A spouse should welcome and encourage the other half and the whole family to serve alongside. Without spousal support, a willing person's ministry is stifled.
1. The person's participation or growth is also minimized if the spouse has little or no desire to attend worship, fellowship and activities has no desire to serve and does not want the spouse to fellowship or socialize with brothers and sisters. The Christian is hurt in their spiritual growth.
 2. A person working for the Lord will find his flame doused by cold water when a spouse is uninterested in ministry and lacking in zeal.
 3. One of the greatest privileges in serving the Lord is getting to serve the Lord together with your spouse. Serving the Lord on your own is a personal blessing, serving the Lord in unity with brothers and sisters in the Lord is a church blessing, but serving the Lord with your spouse is a family blessing.
 - a. Have you, as a couple, stopped growing as a team, going as a team, and giving as a team?
 - b. I believe God wants couples to minister as a team and mature as a team. The one problem in the church today is the surplus of one-man or one-woman ministry.
 - c. God desires couples to be on the same team and the same page in ministry.

- d. Have you and your spouse use and blended your various and unique gifts for ministry? If you cannot do actively, you can always support and pray actively.
 4. It's been said, "There is no "I" word in TEAM." There is no better team than a faithful Christian wife and husband working together.
 5. Ecc. 4:9-12
 6. Doing Christianity together is a key to building a close marriage. Do you spend time together in the Lord with your spouse or are you always going separate ways? Do you teach together? Serve together? Pray together? Fellowship together? Worship together?
- II. Christians want the best for others.
- A. Aquila and Priscilla wanted the best for Apollos, Paul, and the Lord's Church.
 1. The way Scripture talks about Aquila and Priscilla we see they helped Paul, Apollos, as well as the church by hosting the assembly in their home.
 2. Aquila and Priscilla wanted the best for others, because this is what Christ taught and modeled in his life.
 - a. Acts 10:38 went about doing good.
 - B. Studies have been done to determine some of the things that cause divorce and unhealthy relationships in marriage one main causes is selfishness, and being concerned for self. Yet this is not how Aquila and Priscilla acted nor is how we Christians are to act.
 1. Gal. 6:10 do good to everyone.
 2. Let look at Mt. 7:24-27. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 we are wise if we practice what he has said. Notice what he has said and how some many of these things are seeking the best in others and can be applied to marriage:
 - a. We don't hate
 - b. We don't commit adultery
 - c. We don't divorce
 - d. We keep our promise
 - e. We go the second mile
 - f. We love our enemies
 - g. We help the needy
 - h. We pray and fast
 - i. We serve God and not material things
 - j. We seek the Kingdom of God
 - k. We don't worry
 - l. We don't judge others
 - C. Mt. 6:24 We can only serve God or material things we can serve both. It is the same thing in our marriages. Question we must ask ourselves is God in it all. By you being here today you are saying The Lord is the God

of my Sunday but is the Lord the God of your Mondays-Saturdays? Is the Lord the God of your life? Do you think about what he would say about the decisions you make, the words you say, activities you are involved in, the way you treat others and the way you treat your spouse? Is God the God of your marriage?

1. Christians want the best for others and if we can take this teaching into our marriage then we will have a great marriage. Why because there is no other person which is closer to us than our spouse.
2. If we can give the best to them, then we practice the Christian ideal.
3. Someone has said, *"I never got married to get my needs met. My spouse does not exist to meet my needs. I exist to meet his/her needs. And incidentally, while I'm doing that, a couple of my needs might get met."*
4. Christian marriage works better because we take care of one another.

III. Christians are faithful.

A. Everything else we read about this Priscilla and Aquila from Acts on is about them serving God faithfully together. Years later Paul writes back to the church at Rome...

1. Romans 16:3-4 "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: [4] Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."
2. Aquila and Priscilla were faithful to the Lord and faithful to one another.

B. An ideal marriage is of all things a love triangle. In one corner is the wife; in the other the husband. At the top of the triangle is God. The closer our communion with God, the closer our communion with each other.

