

Sunday January 13th 2008
Laying the Foundations
The Picture of Marriage Continued
Getting Practical 3 – Cleaving

1). We have seen in the last two weeks the significance of ‘leaving’ with respect to the marriage relationship. And we saw last week what this process of leaving would look like for us, as Christians, as we consider our future marriage relationship as the Bride of Christ.

a). We saw that leaving has to do with a complete separation from everything connected with our first birth, which would of necessity refer to what scripture calls our flesh.

b). The marriage relationship we are anticipating with Christ involves the salvation of our soul, rulership and an inheritance – and, as we have seen, our first birth, our flesh, can have no part in this - Ga 4:29 *But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

c). And we saw our leaving things connected with our first birth characterized in three ways – We are to leave physically – the choices we make to follow the word of God instead of our own desires – to leave financially – speaking to our act of tithing, as we, by faith, acknowledge from whom we are to receive blessing – and emotionally – as we sever our emotional attachment to the familiar. Whether it be with regards to comfortable sin or the false identity the enemy of our soul has tried to give us.

2). So today we come to the next part of the process, cleaving, or being joined to.

a). Eph 5:31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

b). Of course our foundational scripture here takes us right back to Genesis Chapter 2 and its content is described as ‘a great mystery’ with respect to Christ and the church.

c). Now a mystery is something referred to in scripture that cannot be explained by man, but rather requires being opened through Divine means.

d). Mt 16:17b....*for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

e). The word is used in connection with something that is revealed in the O/T, which is later more fully opened and developed in the N/T.

f). Apart from Divine revelation in the O/T we couldn't know about the mystery in the first place, and without Divine revelation in the N/T the mystery would not be further opened and revealed.

g). With respect to our present context, the mystery concerning Christ and the church is revealed through the account of Adam and the Woman in its foundational form in the opening chapters of Genesis.

h). It is further revealed through the accounts of Rebekah and Isaac and Ruth and Boaz. And added to through Joseph and Asenath and Moses and Zipporah.

i). This O/T revelation is then opened further through the Book of Acts and the N/T epistles – especially as we see here in Ephesians – all culminating in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, where that first presented in Genesis comes to fulfillment through Christ and His Bride.

3). Bearing this in mind then, if we look at the purpose for Adam and the Woman cleaving in Genesis, it will open up the purpose for Christ and His Bride cleaving in our present experience.

a). Ge 3:14 ¶ *So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." 16 ¶ To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." 17 ¶ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." 20 ¶ And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 ¶ Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

b). The Woman had been deceived by the serpent and had entered into sin. 1Ti 2:14 *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*

c). Adam had entered into his wife's sin as a deliberate, calculated act – he was not deceived – a decision made in his unfallen state.

d). Adam, if we compare the type with the antitype, would have known that the fulfillment of God's purpose for Man with respect to rulership could not be accomplished apart from the Man and the Woman being together. From God's perspective the Man had to have a helper 'comparable to him' to help him rule. And it would remain 'not good for the man to be alone'.

e). What God had set in place in the foundation could not be changed.

f). As God had already said that rulership would be accomplished through the process of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh within the marriage relationship – Adam would have to have had faith in what God said with regards to this. In much the same way, I would suggest, as Abraham, later, would believe what God had said about His promises being fulfilled through Isaac, thereby acting in faithful obedience to what God had said, knowing that God's word is absolutely certain.

g). And as a consequence of Adam's action of cleaving to his wife we find the promise of a Redeemer in Genesis 3:15 – a Redeemer, who from God's perspective, had already been slain from the foundation of the world, who would be begotten through the physical descendants of Adam and Eve.

h). And then the confirmation of redemption is given in Genesis 3:21 with the slaying of the animals to make a covering for Adam and Eve's nakedness.

i). As a long term consequence of Adam's action redemption does come through the Seed of the Woman – redemption for all three parts of fallen man's being and redemption for the material creation under a curse resulting in the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes for the ages - - 1Pe 1:20 *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

4). This opening of the mystery here in Genesis is further opened to us with respect to what we find concerning Christ's actions recorded in the N/T.

a). 2Co 5:21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

b). And what do we see here? – Christ comes to the earth, born of a virgin, completely without sin, finding those who would be His prospective wife in sin.

c). In a deliberate, calculated act, one that is made by an omniscient God He took our sin upon Himself, so as to provide redemption for those, who because of sin were eternally separated from the purpose for their creation.

d). And as a result of the death of our Passover Lamb, prefigured in the slaying of the animals in Genesis 3:21, we also receive a covering for our nakedness, the imputed righteousness of Christ - Ro 4:22 *And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 ¶ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

e). Leading to the ultimate realization of the covering of glory at the redemption of our bodies.

