

116 – God joins, we protect

“Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!” (Eph. 3:20-21)

Sometimes it is as interesting to me what the scriptures do *not* say as much as what they DO say. We’ve seen some examples of this in past studies, but tonight, I’d like to look with you at relationships. In this season, we are witnessing God separating some and joining others. The common thread throughout each relationship, whichever direction it’s going, is that God is doing it. Those whom He is joining cannot credit anyone but Him. The same is true for those whom He is separating, although individuals may have different opinions based on perceptions that fail to take the sovereignty of God into account.

In Matthew 19, Jesus makes a singular statement in the midst of his discussion with the Pharisees regarding divorce. It is a statement which is repeated in virtually every Christian marriage ceremony:

Matthew 19:6

What God, then, yokes together, let not man be separating."

In 10 words, Jesus teaches a hugely valuable principle. Let’s look at it together:

1. God yokes together. The context of the entire discussion is marriage, but this statement does not specifically address marriage; it only addresses “What.” Jesus did not say, “Who God yokes together, but “What.”

For myself, I can recall a certainty about God joining me to my first profession in the printing industry, as far back as 13 years old. Just before I turned 40, I didn’t take myself out of it, He did, and tool me into – or rather called me into – the field of health and wellness, complete with a chiropractic degree and a certainty that He had done it, not I. when he took me out of that and called me to Himself, it

was absolutely clear that He was doing it, not I, and even now – perhaps even more so now – my life, day in and day out, is committed to His purposes, not mine.

My point in sharing all this is simply to give you a lens through which to look at your own life, to see what, as well as whom, God yoked together with you. In all of our circumstance and relationships, we made choices that led us to where we are today; nevertheless, we remember **Psalm 139:16**

“And my days, all of them, were written upon your scroll; the days were formed before there was even one of them.” (CLV)

“What God yokes together,” the scripture says. In each of our lives, we had almost no hand in the events and relationships that shaped our lives, except that we were there. God brought us together with our circumstances and our relationships; sometimes miraculously, and all with the most amazing timing, which is usually seen through the long lens of hindsight and experience. Perhaps it felt to you as it did to me almost as if I was witnessing events unfold in ways I could never have engineered or even imagined. Things were happening TO me and around me, and later I grew to appreciate how much they happened FOR me, but rarely if ever did I have a sense that they were happening BY me.

The scripture also says, ***“let not man be separating.”*** Who or what have you separated yourself from that God yoked together? I am suggesting tonight that you cannot have separated yourself from anything that God yoked, or from anyone who He yoked together with you unless HE separated you first. If God does the yoking, He can also do the unyoking. The scripture does NOT say that He won’t break that yoke; it only advises US not to do the breaking.

Let’s take the example of marriage tonight. Neither Barbara nor I know anyone in the Body of Christ with whom we walk, or with whom we have walked before, who is on their first marriage. Why? How many of us got married in the flesh the first time, second time, third time, and so on? There may be some one time marriages, but we don’t know them, or at least, we’re not in relationship with them today.

The point is that God is focused on fulfilling His purpose of the eons, “**which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord**” (according to **Ephesians 3:11**). When God yokes together, it is solely for His purpose – it is part of the fulfillment of His purpose of the eons. If we yoke ourselves together with some-thing or some-one, it is for our purposes and is tentative at best. When we walk in Christ – intimately involved in God’s purpose, everything we yoked ourselves with and everyone we yoked ourselves to is up for grabs. Otherwise, why would Jesus say this:

Luke 14:26

"If anyone is coming to Me and is not hating his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and still more his soul besides, he can not be My disciple.

27 And anyone who is not bearing his cross and coming after Me, can not be My disciple.

Did you yoke yourself to your father or mother? No! Yet, God, in order to fulfill **His** purpose in and through **your** life, may sever those relationships. In marriage, He requires it, as Jesus explained in **Matthew 19:4-5**:

"Did you not read that the Maker from the beginning makes them male and female,

5 and He said, 'On this account a **man shall be leaving** father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh'?

The key words are, “a man shall be leaving.” We could add, “*a woman shall be leaving*” to this and do no injustice to the scriptures. Two words in verse five phrase indicate the hallmarks of what God decides: “SHALL BE.” This specific “shall be” involves marriage – a marriage, by the way, in which God, not man, yokes two together. This is the critical difference, coming back to our starting point tonight:

“What God yokes together, let not MAN be separating.” (Matthew 19:6)

Now go back to **Luke 14:26**:

"If anyone is coming to Me and is not hating his father and mother and wife...

If you did the yoking, there's nothing sacred about it except in your own mind, and your walk with the Lord may require you to give up what religion says should always be kept together at any cost – and that's often what happens – marriages are kept together out of religious duty and the cost is enormous. If we stay anywhere we've done the yoking or with anyone we've yoked ourselves to, no matter how much time, energy, money and personal identity has been invested, God's call may demand its sacrifice. Elisha was plowing with a yoke of oxen, which he sacrificed before leaving to follow Elijah and ultimately receive a double portion of his anointing. Those oxen were his family's livelihood. Who did Elisha leave behind to answer the call of God?

