

GOD'S KINDA PEOPLE**1 Peter 3:1-12****(Read 1 Peter 3:1-12)**

INTRO: Kathy and I are slowly working our way through Tim & Kathy Keller's *THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE*. Tim Keller was the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He began the church in 1989 and when he stepped down as Senior Pastor this past summer, the attendance was well over 5,000 people each Sunday – fully three quarters of them single. They flocked to hear Keller's uncompromisingly Biblical teaching. So it's interesting that he chose to preach a sermon series on the meaning of marriage to a congregation that had so many unmarried people. The truth is, American society needs to know what the meaning of marriage is. There is so much confusion and misinformation out there that people need to know what God's plan for marriage clearly is as it's laid out in scripture. As we read the book, Kathy and I are praying about whether I should do a series based on the book – I probably will – even though not every one of you are married. I will do that because God's kinda people need to have clear teaching from the Word.

What does it take to be God's kind of people? The world, and sadly, many in the church, really do not seem to know. Christians are getting slammed day in and day out as we seem to have forgotten what Bible says about marriage, sexuality, the sanctity of life, simple civility in general, and many other things that are pretty clear when you look at them in the Bible. It seems many are getting their interpretation of the scripture from what Hollywood, CNN, Fox News, and so-called conventional wisdom have decided is truth.

I know it's a no-brainer, but we need to get what the Bible says from the Bible as we look at it through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Peter helps us with how to be God's kind of people here in our text for today. Last week we looked at his teaching to slaves in chapter 2. He reminded them that they are Christ Followers first, and as such they should serve to the best of their ability and show they are children of God. In what I just read from the first 12 verses of chapter 3, Peter goes on to address wives, husbands and then, finally, everyone who confesses Jesus as Lord.

We'll look at it in the same order. First, he describes and instructs. . .

A Godly Wife

- Right away you may have noticed that there are six verses on being a godly wife and one verse on being a godly husband. Let me assure you it's not because of this. While this may be true – that men have an On-Off switch while women need far more fine-tuning – the real truth is, it is because it was much more difficult to be a woman in the culture Peter was speaking into.
- Prior to Jesus's coming women had much to endure. In Jewish culture, the wife was to be revered, but for all intents and purposes, she was still the property of her father or, if she was married, her husband. In Greek society she was the property of her father or husband and was to be seen and not heard, she was to have babies and care for the household. In Roman society a woman was the property of her father or husband who had the right of life or death over her. She could be put to death for something as harmless as burning dinner. In all cases she could be divorced at the smallest whim. Women were little better than second class citizens, and really no higher than slaves.
- Then Jesus came along and liberated half of the human race. He showed the plan had been for equality all along. Now for the first time, women knew that they had equal rights. Anyone, male or female is the same before God and for certain they have equal standing before God.
- But culture still said otherwise and Peter gives instructions for navigating that sometimes dangerous channel. You see, if a man became a Christian, his family almost certainly would follow suit. It was much more difficult than that for a woman. In a culture where she could be put to death by her husband for merely drinking wine without permission, a woman who converted independently of her husband was taking her life in her hands.
- Peter tells Christ Following women to be submissive – in fact he sounds like Paul when he suggests that such submission can be the witness that wins over a pagan husband (1 Corinthians 7:10-15). It is by definition not a whimpering and fearful subservience, but is instead what one commentator describes as "voluntary selflessness." Eugene Peterson in his paraphrase of Ephesians 5:21 which uses the same word that Peter does here, says that we are to be courteously reverent of one another. So, it is a witness for the Christian wife to be "courteously reverent" of her non-believing husband and thereby living a life that speaks volumes without saying a single word. Being a loving, consistent wife and mother will be a witness. Peter says that by

continuing to exhibit the characteristics of a Christ-like person, the unbelieving husband may very well be won over to Christ.

- And then he spends time on where beauty should come from – he says . . .

Beauty comes from daily application of the Holy Spirit

- The first time I ever saw Kathy I was smitten. I was just like Adam when he first saw Eve and he cried “WHOA MAN!!!!” and that’s what females have been called ever since.
- But I’ve seen lots of ladies who are beautiful and I soon find they are really ugly underneath the façade. My high school friend, T. J., used to say – “*Beauty is only skin deep – but ugliness goes right to the bone.*” and, in a way, he was right. Some women use makeup to beautify themselves – and it really works, but what does it cover up? Remember Tammy Fay Bakker? Remember her make-up? It didn’t really help her, but maybe that was because she applied so much. I always wondered what she was trying to cover up? I’m just conjecturing, but I think she was probably hiding her pain and insecurities behind a crust of makeup and mascara.
- The Psalmist knew where to look when his pain and insecurities flaired up, *I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.* Psalm 121:1-2. All the make-up and nice hair is okay – I actually love it. But when it comes right down to it – ultimately it is Christ is who makes any woman beautiful. An adorned heart is much better. That’s why Peter urges the Godly woman to . . .

Do what is right and never give way to fear

- As I said before, there was the possibility that these early Christian women were taking a dangerous road when they accepted Christ – and the is why Peter needs to reassure them. Their faith was ultimately important. They had to stay the course. They needed to submit, but they didn’t have to give up Christ. They were to place all their confidence in him instead.
- Then, after spending so much time encouraging the ladies, Peter turns to what it takes for the male readers of his letters to be . . .

