

Sexual Foundations

1. Introduction

- The issue SSM that's raging within Australia is causing great debate and lots of heartache
 - Most Australians have strong opinions on it one way or the other
 - And it's no surprise
- For 1000's of years, cultures and societies across the world have consistently recognised that marriage is a social 'good' that exists between a man and woman for life
- And yet we've come to the point where SSM marriage has gained so much traction that many in our country and in our governments are keen to see it changed
- How did we get here?

- It started with sexual revolution of the 1960-70's
 - The 1960-70's saw a liberalisation of attitudes towards sex and marriage
 - The mantra of the sexual revolution was 'have sex with anyone you want, as long as nobody gets hurt'
 - As a result ... it freed sex from traditional a conservative worldview and sex was separated from marriage
- It was during the sexual revolution that the gay rights movement started
- Over the last 30 years it's continued to gain traction politically and socially ... to the point now it has almost totally transformed public attitudes

- So how do we move forward on this?
 - How do we formulate a right opinion?
- Well we need a foundation that's objective
 - We need a foundation that's not going to bend and ebb with the current cultural trends and movements

- And so that's why this morning (and for the next few weeks) we're going to be turning to God's word, the Bible, to see what God has to say on this
 - Because if you're here this morning and you call yourself a Christian ... its God's word that is going to give you the right foundation for thinking about sex and marriage
 - If you're here this morning and you'd say you're not a Christian ... I want to ask you ... what foundation do you base you worldview on when it comes to sex and marriage
 - If it's just your opinion ... then who says you're right
 - If it's what our culture says ... then who says our culture is right?
 - Because different cultures have different stances on this
 - And as we've seen what happened in the 60-70's ... cultures change their mind as to what's right or not
 - So that being the case ... I want to encourage if you're not a Christian ... to see what God has to say on this
 - For he is the one who created this world and us
 - Therefore ... he ought to have wisdom for us on this as we seek to navigate our way through this debate
- So today we're looking sexual foundations
 - Pattern of sex and marriage
 - Purpose of sex and marriage
 - Problems of sex and marriage
 - Perfection of sex and marriage

2. The Pattern of Marriage [SLIDE]

- Genesis 1 and 2 provide two different accounts of creation
 - Gen 1 is the big picture > panorama view of creation
 - Gen 2 is like taking a telescope and zooming in to see the details of it all
- As we look at Gen 1 & 2 we see that while God created the heavens and the earth and everything in it ... the high point of God's of it all was the creation of humanity

- And in these two chapters we see God outlining his good design for this world and for humanity and our relationship with the one who created us
- But he also outlines his good design for human relationships and in particular ... marriage
- And the first thing we see is that
 - Marriage is **public, permanent** and **physical**

- **Public**
- In 2:24 we see that the man leaves father and mother to be united to his wife
 - Now in case you haven't noticed ... it's very hard to leave your family home without your parents noticing isn't it ... it's a very public act
 - In the process of publically leaving his family home a man switches his allegiance from his family to his wife
 - A new family unit is established
 - Together they publically declare their allegiance to each other above all other human relationships
 - That's why our wedding ceremonies require there to be witnesses to sign the marriage certificate

- **Permanent**
- The second thing we notice about Gods pattern for marriage is that it's permanent

2:24 – *the man will leave his father and mother and be UNITED to his wife*

 - It means to CLEAVE or CLING or HOLD FAST
 - One commentator rather unromantically says the man shall STICK TO his wife!

