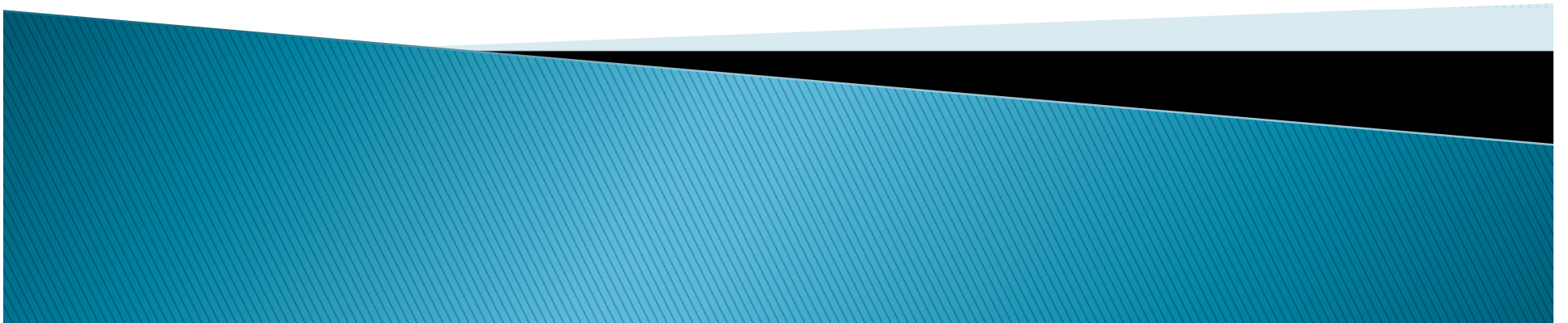


Holy Matrimony, Part 1

A Bible Study

For St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA

Pastor Al Espinosa



Using Luther's Devotional Plan

- ▶ Take a part of the catechism or Scripture and...
 - 1) How does the passage instruct?
 - 2) How does it lead us to give thanks?
 - 3) How does it lead us to confess our sin?
 - 4) How does it lead us to pray?
-- *A Simple Way To Pray* (Luther's Works, American Edition, Volume 43, p 200)



One more thing: Please resist, “I sure hope he/she heard that!”

- ▶ This is for YOU.
- ▶ The goal is to apply it to our own lives regardless of what others do, including our spouse.
- ▶ At the judgment, Christ will not request, “So, tell me about your spouse’s sin.”



God's Word On Marriage

- ▶ Textual approach.
- ▶ We will consider the applicable texts in the order of presentation in God's Word.



Genesis chapter 1

- ▶ Verse 26: *“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*



God refers to Himself as...

- ▶ “us” and “our” ...
- ▶ St. Augustine elaborated on this in *On The Trinity* in terms of love, and identifies the Holy Spirit especially as love.
- ▶ The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father...and the love that extends between them is the Holy Spirit...and it is the Holy Spirit that makes the Son & Father known to us...we love when we know God’s love (have the Holy Spirit).



Verse 26: “image” and “likeness”

- ▶ Image and Likeness = reflect the character of God and also represents God Himself.
- ▶ These things are given to the man and woman as they are created and brought together.
- ▶ In reflecting God’s character, they reflected perfect holiness which extended itself as God did in sending Christ and as Christ did.



How Was Christ's Love Demonstrated?

- ▶ Matthew 20:28: *“even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*



This is a different kind of love than what the world emphasizes...

- ▶ This love is based on:
 - 1) An attitude: selflessness...putting another ahead of oneself.
 - 2) An action: sacrifice...serving the other at great expense and loss to oneself.



So we must be aware of the flesh's response...

- ▶ By nature, we desire the exact opposite!
- 1) Instead of an attitude of selflessness, the flesh is all about selfishness. The primary question is *not*, “How can I serve my beloved?” Instead, it is, “How can my beloved serve me?!” OR “How can I replace my beloved?”
- 2) Instead of actions of sacrifice, the flesh is all about getting and taking. The primary action is not *giving*, but *taking*.



But the world and the devil don't even want you thinking about this!

- ▶ The world and the devil say, “Let's not even consider God's kind of love!”
- ▶ They say, “Instead let's redefine love!”
- ▶ Which is a return to the Genesis 2 rejection of God's image and likeness.
- ▶ This was the putting of self over God!



Love (the world's standards) is not a commitment, but a drug...

- ▶ 1) Selflessness, service and sacrifice has been replaced with...
- ▶ 2) Selfishness, satisfaction and sensuality.
- ▶ In summary, “what you need” has been replaced with “what I want.”



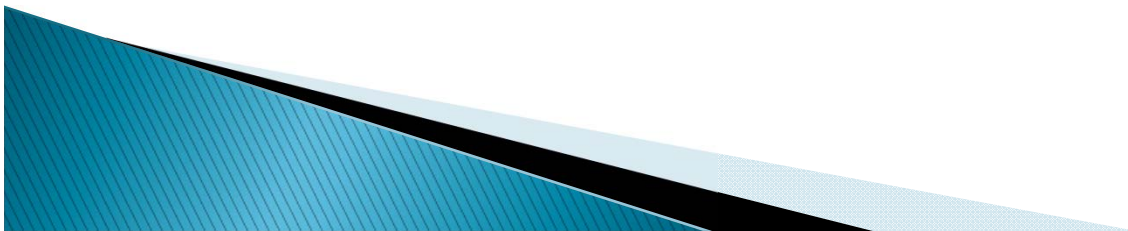
But true love honors...