1. Many marriages are already triangles, but God is not at the top. Instead the third party maybe:
 - a. Money
 - b. Careers
 - c. Hobbies
 - d. If is not another person these things can lead to another person.
2. We can become over committed in these or other things. Over commitment is one of the biggest marriage killers. James Dobson stated, "The lack of discipline in our work, hobbies or friends cause exhaustion which leads to countless of number of negative emotions, such as self-pity, irritability, selfishness and withdrawal." Which can and will kill a marriage.
3. Some Bible examples of this:

- a. During the time of the Judges the Israelites were over commitment to Idols which influence and hurt their relationship with God their spouses.
 - b. Eli and Samuel's over commitment lead to the neglect and demise of their children.
 - c. King David over commitment to being king I believe lead to his adultery and the murder of Uriah.
 - d. Over commitment to idols lead to marriage trouble for the Jews in Mal. 2
- IV. The benefit of having two Christians marrying each other is a happy marriage.
 - A. Christians make the best workers, best fathers and mothers, provide for their own, kind, and are unselfish.
 - 1. "There is a connection between undermining the traditional definition of the family, the healthiest way to raise children, and family breakdown. Decades of studies have shown that kids do best when raised by a married mother and father (Isn't this what the Bible has been saying along).– So we should do everything we can to protect marriage." (By James Dobson)
 - 2. In fact love and closeness between parents are even more important than the love to the children" (John White M.D.)
 - 3. In several 20 year long studies, parent who stay married just for the children instead of seeking a divorce raised children who emotional, mentally, and physically healthier than those who divorced. Also these studies showed that parents who stayed together just because of the children, end up not getting a divorce at all after the children were raised.
 - a. (This shows working together, seeking the best for others besides self, and being faithful to God and his plan for marriage).
 - 4. Just opposite can be said, "Children suffer the most when we divorce, couple live with one another instead being married, when homosexuality is promoted in the home, and when we disrespect what God designed for marriage.
 - 5. In European, countries for example that have legalized same-sex marriage, the result is men and women have stopped getting married. A child has an innate need to connect with a mother and a father, and children suffer when men and women stop getting married." (James Dobson).
- V. A great marriage is possible when we have God at the center of our life.
 - A. From God's Word we learn the marriage skills of:
 - 1. Working together.
 - 2. Unconditional love.
 - 3. Faithfulness.
 - B. God will help up if we only listen to Him! Read and study the Bible.
 - 1. Perhaps the most important tip today about marriage is to have God at the center of your life. From God we learn the marriage

skills of kindness, forgiveness, unconditional love and faithfulness. God is our model for love. His word is the instruction manual on marriage may we follow it.

2. Best of all, when we place God at the center of our lives, he will help us through times of difficulty. He will not solve our problems but will give us the strength to overcome.
 3. So many times the reason a marriages fails is because the Lord was not invited to the wedding or into the marriage. I think that every couple who is planning a wedding should send a wedding invitation to the Lord whether you want to do symbolically by actually writing an invitation and placing it where the two of you will see it or by praying with your spouse to allow God to be the builder of your house. If God is not the builder then someone or something else is.
 4. “It’s easier to serve your mate if you envision your loving Lord rather than your flawed spouse. Picture doing it for Jesus. The imposition then becomes an honor.”
 5. Let each of us make a commitment today to do all that we can to have a stronger marriage and a more Christ like commitment to our spouse. With God’s help—We can!
- C. Make your marriage great, it is worth the effort to have a better marriage!
1. No marriage is perfect. If we expect our spouse to be perfect, we are setting ourselves up for difficulty.
 2. But we realize the struggles and put God in his proper place then marriage can be and will be great!
 3. One last thought, “What kind of grade would you give your marriage?(A,B,C, D, or F)” Assign a grade to the marriage as a whole. It may also be helpful to ask, what kind of grade would you give yourself? What kind of grade would your spouse give you?
 4. Then once you know your grade work to improve that score by putting God first, apply Christian principles and teachings to your marriage.
 5. Regardless of our occupation, our main business, job, occupation ought to be God’s business! Worshipping and serving Him, teaching and helping others, winning souls and seeing people get saved! Are you helping your spouse get to Heaven? If not then your not doing your job.

Conclusion

- A. Aquila & Priscilla were a special couple with a special marriage relationship. They are never mentioned separately in the Bible. In marriage and ministry they were together. They were a team that capitalized on each others strengths. They completed each other. Together and through their home they opened the door of salvation to many. Jesus Christ was the center of their marriage and family life. Their marriage demonstrates several lessons that can help couples

today grow a closer marriage relationship. No matter if you are presently experiencing a good marriage, together but struggling, separated or single anticipating marriage—the Bible can help you take the next steps toward a great marriage.

- B. The first step is to become a Christian, Confess faith in Christ, repent of sins and put Christ on in baptism. Do that now as we stand and sing.

Some parts of this sermon were taken from a sermon by
Tom Steed Carbondale, IL
Preached at Harrisburg, Illinois
October 15, 2000
Adopted by Mark T. Tonkery
July 8, 2007

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.