

LEAVING and CLEAVING Genesis 2:24

We have begun a series of unknown length on **the topic of marriage**. This morning is our second Sunday on the topic and for this Sunday, and the next several weeks, we turn to Genesis chapter 2...

Genesis 2:4-25

Our attention, over the next several weeks will be particularly on verse 24...

verse 24

This verse is likely **the most basic verse on marriage** that we have in the Bible. It is commonly considered and often read at weddings. Its three points of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (or weaving) are well known. We also want to consider these three points only I would like for us to break them up. So today we are on the topics of LEAVING and CLEAVING...leaving Mom and Dad...and starting off life apart from them and now with one's new mate. Tim Martin will be speaking next Sunday and then, Lord willing, I would like to again pick up on the topic of CLEAVING on July 18.

It has been said that the goal of every parent should be quite simple: to get the kids out of the house. Like some parent robin, looking over its nest of young birds, the goal is to **get them out** of the nest. That's the goal and once accomplished we become "empty nesters." Ah...quiet...little drama...and the house stays clean. Yes, that's the goal.

Verse 24 is **NOT** however simply dealing with every parent's desire to see their son out on their own. It is, rather, dealing with that son's leaving Mom and Dad **so as to spend life with a wife**. And while it may be joked at weddings that "We haven't lost a son, we've gained a daughter-in-law" the truth is, in some ways you do indeed, on that wedding day, lose your son. That son will always be your son. That will never change. But that son is now **on his own**, forging his own life with his own wife, and starting his own family unit.

And God's plan is that there **should be a BREAK** between son and parents at this time.

1. This leaving should be a physical leaving.

Through the years I have counseled many couples looking to get married. Generally this has been a great pleasure, a real joy. And when I talk with a couple about their lives, their plans and their futures, one of the questions I explore is what are their plans once they return from their honeymoon. Where will they live? What plans have they made.

Almost always, what I hear is satisfactory to my ears (they have an apartment; they're moving to Texas; one time the couple was moving to North Pole, Alaska). But once in awhile I will hear something like, "We're planning on coming back and moving into the basement of my parent's home."

Ohhh...**such words send a shock down my spine!**

"Noooo....let's **not** do that," is what that couple will likely hear from me.

The whole goal is to LEAVE.

Staying in the parents' basement is the exact opposite of that and it is a set-up for disaster.

Listen to me now...you parents who still have a son or daughter living at your home. Don't plan on having your son or daughter, with their new spouse, live with you. As parents you may THINK you are **helping** that son or daughter of yours by telling them, "Oh, you two can live with us," but you are not helping them. Indeed **you are hurting them**. If they need some place for a couple weeks or a month, that's one thing, but don't open up your home to them for any extended stay. They NEED to forge out on their own.

And son or daughter, don't fall into the trap of getting trapped by a parent who won't let go of you.

Years ago, while Ruth and I still lived in Philadelphia, Ruth worked for a design firm and there was a fairly newly married girl in the office that EVERY DAY, MULTIPLE TIMES EACH DAY, would call her mother or take a call from her mother. Hey, I'm not suggesting that once we get married we treat our parents as though they are now DEAD, but that mother

and daughter were working together to **doom that daughter's marriage**. It was time the girl left her Mom and time the Mom left her daughter.

In these many weddings that I have performed over the years I have, more than a few times, stressed that **if** there is **any part** of the marriage ceremony that is truly ANCIENT it is the part where the father, having walked his daughter down the aisle, now **STANDS BETWEEN HIS DAUGHTER and the fellow who wants to marry her**. His standing there is symbolic of saying, in effect, "No, young man, you CANNOT take my daughter away from me or my wife, until I say you can." And so the couple are each asked questions about their "Intentions." Then, having heard their words of intent, the dad is then asked, "And who gives this woman to be married to this man?" The dad then says, "Her mother and I do," and with that he **STEPS AWAY** and allows the young couple to join hands while he takes a seat.

This is the formal LEAVING. But it doesn't happen until the dad is satisfied that this young fellow is going to take good care of his daughter.

