



Monroe United Methodist Church

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October 28, 2018 8:00 and 10:45 Worship

The Church Gathers in God's Name

PRELUDE Julie Shipe McClain

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP
O Jesus, you have called us to a holy life even if we must stand opposed to popular thoughts and habits. You are our King, so we desire kingdom values. Teach us to get along with all people honorably. Amen.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE Gain, Save, and Give
OPENING CHORUS We Belong to God

**When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying, we belong to God, we belong to God.**

**Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving or when receiving,
we belong to God, we belong to God. We belong to God, we belong to God.**

CALL TO WORSHIP
HYMN Come, Thou Almighty King # 61

UNISON PRAYER John Wesley, 1744
Lord Jesus, you have called us to pursue holiness in our living.
Pride pushes people away from us while humility makes us lovable.
Teach us to be learners for we must learn something quite contrary
to our former self and habits.
Not only do we have much to learn, we have much to unlearn:
a whole set of attitudes, fixed and formed, fashioned after the world.
Our value system, warped and skewed, must undergo a radical
change to conform to you.
Please be patient and persistent,
working in our lives changes that make us more like you. Amen.

TIME FOR SILENT PRAYER

The Church Hears God's Word

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN Sisters Mary and Martha
SPECIAL MUSIC Image of God Chancel Choir (8:00)
An Offering Jane Olson (10:45)

OLD TESTAMENT READING Genesis 1:26-27, NLT
Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:18-24, NIV
The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.
But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

EPISTLE READING

1 Thessalonians 4:1-7, NLT

Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives.

SERMON

Karen Booth

Other scripture in sermon

Matthew 19:1-6

Matthew 19:10-12

1 Corinthians 5:15-20

Ephesians 5:31-32

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Ephesians 5:21-28

Matthew 22:29-30

2 Corinthians 12:21

The Church Responds to God

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS AND JOYS

OFFERING

Be Still, My Soul

Bell Choir

RECEIVING TITHES AND OFFERINGS

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

A MODERN AFFIRMATION

#885

Pastor: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

ALL:

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power, and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children's good.

We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the Kingdom of God may come upon the earth. Amen.

PERSONAL PRAYER, PASTORAL PRAYER, LORD'S PRAYER

MAY THE MIND OF CHRIST MY SAVIOR Katie Barclay Wilkinson

**May the mind of Christ my Savior live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling all I think and do and say.
May the Word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph only through his humble power.**

**May the peace of God my Father rule my life in everything
that I may be calm to comfort all the sick and sorrowing.
May the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea;
Christ exalting, self-abasing, now I know his victory.**

**May I run the race before me, strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus as each day I onward go.
May Christ's beauty rest upon me as I seek the lost to win,
and may they forget the channel, seeing only peace from him.**

**May I take off godless habits as I would old, filthy rags;
strip myself of hate and anger, impure motives, shame that nags.
May I put on righteousness and live a life of truthfulness,
Christ, renew my mind, my desires, clothe me now in holiness.**

DEPART WITH BLESSING



Stewardship message on announcement page

OCTOBER STEWARSHIP MESSAGE

“Gain all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.”

John Wesley

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10, ESV

First, we pray because we are God’s children, and he loves to hear from us. Zeph 3:17

Second, we pray because it deepens our trust in God Philippians 4:6-7

Third, we pray because it causes us to depend on God Isaiah 40:26

Fourth, we pray because it gives us the chance to express ourselves completely to the Lord Psalm 62:8

Fifth, we pray because our prayers move the heart of God James 4:2

Sixth, we pray because it’s an amazing way that we get to be involved with what God is already doing in the world. 1 Thessalonians 5:25

Children’s Sermons

We are Family

Oct 28 Sister Mary Martha Luke 10:38-42

KAREN'S SERMON

My personal testimony. Salvation first before submission to Jesus as Lord, including Lord of my sex life.

Why I relate to the Thessalonians.

Part of the resistance to full submission was my perception of the negative teaching Bible had about sex. Thou shalt nots.