- You see the point don't you ...
 - this is a PERMANENT AND EXCLUSIVE relationship
 - it's a public commitment for LIFE to ONE person

- That's why our marriage vows conclude with the phrase '*as long as you both shall live*' ...
- And they don't say
 - *As long as you love each other*
 - *Until someone better comes along*
- Because marriage is permanent

- **Physical**
- In v24 we also see they 'Become one flesh'
- That is, as they come together ... their sexual union is an expression of their unity ... the two are now one
- They become a new family unit that we recognise as marriage
- The intimacy and bonding of sexual union that a married couple enjoy is not just physical ... but it reflects the relational and emotional bond that occurs when a man and woman come together like this

- **Application**
- As I mentioned earlier ... the sexual revolution of the 60s / 70s separated sex from marriage
- So in our modern world ... its completely normal to have sex outside of marriage
- Not only does this have disastrous consequences ... but it's completely selfish
 - Because its saying ...
 - *I want to get naked and vulnerable with you physically, but I'm not willing to get naked and vulnerable with you emotionally, personally, financially, socially, and legally*
- But the public, permanent and physical nature of a marriage makes a very clear statement of commitment to your spouse and to your family and friends that says ... I want to get vulnerable and naked with this person in every aspect of life for the rest of my life

- There's no ambiguity
- It's very clear

- Second thing we see that sex is actually a good thing!
- God is not anti-sex > he created the idea!
- Sex has been created by God for us and it's part of his good, created order
 - so it's something to be enjoyed and celebrated
 - it's not just for the bearing of children
 - a couple shouldn't feel guilty or naughty for having great sex

- One of the reasons God created sex is because it's good for marriages
- God has designed sex so that it releases oxytocin (love hormone) that helps create a bond between the husband and wife
 - So sex is good for your marriage
 - You want to have a healthy marriage ... have lots of it!

- BUT ... sex is to be enjoyed EXCLUSIVELY in the context of a marriage
 - It's for marriage and marriage alone
 - So sexual relationships that are not in the context of a marriage are not part of God's pattern for relationships
- God gives us this pattern for sex in marriage, not because he's a spoilsport, but because he loves us
 - It's because God is loving, that he sets boundaries for sexual relationships in order to protect us and guard us from getting hurt
 - It's similar to a parent who puts their child in a sand pit and tells them as long as they stay in the sand pit they can have all the fun they want, but they're not to go outside the sandpit because there are bindies and glass and they'll get hurt.

- And the same is true for sexual relationships

- When we get into sexual relationships that are outside God's good pattern, it causes damage and people get hurt.
- We see this in
 - one-night stands
 - the pain of couples separating after living together
 - the destruction of relationships and families caused by adultery
 - the 90,000+ abortions that happen each year due to unwanted pregnancies of couples who are not married
- God knew what he was doing when he created sex for marriage
 - When we enjoy sex in its right context ... it's fantastic
 - Abuse it and we bring pain and suffering upon ourselves and our world
- Summarise > marriage is public, permanent and physical

Equal

- Marriage is also between two **equal** but **different** and **interdependent** beings
 - Look at all the clues the text give us
 - Both man & woman are made of same substance
 - Have a look at 2:23
 - ²³ *The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man."*
 - woman was made from man
 - she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh
 - they are both of the same stuff
 - Man and woman are equal
- We also see from Gen 1
 - In 1:27 ... BOTH man AND woman are made in the image of God
 - In 1:28 ... BOTH have the same commission by God
 - "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

- And 1:29 ... BOTH receive the same blessing from God
- So you see, both man & woman are equal before God

- **Application**
- And so a biblical view of relationships means there is absolutely no place for
 - male chauvinism
 - sexism
 - battle of the sexes
 - And men will have a very high view of women
- Matthew Henry in his commentary says:
 - 'Woman was not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but
 - out of his side to be equal with him,
 - under his arm to be protected by him, and
 - near his heart to be loved by him.'

