

Physical Relationship in Marriage

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Today loved ones, I'd like to try to introduce the subject of physical relationship in marriage and then if we have time this Sunday, but at least next Sunday, I'd ask you to put questions that would help us to clarify what we all believe or what we really understand about this. I'd just remind you that we are discussing Christian marriage not secular or civil marriage.

In other words, most of us here believe that Jesus is the unique Son of the Creator of our universe and that his description of marriage, and his apostles' description in this book is marriage as it was intended by the one who made us all and so that's the marriage we are discussing. We're not discussing secular or civil marriage. Society has taken this gift of marriage and has corrupted it and modified it to suit itself in different countries according to the cultural backgrounds. But what we're talking about here this morning is marriage as we believe it was intended to be by our Creator and therefore really, marriage as we were made for it. And then the necessary conclusion of that is the only kind of marriage that will actually work is marriage as it was intended by our Creator.

So, whether you were married in church, or whether you were married by a justice of the peace, or however you were married, you ought to be able to tell this morning whether your marriage is a Christian marriage or a purely secular marriage by simply looking at the characteristics of secular marriage and the characteristics of Christian marriage. And I'd really encourage you to do that. Do not get so uppity that you say, "Mine is a Christian marriage you just don't see it right. You don't see the true characteristics."

Loved ones, a Christian marriage is not one that has a priest or a pastor pray over it. A Christian marriage is one that works the way God intended it to work. So I'd ask you to be really serious and sensible this morning and not to become egotistical and say, "Look, mine is a Christian marriage. Our church was a good church and my marriage was well done it's just my marriage doesn't have the characteristics that you talk about." No loved ones, if it doesn't then it's a secular marriage. And what we should do this morning of course is ask God's Spirit to enable us to transform it into what he meant it to be.

So I'd just remind you very quickly of the very plain distinction that there is really in scripture and in experience between a secular and Christian marriage. You remember there's a tremendous distinction as far as the basis of Christian marriage is concerned. The basis of a secular marriage is the human will. The man sees a woman that he thinks would give him a lot of happiness either emotional or physical, or a lot of comfort, and would take care of his needs, his dirty socks, and his dirty dishes, and he says, "That's the kind of woman I want to mother my children."

Primarily a selfish thing. Primarily his own will. Or, the woman looks at a man and sees, "Boy, he will give me security in my old age. I don't want to be lonely, I don't want to be left on my own, I want somebody. I kind of like housekeeping and I would like somebody to provide the money so that I could do my thing." Or, she looks at him and says, "I'd like somebody who would really give me a position or significance in society and this man will do it."

Often the man has that attitude, "I would like somebody of my own who would really look up to me." A little like old Touchstone you remember, in Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream* and he presents

to his friends this poor old peasant girl and he says, "A poor thing sir but mine own." And many of us have that kind of attitude, "Well, we don't care really what he's like or what she's like but it's somebody that I belong to."

Now it's primarily a human will thing as opposed to Christian marriage which is based on God's will where a loved one comes to the place where they receive all the security, significance, and happiness that they need from their Creator and they die to getting those things from anybody else. And in the peace and quietness of their will that results from that, they sense God wants them to be husband and wife with this dear person. It's based on God's will.

There's a difference in the purpose. The purpose in a secular marriage becomes the reproduction of one's own image. Often it becomes in fact, a defensive attitude to your own image. You're fighting to keep your own personality, you're fighting to keep yourself from being overwhelmed by the other person and a secular marriage is often ends up as a battle to maintain some kind of superiority for the other's personality. It's also a preoccupation with reproducing one's own image in the children.