2. **This leaving should be an emotional leaving.**

In the film, *Pride of the Yankees*, Cary Grant does a great job portraying the baseball great, Lou Gehrig. But if the film is at all accurate, while Lou Gehrig may have been a GREAT baseball player, he was a **FAR LESS THAN GREAT HUSBAND**, for as shown in the film, he allowed his mother to, as we say, "But into" his marriage, causing all kinds of grief for his young wife.

I'm sure Lou Gehrig loved his wife, but because **he hadn't LEFT his mother**, he let his emotional attachment to his mother become an obstacle in his marriage to his wife.

Listen, no parent ever made vows to a son or daughter. But a couple will make vows to each other on the day of their wedding.

Here and there, through the years, I have learned of a young couple who have had or are having marital problems. And more than one time I have learned of the girl, following some argument, leaving the fellow and heading back to her parent's house. Most of the times I have heard of this it has worked out alright, because the parents have understood where they are to stand in relationship to their daughter. She LEFT them to be WITH HIM and they should do what they can to help it stay that way. But on at least one occasion I learned of some parents who, upon having the daughter come to their door, welcomed her back telling her that they really never liked him that much and that she was free to stay with them just as long as she wanted. BAD PARENTS...NOT GOOD.

When we marry, our ALLEGIANCE...our COMMITMENT is **much more foundational** to that one to whom we have made vows than to any parent or any child. I'm married to Ruth. I'm not married to my 93-year old dad, nor to my 22-year old son. I love my dad and I love my son. But my relationship to either of them is QUITE **SECONDARY** to my relationship to my wife. And that is as it should be. So just as a daughter or son needs to emotionally LET GO of their parents, the parents, likewise, need to LET GO of their child.

3. This leaving should also be a financial leaving.

As a parent of five I can honestly say that this is one of the real JOYS of my life: having a son or daughter get married and venture out on their own. And why is it a joy to me? Because it means **I am finally FREE** of caring for them! They can now sink or swim on their own! Of course we, like every set of parents, hope the best for our children. We hope they **earn more** than we earned and succeed in every way possible. But oh what a joy to think, "They are no longer my financial concern!"

Indeed, as they move out and into their newly married life, we then get...or shall I say are forced to...turn our attention the other direction: towards our aging mother or father.

1 Timothy 5:16

Here in a passage where the apostle Paul is giving instruction on how the church should deal with any needy widows in its midst, makes the point that if one of these widows has a daughter who is a believer, that daughter should take the initiative to care for her widowed mother. Why Paul would mention a believing daughter and **not mention** a believing son is a mystery to me but I can only assume that what he wrote about believing daughters he would equally apply to believing sons.

But either way, the point of the text stands: namely, that **we DO have obligations to parents** who are in need. We may **LEAVE** our parents but that doesn't mean we **ABANDON** them (repeat).

But we can't be turning our attention to care for ailing parents if we are STILL STUCK caring for our married children!

So, parents, don't fall into the trap of **CARRYING YOUR KIDS** financially. Let them make it on their own. Don't be co-signing for them; don't be bailing them out financially; let them make it on their own. If you truly want to help them, maybe the best thing you can do is to **sell some of your stuff** and **give them the proceeds**.

There was a great cartoon someone posted over Facebook a couple weeks ago. In the cartoon was a storage unit with the garage door opened. The stuff in the unit was packed floor to ceiling and literally falling out as the door was opened. An old man with a cane stood in front of all the stuff. A much younger man stood beside him. The caption read,

"Just think, son, one of these days, all this stuff will be yours!"

Boy, isn't that the truth! Oh great...thanks a lot, Dad!

So if you really want to **HELP** your kids, get rid of that storage unit that is full of **JUNK** (or clear out that basement or attic). **Get rid of the stuff NOW**, and give them the money you get for it. That would prove to be a double blessing to them!

4. This leaving need not also be a leaving of our parent's faith.

While our kids may leave us physically, emotionally and financially, there is no need for them to leave the faith of those who have gone before them.