5). In the action taken by Christ we can see His leaving, as He leaves the third Heaven, the farthest recesses of the north, for the purpose of cleaving to His wife.

a). And concurrent with His leaving and cleaving so He also becomes one flesh with her.

b). Firstly, in the sense of taking on a human body - Php 2:7 *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man,*

c). And secondly, as we have seen, by taking on Himself our sin – that which scripture describes as our ‘flesh’.

d). And in this sense Christ can be seen as becoming one flesh with His wife.

6). And we will clearly see that Christ’s action of cleaving to His wife is exactly, as it must be, for the same purpose as Adam cleaving to Eve – redemption, and the ultimate fulfillment of God’s purpose for His Son and for Man – rulership over the earth - Col 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

Ro 5:14b.....*Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.*

7). All of this of course presents us with one facet of the picture.

a). We will realize that with the Woman, Rebekah and Ruth we see not only their husbands cleaving to them, but they also cleaving to their husbands.

b). Just as Christ cleaves to those who will be His Bride, so will those who will be His Bride cleave to Him.

c). This is to be fulfilled at a future time, following the conclusion of the redemption of the inheritance, but it is also a present continuous action in preparation for and anticipation of that coming day.

8). We will recall that it was not possible for Adam to rule apart from his wife and it was equally true that the Woman could not experience redemption apart from her husband.

a). As her husband cleaved to her in her sin so they became one flesh and out of that union would come the Seed of the Woman – initially through Abel who is murdered and then through the third son, Seth – from whose lineage comes the Christ.

b). From whichever direction we look at this the outcome is redemption, ultimately expressed through Christ and His Bride.

c). And in the same way, for us as individuals, and collectively as the Bride, our cleaving to our Husband – Christ – will result in our becoming one flesh with Him resulting in redemption for all three parts of our being.

d). And let us be very clear from the outset, that cleaving to Christ is synonymous to cleaving to the Word.

e). Christ is the Word made flesh – the very embodiment of everything that is written in the O/T scriptures, scriptures that are confirmed and further opened through the N/T.

f). It is quite impossible to have a relationship with Christ apart from the Word – the written word is alive and the living word is written.

g). And we cannot help but hear echoes of Ruth here, who clung to Naomi – a type of Israel and by extension a type of the Word - Ru 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.*

h). In fact the word translated ‘clung’ here is exactly the same Hebrew word translated ‘cleave’ in Genesis chapter 2.

i). And Ruth’s faithful obedience to her mother-in-law results in a redeemed inheritance, marriage and regality through David, the king.

9). The Hebrew word for ‘cleave’ (KJV), ‘joined’ (NKJV) is *dabaq* – and its Greek counterpart in the N/T is – *proskollao* =

a). To pursue

b). To be joined together

c). To keep fast together

10). The idea of pursuit of Christ on our part can be seen in - Lu 11:9 *"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

a). Php 3:12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

b). To be joined together can be seen in - 1Jo 2:24 *Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

c). 2Co 1:5 *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*

d). And keeping fast together - Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

e). Re 2:25 *"But hold fast what you have till I come.*

f). Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven,*

11). Now as we teach what it looks like for those entering into the marriage relationship to cleave to one another in the natural there are seven specific areas that we focus on.

a). Needless to say that it is perfectly possible to bring these over into the spiritual realm to help give us an idea of what it will look like for us to cleave to Christ.