It's entirely different from a Christian marriage whose purpose is to reproduce God's image. Genesis 1:26, you remember, says, "That God made us in his image male and female made he them." And there the preoccupation is to allow God to work through the other person to transform my rather selfish life into an unselfish life. For many of us it's the first time we had to take anybody else into consideration besides ourselves. For many of us it's the first time we ever had to wonder, "Maybe we shouldn't go to the show we would like to go to? Maybe we should go to where they would like to go." And for many of us it's the beginning of the transformation of a very selfish self centered life into something that is unselfish and of course, you remember, we shared that that was why in the marriage service we promised, "I take thee for rich, for poorer, for better, for worse." Often it's the worse in the other person that drives us into Jesus for gentleness, and love, and patience, and kindness. And so it's primarily the creation of a new personality entirely that is the heart of a Christian marriage. That's the exciting thing about it, not the preservation of each other's personality but the creation of a new one completely.

Often in secular marriage it's to fulfill ourselves. We marry primarily to have a good home, have a two car garage, have good vacations, have some children that we can call our own, have good Christmases, good Easters, and primarily fulfill what we want to do in life. A Christian marriage is a combination of two unique personalities to bring the world more under God's will in the unique way that he intended them to do it and so it's a Christian marriage exists for a purpose outside itself. A secular marriage gets very claustrophobic especially towards the end. It seems to exist only for itself and seems to get rather boring at the end actually. But a Christian marriage always exists for a cosmic purpose outside itself and that always lifts it into a magnanimity and unselfishness.

Secular marriage, you remember, is primarily concerned with getting love. I want your attention. I want more attention from you. I want more respect from you. I want more emotional and physical stimulation and satisfaction from you. Christian marriage exists to give love. To give love to the other person, first of all in fulfilling the main purpose of love which is to conform us to the image of the Son of our Maker, and that is to get us into heaven. And Christian marriage is primarily concerned with loving each other into the image of God and getting each other into heaven and giving rather than getting.

Now loved ones, you can check out your own marriages in the light of those characteristics which are very clear. You remember we talked about the way the three Greek words illustrate those concepts. "Eros" is sexual love primarily concerned with getting satisfaction from the other's body, primarily concerned with getting emotional stimulation from the other person. It doesn't last long, really. "Philia" love is based on common interest. It's the kind of love that two brothers can have; two sisters can have to each other because they're interested in the same things. Interested in fishing, or bowling, or flying, or motorcycling, and it's the kind of love that many loved ones try and build their marriages on and then they're disappointed when the other person ceases to have the same interest as them.

It's still a selfish love, because you like the other person because they like the same things as you. Many loved ones have married mistakenly because they thought that was a good basis for marriage. "Agape" love is the kind of love that Jesus showed to the leper. The leper hadn't the same interest as Jesus, the leper provided no physical or emotional satisfaction for him but his heart was filled with love and it just poured out to the leper whether the leper was loveable or not and that's the kind of love that God gives you remember, to people who choose him above people. Who die to people as the source of their security, and significance, and come alive to God. God gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit and that Holy Spirit sheds abroad a divine, selfless, disinterested love that keeps pouring out even when she comes down in her rollers, and even when he comes home broken because he's lost his job. And that's the kind of love of course, that gives life to the sexual love completely.

Now loved ones, those are the characteristics then that we talked about. When two people who have been regenerated in their spirits by receiving the selfless uncreated dynamic energy that motivated Jesus, God's Son. When two people are enlivened and regenerated in their spirits by that supernatural life, and are beginning to be governed by it, when they first sense that God wants them to live with another person for life, their hearts are filled with a great sense of gratitude to him, and a great sense of respect for the other person. They think of the other person as a son or daughter of the most high God that has been given to them and they have a tremendous respect for them and a great desire to protect the other person's dignity as long as they live on this earth together.

And when they sense that they should be together, there comes inside in their spirits, a great sense of fellowship. And so their spirits really begin to interact first with each other and the Holy Spirit has come into each of their spirits from God and regenerated them, and then their two spirits join together. That's the first great delight they have in each other. Great enjoyment in studying his dear word together, great enjoyment in praying together, a great excitement that the God of the whole universe has a purpose in bringing them together and so their spirits join together first and that's the very first intercourse that they experience, just a delight in being together in the Father's presence.