But that's not really the basis of Christian teaching. Instead, traditional guidelines for sexual behavior are based on what Bishop Whitaker calls "the deep structure of biblical teaching about God's purpose for humans as sexual beings." Foundational passages include the creation story in Genesis 1:26-27 (NLT)

26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

27 So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

And in 2:18-24 (NIV)

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,
"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Jesus himself validated and affirmed this understanding of marriage and sex in Matthew 19:1-6 (Message)

19 1-2 When Jesus had completed these teachings, he left Galilee and crossed the region of Judea on the other side of the Jordan. Great crowds followed him there, and he healed them.

3 One day the Pharisees were badgering him: "Is it legal for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"

4-6 He answered, "Haven't you read in your Bible that the Creator originally made man and woman for each other, male and female? And because of this, a man leaves father and mother and is firmly bonded to his wife, becoming one flesh—no longer two bodies but one. Because God created this organic union of the two sexes, no one should desecrate his art by cutting them apart."

At their most basic and concrete level, the passages in Genesis 1 and 2 reveal that males and females were designed naturally as complementary physical beings and that only they together are capable of becoming "one flesh" through sexual union.

This male/female complementarity is explained in greater theological depth in Genesis 2. At the beginning of creation, Adam—which means "a human formed from the ground (in Hebrew, "adamah")—is a sexually undifferentiated being. Male/female sexual differences occur only after Eve is taken from his side and becomes Adam's "negdo," a Hebrew word which means "complement" or "counterpart." This underscores a major point: in marriage the physical union of man and woman in marriage essentially refashions the now divided parts back into a sexual whole. Thus, one original flesh becoming two sexes points conclusively to the principle of two sexes becoming one flesh again in conjugal marriage.

In Ephesians 5:31-32, Paul pushes the theological significance of the male/female conjugal bond even further: (NLT)

31 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." [c]

32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way

Christ and the church are one.

Paul declares the one flesh union of male/female in marriage a great mystery, other translations call it a “profound mystery” because it reflects Jesus’ relationship as Bridegroom to his Bride, the Church. In much the same way, covenantal male/female marriage also uniquely mirrors God’s relationship as faithful husband to Israel as portrayed in multiple passages in the various prophets: Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah.

As Rev. Tim Keller has described it in his book *The Meaning of Marriage*, “Sex is sacred because it is the analogy (reflection or likeness) of the joyous self giving and pleasure of love within the life of the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in a relationship of glorious devotion to each other, pouring love and joy into one another continually. Sex between a married man and woman points to the love between the Father and the Son, as well as that between Christ and the Church.”

Within this context the Bible can be seen not to be a downer about sex, but rather to boldly and openly celebrate its delights. God created sex to be wonderful – heavenly, actually – because it mirrors the joy of relationship in the Trinity and because it foreshadows the ecstasy that we will have in heaven in our loving relationships with God and one another.

Even so, the New Testament also teaches that male/female marriage and the sexual fulfillment it can provide is of only secondary or transient importance. It is ultimately superseded by something much better in the age to come: the divine intimacy of believers in marriage with Christ.

Matthew 22: 29-30

29But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Both Jesus and Paul affirm the single, celibate life as a way of giving undivided attention to the advancement of God's kingdom, a lifestyle choice that Jesus made himself.

Matthew 19: 10-12 (ESV)

10The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” 11But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

32I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Lived out on a practical level, God's holy blueprint for marriage and sex – whether married or single – is not only most pleasing to him, it is what brings the greatest benefit to us as believers. Marriage is a place of security where at our deepest level we can be completely vulnerable with each other – Adam and Eve naked. Keller again:

“Marital sex is a God-invented way to say to another person 'I belong completely and exclusively and permanently to you.'”

All of the biblical sanctions against any other kind of sexual intimacy therefore derive from this traditional understanding of God’s institution of male/female marriage as the only holy context for sexual union.

