



Reformation Reflections



On June 13, 1525, something pretty scandalous happened. A former Roman Catholic nun was married to a former Roman Catholic priest. On that day Martin Luther married

Katharina von Bora and with her had six children and, by all accounts, a very happy life.

Luther summed up his understanding of Christian marriage this way: “This is a true definition of marriage: Marriage is the God-appointed and legitimate union of man and woman in the hope of having children or at least for the purpose of avoiding fornication and sin and living to the glory of God.”

This stiff theological statement was tempered and placed into context with a gentler and more personal observation:

“And I have been very happy in my marriage, thank God. I have a faithful wife ... She spoils nothing for me ... [marriage] is above all chastity.” In other words,



Luther and Katy found great joy in married life, and well they should – it is a gift of God.

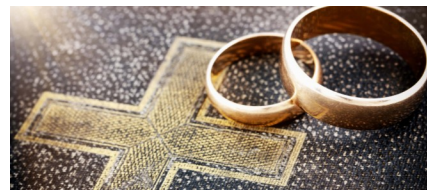
But Christian marriage, as God ordained it, was a subject of conflict in Luther’s day. In the 16th century, marriage was viewed as low and

base and beneath the higher calling of celibacy. Luther had a different view that is described in his remark that marriage “is above all chastity.”

And so, springing from among the other theological reforms of the Reformation, came a Biblical view of marriage as a gift of God that is pleasing in His sight and has been established for our good.

Later, in response to the Lutheran Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent in 1563 had this to say: “If anyone says that the married state excels the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is better and happier to be united in matrimony than to remain in virginity or celibacy, let him be anathema.” (Session 24, Canon 10).

Biblical Christian marriage in our day also finds itself under attack. Even as the prevailing 16th century view of marriage was contrary to Holy Scripture, so too we contend with false teaching and an anti-Biblical view of Christian marriage in our day. In Montana, for example, the established precedence from the U.S. District Court is summed up this way: “Montana no longer can deprive Plaintiffs and other same-sex couples of the chance to marry their loves. This Court recognizes that not everyone will celebrate this outcome.” (CNN, November 19, 2014).



For us though, the beauty, strength, and purpose of Christian marriage is well defined by God’s Holy Word. One man, one woman, one flesh; established by God for

our great good even before sin entered the world (Genesis 2.18-25; Matthew 19.6; Ephesians 5.31-32).

Christian marriage is used by our Lord as an example of the relationship between Himself and His Church. Christian marriage transcends our “feelings” in any given moment and allows us the opportunity to serve one another in the closest and most profound earthly relationship. Christian marriage continues to bless us because it provides stability for children, for families, for communities, and for our congregations.

MARRIAGE



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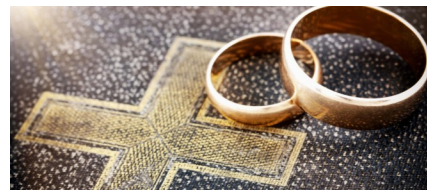
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