True Love Reflects… Pastor Jim Neville Feb. 14th 2021

1. God’s **love** for us (Gen 2:18-25)

* Marriage was instituted *pre-fall* as an act of love (Gen 2:18)
* Eve was crafted with great care to be *suitable* (not adequate, but a perfect complement to her husband) (Gen 2:20b-22)
* They are united as one – both parts equal in design, yet distinct in role and purpose (Gen 2:24, Eph 5:30-32)
  + God creates each spouse *knowing* who they will marry in unique ways that will benefit the other – it is an act of love.
* QUESTION - (So why aren’t marriages perfect?)
  + Sinful nature (*post-fall*) can put spouses at war with one another (Gen 3:16c-17).
* APPLICATION – *Remember* that marriage is created to be perfect but we must submit to the Holy Spirit and intentionally focus on the roles that God has created us for. Your partner is NOT your enemy – they were crafted by God to be a suitable helper when we operate in how marriage was intended.

2. God’s **love** for his church (Eph 5:22-25, 27a, 29)

* The love of God for the bride of Christ is tangibly demonstrated through biblical marriage.
* “As to/As Christ” (v.22, 23, 24, 25) – the modus operandi of biblical marriage is very clear.
* “The submission (v.22) is not the husbands to command but for the wife to willingly and *lovingly* offer” (MacArthur)
* Husbands *love* your wives, just as Christ also *loved* the church
  + The same sacrifice that Christ gave for the sake of his church (as an act of *love*) is the model that husbands must follow.
  + Our marriage should seem completely counter-cultural, yet will also be unavoidably attractive to on-lookers.
* QUESTION! – (So why aren’t marriages always an example to follow?)
  + Inward focus vs. Outward focus – is your marriage/spouse to benefit yourself or others?
* APPLICATION – *Remember* the need to put everything through the gospel filter. Does your primary focus concern itself with immediate or eternal results?

3. God’s **love** for our sanctification (Eph 5:26-30)

* Marriage is a means by which God sanctifies us. (Eph 5:26, 27b, 29)
  + As each partner grows in the Lord, the relationship will grow stronger (As each person reflects on their marriage, Christians should be able to say that they have become more like Christ through their marriage)
* We must find our source of love from Christ alone!
  + When we try to find the source of our love from our spouse (and when they try to find it from us), we are bound to be disappointed – broken people cannot replace the *love* we receive from God – his is perfect.
  + As we grow into the likeness of Christ, we become better equipped for our marriage.
    - Praying together? (praying FOR each other?)
    - Digging into the word together?
    - Prioritizing attending church services together?
    - Experiencing intimacy together? (vs. existing for the daily routine)
* QUESTION! (So why does it feel like we are just surviving and not growing?)
  + Two people working in tandem is far more efficient than trying to do your own thing (it is actually counterproductive in a relationship).
* APPLICATION – *Remember* that your primary focus is to personally grow in your likeness of Christ. Good marriages are the product of sanctified spouses, not the other way around.