Different

- While man and woman are equal ... they are also **different**
- In Gen 2, Adam & Eve are two different sexual beings
- Have a look at v18
 - ¹⁸ *The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper **suitable** for him."*
 - The word 'suitable' literally means ... **like opposite**
 - God doesn't make another **man** to be with Adam ... he makes **woman** who is complimentary to him
- She is a *like opposite* – she's equal, but different
 - See it in 1:27 - *So God created man in his own image ... **male and female** he created them*
 - And it's for this reason—maleness and femaleness—that a man will leave his parents and marry a woman (Gen 2:24)

- These words make it clear that not only is humanity gendered ... but that marriage is gendered
- God could have chosen to create us without gender difference
 - But he made humanity to be male and female ... with gender differences that complement each other

Inter-dependent

- Man & woman are equal, different and they are also **inter-dependent**
- After being told seven times in Ch 1 that all that God created was 'good' ... we see in 2:18 God pronounce that something is 'not good'
 - ¹⁸ *The LORD God said, "It is **not good** for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*
- This is quite a contrast ... and alerts us to the fact that without such a helper, man is deficient
 - he can't procreate by himself
 - he can't rule over God's kingdom by himself
 - he can't have a relationship by himself
- **Application**
- So here we see God's pattern for marriage relationships is between man and woman
 - Same-sex relationships are not part of God's good pattern for humanity
 - Even IF they are faithful, loving and monogamous
 - Because same-sex relationships denies the differences and interdependence that exists between man & woman that is built into the pattern of God's created order
- There's a great blessing that comes as man and woman unite where their differences complement one another
 - Not just sexually, but emotionally, physically, socially
 - Our male female differences are good!

- **Illustration – Royal Dutch Airlines / KLM Seat Belt Tweet** [SLIDE]
- Earlier this year RDA / KLM sent out this tweet on Twitter showing their support for SSM
 - Shows different seat belt combinations > FF, MM, MF
 - “It doesn’t matter who you click with”
 - The idea was to say ... it doesn’t matter if your lesbian, gay or straight ... any combination of sexuality / gender is okay
- Irony of course ... is that only one combination does actually click!
 - When you get on an airplane ... there will only ever be only one combination
- Irony is that the picture actually reiterates the important point, that the complementary nature of our male-ness and female-ness is what actually works best ... because that’s the way God created us

Ordered

- Finally ... the pattern for marriage is that it is also **ordered**
- You see the whole the creation account in Gen 1-2 is about order
- As part of his creation in Gen 1, God establishes order out of chaos
- And in these verses ... God creates marriage relationships with order

- See there are a number of clues in the text that make it clear this is the case
 - Man was created first
 - Man takes the initiative to forsake his family
 - Man is given responsibility to name the animals ... that is, to name something, is to exercise authority over it
 - In v18, we see the woman was made as a helper **for** the man
 - In chapter 3:9 when A & E have sinned it’s man that God comes looking for because he’s the head of the marital relationship
 - Later in 3:20 Adam named his wife Eve ... as Adam did with the animals

- So we see order within the marriage relationship has been established by God
- And so it is the man's responsibility to lead his wife, take care of her and show the initiative
- The woman is to submit to his authority and help him ... **as they work TOGETHER to serve God**

- Now let me reiterate ... there's absolutely NO threat to a wife's equality as a result of this
 - It's perfectly possible to be equal but having different and equally fulfilling roles
 - Adopting different roles within a relationship is not a threat to one's equality ...
 - it's about ordered relationships for humankind to fulfill God's commission

- **Application**
- Order within the marriage relationship is not a matter of the man being more intelligent or competent or having more ability or a greater emotional stability
 - Liana has higher EQ than me > she's a better parent than me > she's way more perceptive than me [as friend once told me that I'm about as perceptive as a plank]
- But there is an order that God has built into our genders and therefore our marriages
 - However, this is not grounds for a man to lord it over his wife
 - There is absolutely no room for abuse within a marriage because of this
 - Talk more about this in the final talk in our series

- Marriage is the **public, permanent** and **physical** union between two **equal** but **different** and **interdependent** people, that is **ordered**
- This is God's good pattern > this was how God created us and intended for humanity to flourish
 - This pattern for marriage is built into the natural order of our creation
 - It's not just a socially constructed convention that varies from culture to culture
 - It's not something that we are free to change because social conventions have changed
 - Rather it is a structure that is inherent in the world we inhabit