In **Luke 18**, Peter said:

28 Now Peter said, "Lo! we, **leaving our own**, follow Thee."

29 Now He said to them, "Verily, I am saying to you that there is no one who leaves house, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children on account of the kingdom of God,

30 who may not by all means be getting back manyfold in this era, and in the coming eon, life eonian."

We know that Peter was married. He probably had children too. We read nothing of them or of his wife. We read only about His mother-in-law, in whose house the disciples stayed when in Capernaum on the sea of Galilee. What about the other disciples? They were all adults and adult Jewish males were mostly all married and had children!

I'm saying tonight what Jesus said, "If God did the yoking, keep your hands off it. Don't YOU undertake to separate what, or whom, He joined you to." On the other hand, I'm also suggesting that God may **require** you to separate from things you yoked yourself to and from people you yoked yourself to:

"...father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and still more his soul besides..." **Luke 14:26**

Barbara knows what that looks like, and as a result of God yoking us together, sovereignly, unmistakably, and miraculously, I know what it looks like too.

Write this down somewhere: If God didn't yoke you to it, you have no accountability *for* it, no responsibility *to* it, and you better stay as far from it as you can get, lest a religious notion of duty cost you the call of God on your life.

Matthew 19:6

What God, then, yokes together, **let not man be separating.**"

2. This is the second major point tonight: when Jesus said, "**let not**," He was assigning our accountability. In other words, what God yokes together, PROTECT IT! God does the yoking, but we do the protecting of it! This is serious...it means something can be stolen from us if we don't keep it sacred and holy. It's along the lines of Matthew 7:6 –

6 "You may not be giving that which is holy to curs, nor yet should you be casting your pearls in front of hogs, lest at some time they shall be trampling them with their feet and, turning, they should be tearing you.

Paul told Timothy: "***The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us***" (2 Tim.1:13,14)

Why would we need to protect what God has committed to us, or with what or with Whom He Has yoked us? Remember that God is parenting – he is maturing sons and daughters to Whom He can relate one day eye to eye. If He does **everything** for us, how will we ever grow up to be like Him? There is an Adversary for a reason, and I believe one of the reasons is to challenge us whenever and wherever it is necessary, especially where we are unprotected. In so doing, we gain strength, experience, and hopefully skill too!

Last point:

3. **Last point:** The scripture says, "**God Yokes.**" It does **not** say that God will not separate that which He has yoked. The Father is focused on fulfilling His purpose.

Now this is my take on this, so check your spirit and see if it bears witness: So long as His yoking serves His purpose, and – this is hugely important – so long as we are protecting, and keeping it holy and sacred, it will remain intact. God does not play games with our lives. Our heavenly Father is wholly benevolent, not capricious. What He yokes serves His purpose and blesses us also, but if we do not protect it, or worse, if we defile it, there is nothing in the scriptures that says God won't break the yoke He formed.

Barbara and I know, beyond all question, that God put us together. It is entirely up to us to protect it – to, as the scripture says, ***“let not man be separating.”*** In mere days, we will celebrate a wedding here between two dear people whom we know – and everyone who is hearing my voice live right now knows – God yoked, sovereignly, miraculously and unmistakably. It will be up to them to protect it, so that their union serves the purpose for which He yoked them and “let not man be separating.” Not any man, woman, outside their marriage or inside it!

A parting word if I may: Hold nothing dear to yourself except what and whom God has yoked. Let Him and unyoke as He works out His purpose in and through your life. Be as the shepherd boy, David, who was unafraid when King Saul and all of Israel's army was quaking for 40 days at the giant, Goliath's clenched fists, rattling armor and shouted taunts. He alone was confident because He knew there was a God in Israel Who is faithful. David was yoked by God to the kingship of Israel. He didn't know that he was protecting it that day, but he was. He let no man, circumcised or uncircumcised, separate what God yoked. He knew how to find the stones for his sling. He knew where to find them. He knew how to sling them and hit a target for maximum effect. He picked five, but He only needed one.

You and I have One today. His name is Jesus, Yeshua HaMashiach, Who has gone before us and already won the battles we could never fight. We are hidden in Him, indwelt with the Holy Spirit of the Living God. Isn't that worth protecting and serving with our lives? Isn't He worth loving and praising with our whole hearts?

Holy Father. Precious Lord, we worship You and fall down before Your majesty. That we can know You at all is astonishing by itself, but for You to call us into Your purpose of the eons is an unspeakable privilege we did not earn, but Our Lord Jesus Christ, earned it for us. So Father, We say yes and AMEN to everything You order in and for and through our lives today. We say, THANK YOU, for all the circumstances, situations and relationships that have gone before, because You authored them, knowing exactly where we would place our feet at each step. Lord God, we hold nothing dear to ourselves, not even our own lives, but they are yours. We pledge tonight to protect, to keep holy and sacred what you have yoked, and we will let not man be separating. We agree with all of Your word, Father, spoken before and spoken now, and that which is yet to be spoken. We pray tonight, Father, to BE Your Word with Your Heart for Your Children, wherever they may be. WE, Your sons and daughters, live and move and have our being in You. Thank You, Father for Your sovereign separating and Your sovereign yoking. Whichever side of that we find ourselves on today, we say AMEN. In Jesus Name, Amen.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you: the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)