

The Sanction of Eros

Why Christians Divorce

June 23, 2011 BreakPoint.org

I still remember my sadness on hearing that an old friend, someone I believed was a sincere Christian, was leaving his wife. I was shocked and disappointed. How could this man, committed to both his spouse and his Lord, fall in love with another woman?

An essay by the late Sheldon Vanauken helps answer the question and reminds us that such temptations are all too common.

Vanauken, best known as the author of the powerful love story entitled *A Severe Mercy*, also published a collection of essays called *Under the Mercy*, which explores these feelings.

In one essay called "The Loves," Vanauken describes how a Christian friend named John shocked him by announcing that he was leaving his wife to marry another woman. John explained his sudden change of heart by saying, "It seemed so good, so right. That's when we knew we had to get the divorces. We belonged together."

As Vanauken explains, John was "invoking a higher law: the feeling of goodness and rightness. A feeling so powerful that it swept away . . . whatever guilt [he] would otherwise have felt" for what he was doing to his family.

Sadly, many people love their spouse not as a person, but as someone who evokes certain feelings. Their wedding vow was not so much to the person as to that feeling. So when such people fall in love with someone else, they just transfer that vow to the other person. And why not? says Vanauken, "If vows are nothing but feelings?"

Vanauken dubs these thrilling emotions "The Sanction of Eros." When John spoke of the goodness of his new love, "the sacred approval [he said he] felt could not possibly have come from [God,] whose disapproval of divorce is explicit in Scripture. It is Eros, the pagan god of lovers, who confers this sanction upon the worshippers at his altar."

Vanauken continues, "The pronouncement of Eros that this love is so good and so right that all betrayals are justified is simply a lie." But worst of all, those caught in its thrall of Eros are convinced their love is different, even sacred. They do not dream, Vanauken says, "that every other lover has the same assurance."

Now, can the Eros type of love – this emotional and physical attachment – be a healthy part of a marriage? Of course! But Eros is not the type of love that glues husbands and wives together "til death do us part." That love would be Agape love – the love modeled by Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross for His

Bride, the Church. Agape is the love Paul talks about in Ephesians 5:25, when he commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church.

Agape seeks to bless the other person; it is totally self-giving. Eros, especially outside of marriage, seeks only to use the other. Its goal is self-gratification. And that's why pastors have to work hard to teach engaged couples about the necessity of understanding Agape love. At some point, Eros will almost certainly beckon with an exciting new love – and the feelings of rightness, and even sacredness, may be overwhelming.

Couples need to know that only when Christ and Agape love are at the heart of their marriage can they withstand these temptations.

Come to BreakPoint.org; we'll provide links to organizations and resources that will help strengthen your marriage and build strong marriages in your church and community.

Copied



SUNDAY AM SPEAKER - Jack Wilhelm

Notes: _____



SUNDAY PM SPEAKER - Mike Brooks

Notes: _____



The Highlighter

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June 26, 2011



Christ Is Preached

"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this rejoice, yes, and will rejoice" (Philippians 1:18).

The above statement is one of the more impressive illustrations that we have of the wonderful spirit of forbearance and unselfishness exemplified by the apostle Paul. In the preceding verses he told how some were preaching the Gospel (apparently in

Rome during Paul's imprisonment) out of courage inspired by Paul's faith. Others however were preaching in order to put more pressure on Paul, evidently out of the assumption that the more converts there were to Christianity the more upset Roman authorities would be at the situation, therefore judging Paul more harshly.

Paul's reaction to this malicious attempt to harm him was simple. He said basically, "If souls are being taught and saved, I am glad, regardless of the motive of those preaching, or of the results to me personally." Note that Paul is not suggesting that the preachers who had bad motives would be pleasing to God, or forgiven for any sins they were committing. He is simply saying that he rejoiced at any good which might result from their evil.