So the first time they go out together that's really what they do, they pray at the end of the date or the beginning of the date and they enjoy that most of all and it's their spirits that develop and strengthen each other. And then as their spirits begin to influence their minds, and to create the image of Jesus in their minds, so they find that journey into each other's mind that becomes satisfying in itself, and they begin to get to know each other as far as their thoughts are concerned. And they begin to discuss what they think of God, what they think of life, what they think of the world, what they think of politics, what they think of books, what they think of ideas, and the two minds begin to come together. And the mental intercourse is not just something that is

an enclosed system but they find that the Spirit of Jesus in the other person coming through their mind with a slightly different flavor and fragrance to the way he is in their mind begins to correct them at times. It begins to drive them more into Jesus at times and they find that there is a real intercourse that takes place, an intercourse that originally comes from Jesus' Spirit in the other person.

It is so with their emotions. The Holy Spirit begins to inference their emotions and their emotions begin to interact with each other and they begin to enjoy beautiful spring mornings together, they begin to enjoy summer afternoons together, they begin to enjoy painting, and music. Their emotions begin to interact with each other until gradually they become more and more one person. One person that is stronger than they were individually. And so that mental and emotional intercourse follows the intercourse of their spirits and so for them the backseat of the car is not the main purpose of a date at all because they are a son and daughter of the most high king of the universe and they know how precious they are to each other, those parts of them that will never fade away because they're both so conscience that these bodies will fade away in 70 years and eventually they won't exist at all. But these spirits of theirs, and these minds and emotions, and then these dear wills will live forever.

And gradually of course, the Holy Spirit begins to move through their wills and their wills begin to interact with each other and they begin to correct each other through their wills, and they begin to correct an overabundance of strength in one will, or a weakness in the other person's will and their wills begin to want not only to get each other into heaven but their wills begin to unite in the purpose that God has put them here to fulfill. And so the woman begins to compliment the man's insight into his job and the man begins to share in the woman's responsibilities in her job or at home, and so there begins to be a volitional intercourse that begins to affect their outward life. And so before anything happens they have begun to have an intercourse that is intimate and that is personal, and that is filled with life.

So when these two people hold hands the world might look at them and see the hand holding, but for these two children of God the hand holding is only a physical expression of a complete mental, and emotional, and spiritual, and volitional intercourse that has already bound them as one and that is always there whether they hold hands or not. There's that sense of intimacy together and that sense of unity that makes them one. So for them, the hand holding is really just a physical expression.

So it is when they kiss and when they embrace. The exhilaration and the eternity of being completely and intimately known by another person is not in the kiss, or in the embrace, it's in this whole interaction that takes place underneath that. And it's in that mental and emotional unity that is there all the time. And the kiss or embrace can be there or may not be there, but for them it's just the physical expression of their spirit continuing to come out through their bodies and everything that they do with their bodies is governed by that intercourse that has taken place within them.

So it is when at times the Spirit of Jesus in each of them directs them to draw both bodies together in physical intercourse. For them it doesn't matter whether it's once a night, or once a week, or once a month. Indeed, increasingly as they mature together as a personality, they realize that it is a kind of clumsy way of expressing the infinite depths of unity that they have come to sense in each other and they begin to find more and more that it is really a very inadequate way of expressing the intense intimacy and unity that they feel.

For them it's not some kind of complex physical technique whereby you stimulate the other's body to a point of climax. For them it is not a preoccupation with really how we do it, or the way that we do it. For them it is just an automatic expression of a great unity that is dearer to them than the joining together of the two bodies. So loved ones, in a way the very relaxation, and the peace, and the confidence in their spirits that they are really meant for each other by the Lord God of the universe and the great certainty, and confidence, and peace, and relaxation that that brings, that's what stimulates the secretion of the right fluids. That's what stimulates the relaxation of the body.

It isn't so much the other person stimulating the body as this deep certainty and confidence that this is from God, and a great relaxation that comes from that, a great awareness and assurance that they are bound together from the very depths of their being. And so the bodies are prepared for physical intercourse in a loving, gentle, relaxing way.