The price Jesus paid on the cross, the grace that is made

available to us through that sacrifice, calls for an equally sacrificial response on our behalf – perhaps most especially in the realm of our sexual lives. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5:15-20 (NLT)

15 Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! 16 And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one."^[d] 17 But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. 18 Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. 19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Jesus' work on the cross is not merely a pardon for one's sins but also the promise and power to live life as a "new creation," including in the sexual realm. Jesus himself coupled a heightened sexual ethic with a loving outreach to violators to lead them to repentance. One need think only of the woman caught in adultery (Luke 7:36-50) whom Jesus told to "go and sin no more" or the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-30) who was invited to exchange her serial adultery and fornication for the "living water" that alone would satisfy.

Or consider Paul's admonishment of the otherwise faithful believers in Thessalonica, calling them to repent by submitting their sexuality to the revealed will of God and the gracious work of transformation by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:1-7). Refusal to do so would be an insult to divine grace and a hindrance to the process of sanctification whereby the believer becomes progressively more mature and godly.

The power of the cross not only applies to our individual sexual morality, but to the ways we are empowered to live out our marriages. Paul in Ephesians 5:21-28 (Message – profound mystery passage)

21 Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

22-24 Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.

25-28 Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They're really doing themselves a favor—since they're already "one" in marriage.

This is what ended up the "profound mystery" passage. Profound mystery that any of us sinful human beings can actually live in this self-sacrificial way. Only through Holy Spirit.

Finally, the power of the cross allows us together to respond to sexual sin in our midst in truthful yet compassionate, self-sacrificing ways, neither with judgment nor tolerance, but with a combination of heartfelt truth and grace. Again, take a lesson from Paul.

In 1 Corinthians 5, he addressed a thorny situation in the church fellowship—one of the members is living in incestuous relationship with his stepmother, an immoral act that not even the pagans approve. A cursory reading of the chapter might lead us to believe that Paul is extremely hard-hearted and exclusionary when he directs the Corinthians to remove the man from fellowship. With a bit more reflection, we might conclude that those actions are warranted due to the serious moral and spiritual threat to all involved. But if we dig beneath the surface, we see a very different, and far more compassionate, motivation at work.

In 1 Corinthians 5:2, Paul challenges the congregation about their attitude. He writes: "And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with *grief*?" (NIV) The Message paraphrase renders it even more strongly—"Shouldn't this break your hearts? Shouldn't it bring you to your knees in tears?" Some commentators propose that Paul is grieved because of the Corinthians' unyielding pride, but I wonder if that is the most accurate understanding. For later, in 2 Corinthians 12:21, as he anticipates his third visit to them, he writes:

I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be *grieved* over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

The Greek word translated “grief” in both of the letters is *pentheo*. *Pentheo* is a strong, emotional word, implying a sorrow so deep or so severe that it can only be expressed with lament, wailing and tears. It is the same word that Jesus used in the Beatitudes when he said, “Blessed are those who *mourn*, for they shall be comforted.” That is how Paul feels for the sexually sinful in the Corinthian church. He mourns over them. (Jeremiah mourned in the same way over the people in Judah, lamenting the fact that there was no spiritual “balm in Gilead” that could heal their sinful “wounds.” [Jeremiah 8:22]) Paul also expresses the same amazing tenderness for the believers in the Thessalonian churches. Though they also strived—yet obviously failed—to live with sexual integrity, Paul nonetheless describes his response to them as “gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children,” (1 Thessalonians 2:7) and “as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God.” (2:11-12)

Paul wasn’t mean-spirited, uncaring or pitiless with either church. He managed to be compassionate without compromise, achieving a gospel balance of grace *and* truth that had great appeal to the pagan world.

Burnt out from the excesses of a culture much like ours, non-Christians marveled at the Christians’ sexual freedom—not to do as they wished, but the freedom from being driven, defined, or dominated by their urges and passions.

It was a freedom in Christ that empowered them to live as chaste when single and monogamously faithful when married. It was a freedom that benefited the whole community, especially the most vulnerable. And it was a freedom almost unheard of in the rest of the Greco-Roman world, a freedom grounded in the gospel of grace and truth.