A REAL MAN

- Over the years it seems that there has been a movement to emasculate men in American society. We are urged to get in touch with our feminine side as if that will be an improvement. On TV men are regularly depicted as goofy, unintelligent, insensitive, and interested in sex and little else. Some of that is well-deserved, but most of it is an effort to usurp what God’s plan is for Biblical manhood.
- The reaction is sayings like: Real men don’t eat quiche. Real men don’t cry. Real men don’t have weaknesses. Men have to be tough and not let anyone see you fail, and the list goes on.
- But Peter wasn’t addressing a society that was trying to feminize men – he was dealing with a society that subjugated women and gave men all the power. He was endeavoring to break through societal failure and point out what is still true: Real men love Jesus. Real men sacrificially love their wives. Real men know they have weaknesses and work on them. Because a real man is a man of God and if he’s a man of God he is . . .

Considerate

- I already pointed out that the man of Peter’s time was the ruler of the house and women literally had no rights. In that society there was no cultural incentive to treat women as anything more than property – therefore there was no incentive to be considerate.
- All too often it would seem that things are a little better 2000 years later, even in the church. Over the past couple months there have been a rash of revelations about sexual harassment, from sexual innuendo to outright rape, instigated by men in powerful positions. Even in the church, where safety should reign, this has happened. I read in the TG the other day of an indictment of three pastors in the Toledo area on charges of sex trafficking.
- Now all this is really radical stuff and I’m not saying that any of us men are doing that, but we should be much further along. Men have exploited our advantage as the “stronger sex” and have, for one thing, too often forgotten to be considerate.

- Christianity introduced chivalry into the male/female relationship. And we need to get back to that. Chivalry is an old term and concept that has at its basis a respect and admiration for the characteristics, gifts and talents of the opposite sex.
- Being more specific, that means, as husbands, being considerate means we need to consider our wife first. And the way we treat any woman, whether our spouse or not, is to be considerate. We've allowed the feminist movement to dictate to us that it's no longer necessary to do something as thoughtful as holding the door for a lady. Don't give in.
- Husbands, did you ever consider that if supper isn't ready when you get home, maybe your wife just got home too and she needs help to prepare it? Better yet, maybe you could tell her to go relax while you make it. Did you ever consider helping with the cleaning or laundry rather than complaining when they're not done? You see, I don't know what the division of labor is in your home, maybe you already do that, but too many times I've heard men gripe about their dirty house, while they do nothing to change that situation.
- Being considerate means taking time to consider what your wife's dreams and goals are for you, your family and herself. Do you consider you had better listen to her wisdom and spiritual counsel when a family crunch time comes? In other words, being considerate means thinking past ourselves.
- Peter tells us why. Our wives are . . .

Partners in Christ and co-heirs of salvation

- Women are our equals in Christ with all the benefits that come with it. Prior to Jesus's death on the Cross, when the veil was torn from the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem, a Jewish woman couldn't go past what was known as the Court of Women. They had even less consideration in pagan religions – if there were any women in pagan temples it was for the purpose of ritualistic prostitution.
- That is why when Mary sat at Jesus' feet as he taught the Good News, this was completely new stuff. Jesus changed everything. The Good News means that men are not the only fish in the sea when it comes to salvation. So instead of being a tyrant or an overlord, Peter shows in verse 7 that . . .

A real man prays

- The truth is, a real man of God is helpless. He realizes that he is not self-sufficient and self-contained – he needs God – DESPERATELY! Therefore he is in communication with him.
- Peter implies very strongly here that in order to make sure that prayers are unimpeded, men need to make sure that they are in a right relationship with their Lord, their spouse, their kids and with others. If we are inconsiderate and selfish in our relationships – our prayers will be hindered. In fact it's like this, a real man irons. He irons out problems as best he can and he can only do that by being a man of prayer.
- Finally, Peter teaches everyone – husbands, wives, singles, children – everyone who is a redeemed child of God, to be . . .

Like-minded

- It is a fundamental truth that our relationship with God can never be right if our relationship with our brothers and sisters is wrong – especially with our fellow Christ Followers – but also with those who do not profess Christ. Paul tells us, *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* Romans 12:18. It's up to us to pursue unity and it's essential that this be true in the Church. Satan loves it when he sees the church split.
- Cranfield says this of Peter's words to be "like-minded" – it's long but very good: *"The New Testament never treats this agreeing in Christ as an unnecessary though highly desirable spiritual luxury, but as something essential to the true being of the Church. . . . The more seriously we take the New Testament, the more urgent and painful becomes our sense of the sinfulness of the divisions, and the more earnest our prayers and strivings after the peace and unity of the Church on earth. That does not mean that the like-mindedness we are to strive for is to be a drab uniformity of the sort beloved of bureaucrats. Rather is it to be a unity in which powerful tensions are held together by an over-mastering loyalty, and strong antipathies of race and color, temperament and taste, social position and economic interest, are overcome in common worship and common obedience. Such unity will only come when Christians are humble and bold enough to lay hold on the unity already given in Christ and to take it more seriously than their own self-importance and sin, and to make of these deep differences of doctrine, which originate in our imperfect understanding of the Gospel and which*

we dare not belittle, not an excuse for letting go of one another or staying apart, but rather an incentive for a more earnest seeking in fellowship together to hear and obey the voice of Christ."

Conclusion Peter is saying this: in order to be God's kinda people, those who bear his name, whether we are wives, husbands, singles, grandparents, uncles, aunts, teachers, preachers, cops, soldiers, students; no matter who we are, we need to forget ourselves and be about each other. We are to be considerate, sympathetic, compassionate, humble and forget about retribution. As he ends this section of his teaching, he quotes from Psalm 34 to put teeth in his words – and it's how we will finish this talk.

Whoever would love life

and see good days

must keep their tongue from evil

and their lips from deceitful speech.

They must turn from evil and do good;

they must seek peace and pursue it.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

and his ears are attentive to their prayer,

but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. 1 Peter 3:10-12 Amen.