So really for them, you know, physical orgasm is not at all the culmination of union. For them that culmination of union took place when at the very beginning they sensed in their spirits they were to be joined together in God's eyes and in God's purposes. Physical orgasm for them is really a relatively incidental and unimportant physical event that takes place last because it's least important. That is best when it is least thought of and it's something that they can have or can do without. For two such children of God there is no fretful, anxious, calculation of the right time of the month. There is no fretful, concern that they do it right or that they not do it wrong. For them there is no preoccupation with virility or impotence, with whether the other person is good in bed or whether they're bad in bed.

Those things are so pitifully childish compared with the deep things that they have experienced with each other that really they do not concern them. And so if they are guided by God not to have children and therefore never to have intercourse that is a small thing because they know that eventually it will pass anyway and this is the depths of their unity that will last forever. And indeed, as the years pass and they mature more and more in spirit, the exhilaration that comes from being fully known by another person, and the great sense of an eternal moment that comes from that is something that they experience just sitting side-by-side in a room, and something that when they are 80, 90 years of age is as real to them and as alive and vibrant as it was when they first met and the love remains fresh and new.

And really loved ones, that is the place honestly of physical intercourse in the marriage of a son and daughter of God and it is really as real as that. Such a contrast, and you know it will startle you even as I use the phrases but I use them to bring before you how far we've got from that, such a contrast to kinky sex, to whipping bodies, to abusing and manipulating bodies. It's such a contrast to the concentration on trying to get the physical thing right. And you see that's the pathetic state of sex in our society and that's the reason for the pathetic state. It's the idea that somehow by working on the other loved one's body you can create the security, and the sense of value, and the sense of unity, and safety, and intimacy that can only be created when you're joined together by God, and you're joined together in spirit, and in mind, and in emotions.

It's the pathetic misunderstanding that somehow by acting upon the body you can perhaps act upon the will, and the emotions, and the mind and if ever you do think of the spirit you can somehow act upon the spirit. And that's why we experience such disintegration of our personalities. That's why we experience such conflict because in here all the time our conscience is saying, "No, no it's not

meant to be like that. It's not meant to be like that." That's why even when the husband comes home even with his flowers the wife often refuses him physically, because he sees the thing as just making something up that he made go wrong. He sees it as something that he ought to do that she can see outwardly and it should make everything right in her own personality.

Well, that isn't the problem at all. The problem is that there's no unity in there at all and they never share that unity and they're trying to impose a unity by motivating each other's bodies in different ways. It's really the cause of the animalish horror of a husband forcing himself on his wife. You can see, it's just so ridiculous, it's so grotesque in the light of what God has planned here, and that it isn't even worth thinking about. It's something to be drawn back from in horror because of course the beauty of real intercourse is that it's a deep, relaxing, mutual desire that comes from the very depths of people's spirits and if there's ever any forcing then there's nothing. There's nothing.

It has nothing to do with marriage. You may join two bodies together but it has nothing to do with marriage as God planned it to be and it has nothing to do with happiness of course, as God planned it to be as all of us know who have ever experienced that. How the thing bursts like a soap bubble in your hands and you have nothing at all left, and you look half at guilt with the other person. So different from this that lasts forever. That's why it is such abject foolishness for the girl who uses her body as a trap or as bait. It has nothing to do with marriage. It has nothing to do with partnership as God planned it. All you're doing is trying to use the body to somehow stimulate the other person to love you, and to care for you, and it can never be.

So it is really in courtship. The priorities of courtship are plain in the same way. You will never loved ones, by working on each other's bodies, you will never produce the intimacy, and the unity, and the sense of absolute peace and relaxation in the other person's eyes, and in the other person's mind. You will never produce that security by stimulating each other's bodies. And so the whole problem of courtship is that we're playing – we're like little children playing with bodies. We know really nothing of what union or marriage is about. We're like little children playing with the least important part of each other's personalities and ignoring the only part that is going to last forever.