12). Firstly, we teach that in order to properly cleave to one another it is necessary to leave everyone else completely – this is really a follow on from the process of leaving we looked at last week – and we can see this in two ways.

a). Clearly it is an abandonment of the things of this world - 1Jo 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

i/ Just as we cannot take our relationship with an old flame into our marriage, neither can we take our relationship with the world into our marriage with Christ.

b). There is also the inevitable separation that takes place with regards to other Christians as we choose to cleave to Christ. We are well aware of the type for this seen in Ruth and Orpah - 2Co 6:14 *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what*

communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

c). Now please note that it is the Orpah Christian who will choose to walk away from us, but in this situation it is our responsibility to cleave to Christ, and thereby 'come out from among them' and not to cleave the one walking away - 2Ti 1:15 ¶ *This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

13). Secondly we talk of remaining pure sexually.

a). Not only would we need to understand this literally as sexual immorality is unacceptable in the life of a Christian - Heb 13:4 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

b). But we would also need to see this in a metaphorical sense in the same way that God uses sexual immorality in relation to Israel - Jer 3:6 ¶ *The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.*

c). God always looked upon Israel's assimilation into the gentile nations that surrounded her and Israel's subsequent involvement with other gods as harlotry.

d). Our continued involvement with this world, would, from God's perspective be viewed in exactly the same way as Israel's - Jas 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

e). We need to cling to the Living Word and not allow ourselves to be seduced by the passing pleasures of sin - 2Co 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

14). Thirdly, we teach about loving for the long term – this is a process that requires patience and endurance and of course faithful obedience to the word of God - 2Pe 1:5 ¶ *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control*

perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

a). As the very nature and character of God is described as love - 1Jo 4:8 *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

b). So must ours be also - 1Pe 4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

c). The love that we are to have for the long term – from the point of our eternal salvation until we stand at the Judgment Seat can only be demonstrated scripturally in two ways –

i/ Joh 14:15 ¶ *"If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

ii/ Scripturally then, our love for the one to whom we are to cleave is not a warm and fuzzy feeling, but an expression of obedience – His commandments, contained in the written word, are Him – we cannot love Him as a person without keeping His commandments as He is the embodiment of what is written.

iii/ 1Jo 4:20 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

iv/ Keeping His commandments will find its expression in the love we have for one another - Ga 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

v/ And given the fact that we all live in a body of this death and therefore mess up means that our love for each other must be for the long term.

15). The fourth thing we teach is really akin to the third – to forgive 70 X7.

a). Hand in hand with the command to love one another must go forgiveness.

b). Without forgiveness a root of bitterness will spring up – and allowing that root of bitterness to remain is not just problematic for us - Heb 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

c). Our blue print for forgiveness is found in the One to whom we are to cleave - Mt 18:21 ¶ *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my*

brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

d). This interchange between Peter and the Lord immediately precedes the Lord giving the parable of the unforgiving servant – a parable that begins with the phrase, ‘Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like.....’

e). And ends with this chilling conclusion - Mt 18:32 *"Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*

16). Fifth we would teach about living at your our standard of living, rather than desiring to have that which, because of financial limitations remains unattainable.

a). The principle here for us is first laid out in - Ex 20:17 *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."*

b). To covet means to have an overwhelming desire for something that we cannot have to the point where we believe that our happiness, contentment and security can only be found by possessing it – this can relate to things or money.

c). Look how N/T scripture describes it - Col 3:5 ¶ *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

d). Rather, cleaving to the One who will be our Husband and the promises that are contained in Him is to be our hope, our joy, our contentment, our security - Heb 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

e). 1Ti 6:6 ¶ *Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

f). Php 4:11 *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:*

g). 1Ti 6:8 *And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*

h). And all this really takes us back to the tithing of last week – it is not in the abundance of things or money that we are to find our contentment and security and ultimate happiness, but in the faithfulness of a faithful God who has given us exceedingly great and precious promises.

17). Sixth, we would look at working at marital happiness – just as in the natural our marriages, if they are to be successful, must be worked at and not taken for granted, so in the spiritual our relationship with Christ and therefore the Word requires effort on our part - Heb 6:11 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

a). 2Ti 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

b). Pr 13:4 ¶ *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

c). 2Pe 3:14 *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*

18). And finally, #7 – keep God in the center of your marriage.

a). And in this for ourselves we would really see the summation of all that has gone before. God for us is to be all in all.

b). And this is adequately expressed for us in - Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking [from this world] unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

c). Mt 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

19). If we have already made the determination to leave, we must know have the same determination to cleave.