



Reformation's
500-Year Anniversary—2017



John Stewart

Luther on Marriage

as any aspect of human life, the unchanging nature in the Christian concept of key home and family values.

Begin with a Prayer

Luther lovingly instructed that marriage should begin with a prayer: “Dear God, add Thy blessing.”³ He also emphasized the importance of understanding, openness, and discussion between believing parents and their children who intend to marry. Tied closely to a couple’s hope of establishing a marriage Luther said that the basic Christian concept of marriage “must be seen in the light of God’s Holy Word” in order that it be correctly understood. In reminding engaged couples to remember that “marriage should be brought about in such a way that we have God present,” he also reassured the pair to take heart that God helps in godly marriage.⁴ “[God] established marriage for countless good purposes, and He himself joins the spouses. Nor does He only join them; He also blesses them.”⁵

Godly Marriage

Luther defined the estate of Christian marriage as “the divinely instituted and lawful union of a man and a woman in the hope of offspring, or at least for the sake of avoiding fornication and sin, to the glory of God. Its ultimate purpose is to obey God and to be a remedy for sin; to call upon God; to desire, love, and bring up children to the glory of God; to live with one’s wife in the fear of the Lord; and to bear one’s cross.” Luther further explained how God had blessed Adam with a spouse, Eve, in accord with His command that they bring forth children (Gen. 1:28). Luther added, “But if no children result, you should nevertheless live content with your wife.”⁶ In addition, Luther described how God also provided a spouse as a helper and companion in this life based on the Creator’s words: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18).⁷

In recognizing that challenges can sometimes occur in marriage (because of our own sinfulness), Luther wrote: “In the household, quarrels and disputes arise between husband and wife” and noted that peace in the marriage can be disturbed in various ways.⁸ But at the same time Luther also provided comfort, adding: “The Lord is at hand to oversee and direct marriages and households.”⁹

Luther reminded married couples to recall Apostle Peter’s exhortation that spouses “love each other and to treat each other with respect and not as people are now in the habit of doing” (see 1 Pet. 3:1–7). Luther provided a beautiful example of a fine marriage from the Old Testament noting how Abraham spoke most respectfully to his wife Sarah, even in difficult moments they had faced in life (Gen. 20:11–13).¹⁰

Marriage—a Place of Honor

Marriage and the home, as Luther described, is a place where married couples (and their children if God has so granted) can “spend their time and dwell with joy,” touching on wedlock’s lifelong commitment that Christ described, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6). Luther further wrote: “For the lawful joining of a man and a woman is a divine ordinance and institution. For is it not a great thing that even in the state of innocence [before man’s Fall into sin] God ordained and instituted marriage?”¹¹ Luther added: “Marriage should be treated with honor; from it we all originate, because it is a nursery not only for the state, but also for the church and kingdom of Christ until the end of the world.”¹² He further noted, “The best thing in married life, for the sake of which everything ought to be suffered and done, is the fact that God gives children and commands us to bring them up to serve Him. To do this is the noblest and most precious work on earth.”¹³

In Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses, he described the keys of the kingdom, which Jesus gave to His own through the Holy Spirit, as “the treasures of the church.”¹⁴ Yet today, believing couples and children in the Christian home find the gospel of the forgiveness of sins to be the power of God unto salvation even as Apostle Paul described in his time (Rom. 1:16).

Sources:

¹ Durant, Will. *The Story of Civilization—Caesar and Christ*. MJF Books, New York, 1944, p. 222.

² Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 1, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House (CPH), 1958), p. 118.

³ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 54, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1967), p. 25.

⁴ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 4, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1964), pp. 22-23.

⁵ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 4, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1964), pp. 22-23.

⁶ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 4, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1964), p. 244.

⁷ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 1, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1958), p. 116, 118.

⁸ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1961), p. 55.

⁹ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1961), p. 55.

¹⁰ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1961), p. 353-354.

¹¹ Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 1, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1958), p. 134.

¹² Luther, Martin, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 1, (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1958), p. 240.

¹³ *What Luther Says*, p. 907, 2836.

¹⁴ Luther, Martin, 1483-1546. *The Ninety-Five Theses*, 1517, Thesis No. 62.

HALF A MILLENNIUM ago, Martin Luther was born into a world dominated by religious and political leaders steeped in antagonism toward the teaching of sound scriptural truths. It is not surprising, therefore, that marriage—an estate basic to human existence—was likewise a topic of extensive focus, discussion, and clarification in the life and times of Luther. Not only had medieval Roman Catholic teaching regarding holy matrimony deviated significantly from the Bible (celibacy of priests, etc.), but marriage had become widely misunderstood within the overall fabric of medieval society. Even though the Middle Age culture of Luther generally maintained a religious core, misunderstandings concerning marriage were widespread. For example, misunderstandings stretched to the point that many people failed to recognize procreation as a key purpose in God’s establishment of marriage, and sought methods to avoid acceptance of children, as had been the case in ancient Rome some 1500 years earlier¹. As Luther characterized the society of his time: “Today you find many people who do not want to have children,” and described that understanding as “callousness” and an “inhumane attitude, which is worse than barbarous.”²

Although 500 years of global change has passed since the Reformation, key doctrinal issues of God’s kingdom remain unchanged. The concept of marriage—its sanctity, purpose, and nobility—exemplifies as clearly

Camp Matters



LLC Confirmation Schools 1977–2017

Announcement!

1977 LLC Confirmation School Students

Forty years ago, you attended the first LLC Confirmation School, with the exercise held in conjunction with the LLC Summer Services. We invite you to gather for a photo and a chance to reminisce at the 2017 LLC Summer Services which will be hosted again by the Cokato believers at the Wright County fairgrounds in Howard Lake, Minn. Time and meeting place will be announced during the service event.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1977, the first LLC (then AALC) confirmation school, as we know them today, was held. Prior to this, confirmation classes and exercises were held in the local congregations, conducted either by the local minister or a visiting minister. In 1977, students traveled for the first time from their home congregations in the U.S. and Canada to the LLC-directed confirmation school. Classes were held at the Cokato Laestadian Lutheran Church, and the confirmation exercise took place in conjunction with the annual LLC Summer Services held that year in the Dassel-Cokato High School. The 60 students who attended were hosted by families in the Cokato area.

The 1977 confirmation school marked the beginning of annual LLC confirmation schools. We can clearly see an example how God abundantly provides for the needs of His children. An additional confirmation school was added in 1987, and except for 1988, there has been at least two annual confirmation schools since 1989. Forty years after the first confirmation school, we will hold, for the first time, six confirmation

schools this summer. Two will be hosted at Stony Lake Camp, one at Hasscib Lake Camp, one at Kamp Kipa, one on the West Coast, and the inaugural confirmation school will be hosted by the Saskatchewan believers at the Lutheran College Bible Institute (LCBI) campus in Outlook, Sask.

Work is currently underway to review and update our confirmation school curriculum. A teaching committee and a curriculum committee have been meeting to consider what is taught and how we teach at our confirmation schools. This work will be piloted at Stony Lake Confirmation School 2 this summer, and with the gathered feedback and input, be used at all the confirmation schools in 2018. God has richly blessed us! We pray that He will continue to bless confirmation school and all the work in His kingdom.

Adrian Pirness