And so really, the whole question of how far should you go is really simply answered if you remember that the principle that God has ordained is from the inside out. And so if you take that famous line, its easy there's no legalism about it. There's no need to make rules for each other, all you have to reflect is am I expressing to the other person what Jesus in his Spirit, wants me to express and what they are able to receive without it absolutely dominating and overwhelming what is coming from within them?

In other words, all you ask is does holding hands, does kissing, does embracing, does prolonged embrace, does prolonged kissing, does petting begin to force their personality to be driven by the passions of the body? Are we driving them out of self-control? Are we driving them out of what they really want to express and what is really appropriate to express by the degree of commitment that we have made to each other legally and civilly? Or, is it something that is inappropriate? Are we in fact stimulating, and motivating, realizing that love play is a preparation for intercourse and intercourse is a preparation for children, are we beginning to stimulate in order to disappoint? Are we beginning to start physical feelings within a person that we then cruelly and heartlessly cut off in frustration?

Well there you can see whether you love a person or not, because love is not lust and it's not getting satisfaction for myself for my own body, and it's not stimulating their body to see what kind of things it will do. Love is wanting to share the Spirit of God that has come from us with them, and to build them up into that image. And so really, there is no legalism, there is simply mature reflection on what affect I am doing is having on the other one. Is it encouraging them to be in control of themselves? Is it encouraging them to do only what in their sane and sober moments they will be glad they did? Or am I in fact beginning to create unbearable conflict? It is God's will that their personalities would work outwardly and am I doing the work of Satan by trying to make them work from the outside in and therefore creating unbearable conflict in them?

Now loved ones, I think maybe I could take about maybe two questions but I think that would be it probably. But I think it's – or, if you want to think of questions then for next Sunday, we can spend a good deal of the time on questions. Brother?

Question from the audience:

Most of us would find that there are some qualities perhaps of each of those in our relationship and in our marriage and maybe we would start at the level of the spirit?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Loved ones, then you deal with whatever is next. I would share with you that this is really God's order and I would point out that loved ones, you've allowed – we have allowed satanic society to destroy a beautiful experience that was God's idea. And I would encourage you, if you're beginning to sense that you should be together with another person, will you for goodness sake give yourselves a chance when you go out on dates? Will you stop the business of not planning where you are going to go, or planning that all you'll do when you go out is eat? Will you plan to do something that does involve your mind in some way, or the rest of your personality in some way, but something beyond the old body?

Will you in fact, do something that begins to take you into the next realm, whatever that may be in your relationship? And it's the same with the husbands and wives loved ones, we make our own troubles. We do, we make our own troubles because we think in our jobs – if we're school teachers we think as to how we'll organize the children, but it seems when it comes to our marriages we stop thinking, and we stop planning, and it seems we plan beautiful experiences for everybody else but for the dear one who deserves it more than anyone else.

And so brother, I would say that you work on whatever is the next area that you know there is absolutely no intercourse in and you begin to develop that. And for many of us, of course it means stepping back because many of us sensed this and then went straight to the bodies and were absolutely overwhelmed, and it just made no sense at all. So brother that's it, yeah. Just one more sis?

Question from the audience:

Do you want to get into the place of birth control in Christian marriage?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

I think it will be good to start next day on those big questions. So loved ones, I will come with a

very brief presentation next day, much briefer than this and will you bring the questions? I will not answer them but I will share what I can see through Jesus's Spirit. Okay? Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank you for the beautiful gift of marriage and Lord, we apologize for the way we have corrupted it, and mocked it, and destroyed it, and spoiled it, and dirtied it. Lord, sorry. Father, we want from now on to begin to live our marriages, and our courtships, and our dating in the way that you want them lived. And Holy Spirit, I would pray for every dear one here this morning who might see it just beyond them Lord, I would pray that you would whisper in their hearts, "It is possible. It is possible. It is possible to get out of the gutter and it is possible to get into the palace of the king." And Lord, I would pray that you would assure them that there's more joy and exhilaration and love in the palace of the king than there is in any gutter.

Lord, I pray that you'll impress that upon all our dear hearts that we may rise into your plan for our relationships for your glory. Amen.