3. Purpose of marriage [SLIDE]

- What's the purpose of marriage?
- Why did God embed marriage into the pattern of creation?
- **Serving God**
- The primary purpose of marriage is to serve God
- This is the reason the man is not left alone in the garden
 - It's not because God saw Adam and thought
 - "Poor Adam, look at him all alone, he must be so lonely, I'll create a women to keep him company"
 - No! He creates Eve to help him fulfil the task God has given him to look after the garden, rule the earth and to fill it
- What this means is
 - marriage is not to cure your loneliness
 - marriage is not about making you feel fulfilled and worthy because you have someone to make you feel special
- A married couple's first goal and purpose is to serve God together
- **Procreation and nurturing of children**
- Second purpose for sex and marriage procreation and nurturing of children

- We see that there in 1:28
 - *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.*
- God's design for sex and marriage is for children to be born and grow in secure and loving care of their mother and a father united together in marriage
- What this means is ... its best for children to be raised by their biological mother and father
 - This is very controversial
 - Not saying
 - Same-sex couples are unable to raise children and love them
 - Of course they can
 - What's best ... what's God's good pattern ... is that children be raised by their biological mother and father
- A research paper by Mark Regnerus in the peer-reviewed journal Social Science Research showed that children do best as adults on multiple counts and across a variety of domains when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father¹
- Sydney University Professor of Law Patrick Parkinson's review of the literature, *For Kids' Sake*², also showed that on average, kids do best when raised by their own mother and father

[SLIDE x3]

- There are signs that people who aren't Christian agree with this:
 - Even Elton John, despite being in a gay marriage, previously admitted that for his son, who was born via donor egg and surrogate mother,
 - *"It's going to be heartbreaking for him to grow up and realize he hasn't got a mummy"*³

¹ <http://gotherefor.com/offer.php?intid=29377&changestore=true>

² http://sydney.edu.au/law/news/docs_pdfs_images/2011/Sep/FKS-ResearchReport.pdf

³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2174030/Elton-John-It-break-son-Zacharys-heart-realise-got-mother.html>

- Heather Barwick, who was raised by a loving lesbian couple says,
 - *"My father's absence created a huge hole in me and I ached every day for a dad. Same-sex marriage and parenting withholds either a mother or father from a child while telling him or her that it doesn't matter. That it's all the same. But it's not."*
- Millie Fontanna is even more forthright about this issue
 - Millie is in her 20's and grew up with lesbian parents, and was raised as an atheist with no religious affiliation⁴
 - And yet, she insists the negative impact of children raised by same-sex parents, as loving as they may have been, is something that cannot be underestimated nor should it be ignored
- Purpose of marriage
 - Serving God and bearing and nurturing of children

4. Problems of marriage [SLIDE]

- Some of you may here might have a problem with this particular view of sex and marriage
- Some of you may be thinking
 - "That's fine for you if that's what you believe ... but you can't impose your religious views on me or our society"
- Firstly, it's not just Christians who support this view of sex and marriage
 - There are many non-Christians and even gay couples who recognise and support traditional marriage
- Secondly, if God's good pattern for sex and relationships is embedded in the design of creation, then this is good for ALL humanity ... not just Christians
- Therefore, because Christians want what we believe is best for couples, children and society as a whole ... we want to commend (not impose) this view of marriage to everyone

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g4vphO1Sk>

- Other's of you might say
 - "how can you stand against two consenting adults who love each other getting married?"
- When you think about it philosophically, 'love and consent' can't be the reason for adopting same-sex marriage
 - For if this were the case, then using the same logic, we're forced to say that must be okay for someone to marry a child or a man to marry multiple wives as long as they love them
 - Based on the outrage that we see when these scenarios play out in other cultures ... it's clear that most would agree that neither of these are okay
 - So we need a reason this is more than just 'love and consent.'
- Other's will say .. "this antiquated view of sex and marriage just proves you Christians are anti-gay"
 - God is not anti-gay
 - Every human being is made in the image of God
 - Therefore every human being is loved by and valued by God
 - Christians are called to do the same
- Yes, some Christians and some churches have behaved appalling towards LGBTI community in the past
- But as God's people we want to welcome all people to our church and our community while at the same time upholding God's good design for sex and marriage