Some younger person, in promoting their church, may say, "It's not your father's church." Well of course it is not your father's church. No church was ever meant to be your father's church. **Each generation of believers must rise up to make the church what it believes it is to be.**

The passing of the baton here at Burning Hearts to a younger generation is as it should be. And what that generation will do with the claims of Christ, with the gospel, and with the great challenge to live as godly people in their day and age...we who are fading into the sunset can only hope and pray that they will do great things. We pray for them. While we hope they will embrace the "faith of their fathers" that will be up to them.

Of late a lot of adult age kids have abandoning their parents' faith. The irony or it all is that these same adult age children are probably MORE ATTACHED to their parents than have almost any generation in recent memory. Kids are living at their parents' homes longer, staying dependent upon their parents longer, still mooching off of their parents well into their 20s or even their 30s. But as for their parents' faith? All too many seem uninterested. That is one of the reasons I probably come across as **so excited** when we have a young couple in their 20s show up for the first time at church, Bibles in hand. "Wow," I think to myself, "another generation of those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness! Praise God, God's Spirit is still working in raising up a new generation of those who desire Him. Yes, praise God!

Well, let's move on to CLEAVING....

As stated before, the leaving of Mom and Dad, mentioned here in Genesis 2 is not merely a leaving of them, but it is a leaving of them SO THAT one may CLEAVE to another: to a new found wife.

We guys are known for being conquerors.

- There's a mountain to be climbed and so we decide to climb it.
- There's a destination to reach, and so we'll drive and drive and drive until we reach that destination.
- And if there is the heart of a young girl to be won we'll do **WHATEVER IS NECESSARY** to win the affections of that young

girl. But once we have won her...once we have conquered the mountain...we all too often **quit the quest**, leaving our new bride wondering what happened to that fellow who could write poetry, and send beautiful notes, or buy flowers? What happened to him? Where did he go?

Many years ago a woman, whose husband still shared her bed, but who emotionally had left her years earlier, shared a Bible verse with me. Let's look at it...

Proverbs 30:21-23

The meaning of verse 23 is cleared up a bit by the NIV translation. There it speaks of..."an unloved woman who is married."

That's a terrible place to find oneself.

Back in 1900 music composer Arthur Lamb wrote the words to a song that would become highly popular. It was "The Bird in the Gilded Cage." It was a ballad about a beautiful woman who was now married to an older wealthy man who didn't really love. He just loved showing her off.

The chorus to the song was these words:

*She's only a bird in a gilded cage.
A beautiful sight to see.
You might think she's happy and free from care.
She's not, though she seems to be.*

*Tis sad when you think on her wasted life,
For youth cannot mate with age.
Her beauty was sold for an old man's gold.
She's a bird in a gilded cage.*

In Genesis 2:24 the word that is translated as "cleave" in many versions is rightly translated as "hold fast." It is the Hebrew word "dabaq" and it means to cling, to hold fast, to keep close, to pursue hard, to cause to stick.

In marriage we become the LIFE PARTNER to that one that we have married. We **bond** as we are BOUND TOGETHER in holy wedlock.

Now I want to have us consider an important passage when considering getting married...

Deuteronomy 24:5

The first year of marriage is a foundational year.

It is tough bringing ANY two lives together, and the later in life that a couple marry, and/or the more bull headed each of them happens to be, the greater will be the challenges of that first year. But here In Deuteronomy 24:5 is real WISDOM being passed on to any couple looking to marry...namely, spend it in **uninterrupted time with each other**.

Don't let wars get in the way

Or work

Or children

And certainly, don't let parents or in-laws get in the way.

- Tell the **softball team** that you've been playing on year after year that for ONE YEAR you won't be playing on the team.
- Tell **those girls** that you've been getting together with every Friday night that for one year, you won't be joining them.
- **Don't agree to serve** on the church's social committee that first year...or work in the nursery...or teach that Sunday School class. AFTER that year is up, go for it. But not that first year.
- FIND YOUR OWN WAY...Get established in your marriage. Set the foundation for the DECADES to come.
- Don't even feel compelled to go to your parents for Thanksgiving or Christmas...not that first year. Get established in your marriage.

LEAVE so as to CLEAVE

Learn what it means to HOLD FAST to that one you have made your vows to. Get established in a rock solid kind of way at the beginning, because most likely you will need that solid foundation in the years to come.