- ▶ In his book *Love Is A Decision (1989)*, Gary Smalley emphasizes that this overarching sense of love will emphasize not emotion, but *honor*.
- ▶ Smalley writes, “*Genuine love is honor put into action regardless of the cost.*” (p. 37)



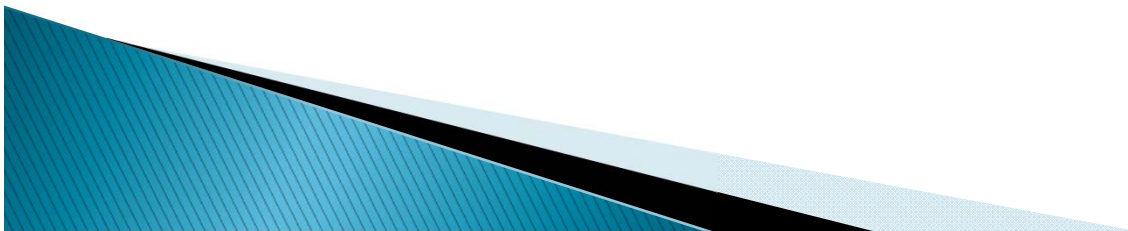
It considers what the creation event teaches:

- 1) God joins the married couple.
- 2) God gives them both His image.
- 3) God gives them both His stewardship.
- 4) God gives them both the command to serve.
- 5) They are both HONORABLE!



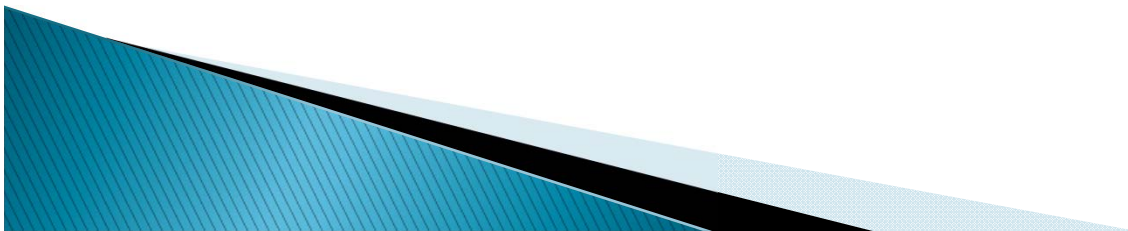
Luther Concerning Katie:

- ▶ “When I look at all the women in the world, I find none of whom I could boast as I boast with joyful conscience of my own. This one God himself gave to me, and I know that he and all the angels are pleased when I hold fast to her in love and fidelity.”



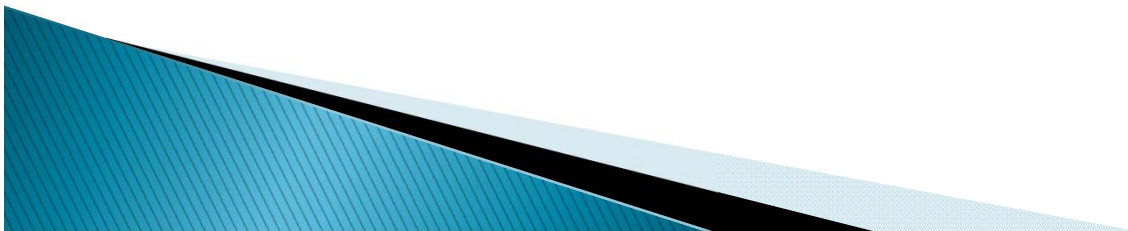
How do we love like that?!

- ▶ 1) Know that God sent Christ to restore the image and likeness of God in us.
- ▶ 2) God sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts through the Word to know Christ's restorative ministry.
- ▶ 3) Our response is not therefore a matter of feeling, but a matter of obedience.



Primarily to let the Word of God form us...

- ▶ We pray, “Lord speak to me and form me!”
- ▶ And so He does...



Verse 27

- ▶ “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- ▶ The man and woman are co-regents and co-representatives; they are both ambassadors of God; they are both ambassadors of love.
- ▶ In Christian marriage, *we live out our faith by living in this primary kind of love.*



This love is expressed as servanthood...

- ▶ The first married couple would immediately express this love through children and stewardship of the earth.
- ▶ Verse 28: *“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”*



That is, such an image and likeness restored by Christ

- ▶ 1) Understands that faith and love are the essential elements of returning to God's image and likeness.
- ▶ 2) These surpass what we feel and subscribe to what God says.
- ▶ 3) Take on the attitude of selflessness and crucifies selfishness.
- ▶ 4) Takes on the lifestyle of service and sacrifice while crucifying living for self.



Genesis 1 Conclusion

- ▶ Verse 31 a: *“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...”*.
- ▶ *It is remarkable to note that our being in “very good” state does not get into our definitions for happiness (as Satan would pursue in Genesis 2), but simply living in God’s design. This design is very good!*