5. Perfection of marriage [SLIDE]

- While much of the same-sex marriage debate has centred on the issue of equality ... it seems to me that equality (in the legal sense) is not really the issue
- It seems as though the underlying issue for the LGBTI community is really 'acceptance'
- Magda Szubanski – Q&A

- *"If I can somehow get people to understand what it is like for me and other LGBTQI people, how profoundly insulting it is to be told you're lesser than [others]"*⁵
- I think what's behind her comment is
 - She and others in the LGBTI community feel like outsiders and that mainstream society rejects them
 - And that marriage is the platform / mechanism to say to society ... - we're just as normal as you and being able to marry legitimises or proves that society has finally accepted that
- You see ... Magda Szubanski wants to see this change because without it undermines and insults who she is as person

- Why's that?
- Mark Yarhouse⁶ (Professor of Psychology and Director of Institute for Study of Sexual Health) says the LGBTI community has this cultural narrative that tends to drive those with same-sex attraction towards creating an identity based on their sexuality
 - It says your same-sex attraction is core to who you are as a person
 - That means you can't be the real you unless your sexuality is fulfilled
 - Therefore, if you're going to be true to yourself as someone who experiences same-sex attraction, then its only right to embrace and actualise that
 - Because its only when you actualise your sexual identity will you be truly fulfilled

- And because identity is so closely tied to sexuality, when same-sex marriage is not recognised in the current marriage laws, you can understand why those with same-sex attraction see this as a direct assault on them as people

⁵ <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/ganda/txt/s4736569.htm>

⁶ Professor of Psychology and Director of Institute for Study of Sexual Health

- Is there a way though this?
- Is it possible to uphold God's good pattern for sex and marriage ... and at the same time assure someone with same-sex attraction that their identity is not undermined or threatened?

- There is ... and it's found when you place our identity in Christ
- You see ... when your identity is grounded in anything else ... whether it be
 - Sexuality
 - Relationship
 - Career
 - Grades
 - Popularity
 - Body shape
 - Then if you fail to get it
 - Unable to achieve it
 - You had it and then you lost it ..
 - Then it will devastate you
 - You'll feel rejected, unworthy, like an outsider
 - You'll feel like you're missing out and that your life is unfulfilled

- But the Bible says ... true identity / true value / true worthiness is found in Christ
 - True whether you're single, married, divorced, straight, gay or bi
 - Because when it comes to sex and marriage ... the trajectory of the Bible shows that sex and marriage are ultimately pointing to the perfection of marriage that is found in Christ
- You see as you go through the Bible, God's relationship with his people is described like a marriage relationship
 - God is the husband / groom
 - His people are his bride ... often an unfaithful one at that

- And in the NT, that metaphor carries forward to Jesus and his church
- Christ is the groom and the church is his bride ... and Jesus loves his bride so much he is willing to lay down his life for her at the cross to make her pure and spotless ... without any stain or wrinkle or any other blemish

- This is the ultimate marriage
 - When your identity is in Christ
 - You'll never feel rejected, unworthy, or like an outsider
 - You'll never feel like you're missing out and that your life is unfulfilled
 - Because for those whose identity is found in Christ share in the wonderful blessing of being loved, and cherished and protected and cared for ... in a way NO OTHER human relationship ever can or will provide

- And so, God's call to each and every one of us ... whether
 - Married, single, widowed, divorced, gay or straight
 - That you and I would all be married to Christ
 - And that in doing so we would ALL share in the perfect marriage
 - And we would be publically and permanently united to Jesus

Questions

Next week

- Sexual disorder – what happens when God's good design goes pear-shaped
 - Break down of marriage
 - Same-sex attraction, Transgenderism
 - What does this mean for the Christian who experiences SSA