There is at least one positive application which we can take from this passage. We do not have to be perfect in our efforts in order to produce good. I am not suggesting that we should be complacent about imperfections, or set out deliberately to do something in a wrong way. Those seeking to harm Paul would be judged by God. But we are human, and we will make mistakes, unintentionally, and sometimes out of ignorance. That does not mean that our efforts are in vain. Good may (and usually does) still result.

This is of great comfort to me personally when it comes to the work of evangelization. There is much debate about missionary methods. One does not have to work long in a foreign country (or for that matter in a local church) to realize that not everything works as well as he thought it should. People are offended by what we intended to be a compassionate approach. Churches may not grow as quickly or as well as our plans anticipated. Co-workers may disagree about how we work. But perfection in our methods is not required (nor is it possible). Good results may be achieved by imperfect people.

It is regrettable that some missionaries have become so enamored of particular methodologies, or so convinced of the error of other methods, that they have caused divisions among the churches planted over how the work is to be done. I like the statement I once read which was made by an experienced personal worker when he was criticized for his methods by one who confessed he was not doing evangelism. He replied, "In that case, I like the way I am doing personal work better than the way you are not doing it." The key to remember is that any method of doing the Lord's work (barring the obviously un-Biblical) is far better than refusing to do it.

Elders

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SERVICE SCHEDULE:

SUNDAY:

9:00am Bible Class
10:00am Worship
5:30pm Prayer Session
6:00pm Worship

WEDNESDAY:

7:00pm Bible Class
Wed Devo - Lloyd Jackson

The Record You Help Make

Bible Class 182
AM Worship 303
PM Worship 264
Contribution.....\$7,934
Child Care.....\$ 88

OUR SICK: Grady Hargett (Dwain's father) is in ECM not doing well. Sonny Watkins (Jerri's Friend) is recovering from knee surgery at Sundbridge. Robert Morris is receiving out patient care. Thelma Wallace is home. Bob Green is home and will go for another opinion July 6th. Randy Branscome is in Shoals Hospital Room 414 expecting to be released.



Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Montgomery

*Invite you to share in the joy
Of the marriage uniting their daughter*

Katie Lauren

And

Douglas Kyle Oakley

On Friday, the First of July Two Thousand and Eleven

At Six-Thirty in the evening

Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail of the Shoals

Reception immediately following the ceremony



Ladies Fitness Bootcamp

If there is enough interest, Katie Haddock will come to the MPR for one week to train the ladies in a home fitness program. The cost would be \$50 for the week. If you are interested, please sign the sheet on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, please see LaGail Ford.

ANNUAL AGAPE DINNER & AUCTION

Thursday July 21st

Single Tickets \$ 40

Table of 8 \$300

See Brochure on Bulletin Board for more details

Introducing Caring Kids

Caring Kids Care About:

God and Jesus-their family-their friends-their community!



Bring your children
to children's worship on
Sunday nights

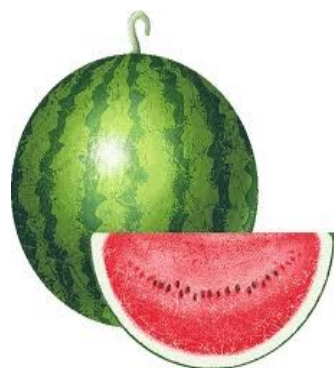
For Ages K-5th Grade

(except 1st Sunday of each month).

We hope to see you there! See Amy

Morris for info!

In room 402



Widows & Singles Event

will meet at the home of
Betty Flanagan on July 10th
after evening services.

Watermelon, dessert &
drinks will be provided. (If

you like, you may pick up a sandwich on the way
there.) The group invites all other widows and
singles to join them.

Heritage Christian University Associates

Tasting Tea Fund Raiser

Saturday, July 16th 11:00 am to 1:30 pm

\$15 donation for HCU

At the home of Kathy Lawson

215 Riverwood Dr. Florence, AL 35634

Please see Janet Moon for more info!

Address Change

Ann Hargett

413 Cox Blvd. Apt. 210 Sheffield, AL 35660

THOSE TO SERVE

10:00 AM WORSHIP

Read Scripture.....Freddie Williams

Opening Prayer..... James McAffry

Closing Prayer.....Vernon Malone

6:00 PM SERVICE

Read Scripture.....Pat Moon

Opening Prayer.....Michael Jackson

Closing Prayer.....Ala n Waycaster


Greeters -.....Terry & Susan Williams

Wed Night - Lloyd Jackson

JUNE CONTACT ELDER

TIM FULMER

Prayer Lists:



Roy Thompson, Austin & Berry
Davenport,Howard
Jeffresy,Mabeth Jones,
Pauline Jackson, Harvey
Hasha, Rayburn Moore
(Melinda Logan's brother-in-
law), Wylodean Dabbs,
Vic & Margaret Addington,
Lois Black, Opal Farris, Guy
Jeffreys,Jimmy & Olene Hanback,
Albert Sharp. Kim Hallmark,
Christine Kirchner, Edmund Cagle
Reagan McBride

Please remember our cancer patients:

Robin McCollum, Brenda Pettus,
Howard Jeffreys, Sheila Renfro
Adrian West & Peggy McCollum (Robin
McCollum's mother & sister-in-law),
Norma Hallmark
Kenneth Harrison (Dot Crowden's
brother), David Blazer, Ann Hargett,
Betty Barnes, Mike Farris
Mozelle King (Faye Smith's friend)
Spruell Fretwell (Faye Smith's cousin)
Bob Green

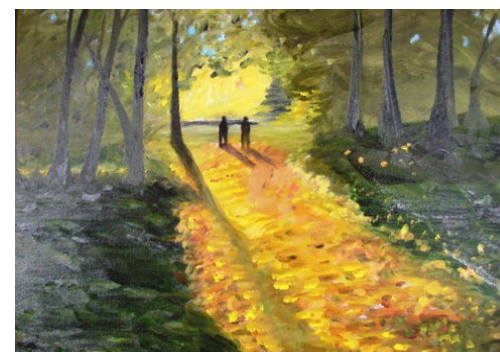
Widows & Singles

Meet tonight after service at

Quizno's



Pantry item
Cereal



Observations

"Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him'" (John 11:9-10).

When troubled by temptation and sin it often seems that it is very difficult to make right choices and to do the right thing. Temptation appears to

have all the advantages. It may even seem that there is limited opportunity to live righteously; that all the pressure, advantage and abilities lie on the side of evil. Though we recognize it as an excuse, the phrase "everybody is doing it" carries a lot of truth.

In John 10 and 11 we are told how Jesus and the twelve left Judea and went across the Jordan because of rising persecution from the Jewish leadership. While there he learned of the illness of his good friend Lazarus. When He proposed returning to Judea to visit Lazarus His disciples objected, reminding him of danger there. Jesus response in the verses quoted above shows that we must not allow the threat of evil to deter us from doing good. But it also invites us to recognize that while evil seems strong, God always provides opportunity to avoid it and to live as He wants us to.

The day is divided into two parts, light (day) and darkness (night). One is as long as the other. Those who confine their activities to the period of darkness do so not because there is not enough light, but because they (or their activities) prefer night to day. Becoming nocturnal is a choice, not a necessity.

In another of his writings John makes this very plain, and applies it specifically to spiritual and moral matters. "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1-7).

There is just as much light as there is darkness; just as much good as there is evil. If we live sinfully it is not because of necessity or compulsion. It is because we choose evil over good.

As Christians let us choose righteousness. God will help us to achieve that goal.

M.E.B.

Area Gospel Meetings & VBS

Petersville Homecoming

June 26th Speaker - Will Tidwell Bible Class 9:00 am Worship 10:00am

Lunch 11:15. Afternoon worship 1:00 p.m.

Rogersville VBS

June 26 - 29 6:00 to 8:00pm Ages 2 yrs to 6th Grade

Cherokee Church of Christ

July 6 - 8 7:00pm nightly Speaker - David Sain