**Greater Than All - wk 25 – Marriage and Money – Salty**

**The last chapter… the writer has stated the case = Jesus, God in the flesh, creator of all, greater than all, the only forgiver of sins.**

**Hebrews wraps up with practical challenges. Issues that hit our daily life = last week… stay committed to loving each other and care for the stranger and the persecuted.**

**Today 3 verses, 2 hot issues - Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. 5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” 6 So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Two hot areas that hit home – marriage and money)**

**When you hear we are going to talk about sex and money – you either wake up – or try to leave. Considered taboo, inappropriate, hate, or unreasonable. Sad - the rise and fall of spiritual leaders.**

**God cares deeply about your marriage and money – Why?**

* **Marriage was a design from God given as gift**

**A beautiful gift to be protected, cared for, and nurtured.**

**The gift of a wife / husband.**

* **Money can be a distraction from God’s design**

**Can be used for great things and abused for evil things.**

**He cares about both – because he cares about you.**

**God has a lot to say about both. We look at some of it.**

**First – 4 Encouragements and 1 warning about Marriage from Hebrews**

**1. All of us need to honor marriage – ours and others**

**13:4 Marriage should be honored by all,**

**This is not just for those who are married. God’s design for sex is to be honored by everyone. Teen, senior, single, married**

**We will all answer to God on this issue – all accountable.**

**Marriage (gamos) = the official legal ceremony. Recognized legally by those around you. The “gamos” - that which follows the wedding.**

**Big question, what’s a marriage that is honorable/ acceptable? Each person has their own rules. But what does God say? More on this in a moment…**

**2. God designs sex for marriage**

**…and the marriage bed kept pure, *(uncontaminated – is precious)***

**The bed (koite - sex) is designed for marriage**

**Bible speaks on this a lot. Hundreds of verses. A clear command in scripture, we try to explain away and invalidate but it is clear.**

**Again, the question is, what is considered honorable acceptable sex? More on this in a moment…**

**3. The future marriage bed begins before marriage**

**…and the marriage bed kept pure…**

**Young single man / single woman abstinence is not a dirty word.**

**If you are dating, you’re single - If you are engaged, you’re single.**

**Only when you get married are you given the gift of the “bed”.**

**You honor your future marriage bed by not having sex before then.**

**Wisper it, use your lips – “let the marriage bed be undefiled”**

**WHY a big deal? You are sowing seeds of faithfulness and trust now and after. Honoring the marriage bed begins now**

**4. God defines what love is not humans**

**…for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.**

**We will not decide, we do not get to make the call – God dose.**

**Two words mentioned - adulterer and sexually immoral (fornicator)**

**Two things God says dishonors Him and bring judgement.**

**-Adultery- sex w/ another person’s spouse (single & married) (Stat)**

**-Sexual immorality (porneia) – sex outside of God’s design.**

**1 Thes 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; (porneia) that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like those who do not know God…**

**Ephesians 5:3 But sexual immorality (porneia) and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.**

**Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, (porneia) impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.**

**Porneia – large umbrella meaning sexual sin. From prostitution, pedophilia, bestiality, premarital sex, and same sex intimacy – anything outside God’s design. \* What is God’s loving design?**

**Every time we talk about this there is the possibility of offending & uncomfortableness. The Bible is very confronting.**

**Heb 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all…**

**The creator’s design for marriage is to be honored – by all.**

**“Well love is love.” One question – Who defines what love is?**

**Do we (the creation) or God (the creator and designer) we like to define what love is based on feelings and desires, led my senses.**

**God defines what Love is. “Well, God is wrong, the Bible is wrong”**

**And there lies the issue. We don’t like what it says – so it’s wrong.**

**“Well, God wants me happy” - No, he wants you in his will. That’s where joy is. God is not a killjoy but is opposed to what kills joy.**

**What is God’s design to be honored by all? What is undefiled sex?**

**Genesis 2:23 The man (Human) said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ (Ishah - feminine) for she was taken out of man.” (ISH – masculine) 2 separate kinds like the rest of living creatures.**

**BTW – that is first recorded words of man in the Bible.**

**24 That is why (for this reason) a man (Ish) leaves his father and mother and is united (cleave) to his wife, (Ishah) and they become one flesh. (marriage begins when you leave your Ish and Ishah) 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

* **We see the design: Receive (dating), Leave (marriage), Cleave (union), One (sex) God’s design has been under attach ever since.**

**Jesus later quotes the same passage several thousand years later –Mark 10:6 From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male (Ish) and female.’ (Ishah) (Gods’ design from the start – man and woman) 7 ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast (cleave - united) to his wife, 8 and the two (Ish and Ishah) shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.**

**The 2 not many - 1 man and 1 woman - intimacy as 1 flesh.**

**God’s gift of marriage and sex – The designers design**

**9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (What God has put in place - God’s design, divine union – don’t let anyone tear this apart)**

**Jesus started with, “from the beginning” God’s forever design. Jesus says marriage is an (Ish) and (Ishah) – becoming one.**

**Sex and our desires do not define us – God defines us.**

**“But this is what I want – this is who I desire” - Mark 8:34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

* **Our definition of marriage and sexuality will either be defined by the LORD or by the Liar (Satan = the deceiver)**

**Porneia is the defiance of God’s written, established creation & design. When we ignore God’s design it’s called sin = lawlessness (1 John 3:4) Its creation telling the creator they know better (Rom 1)**

**The warning**

**Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.**

**This is a loving God’s reminder – to love what God loves.**

**\*\* At the end of the day God defines love and marriage, and we either accept it or ignore it - we will face God with what we decide about it.**

**We are called to holiness – which means set apart and different. We are called to be the light and salt to the world. We will stand out. We won’t see eye to eye with the world on these issues.**

**But Know - we are called to be different, not to dictate how others should live. We are not to force this on unbelievers – We point to the cross – not to policy.**

**We share the gospel and live the truth and watch what happens.**

**That was fun… let’s talk about the next issue… MONEY- 3 thought**

**Knowing Jesus changes how we view money**

**Heb 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money (obsession for more) and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Deut 31:6) 6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (Psalm 118:6)**

**\*\* Money is a terrible lover - it never satisfies, it only wants more of you**

**“Keep your lives free from the love of money”**

**Four words upfront, “Keep your lives free” - who would not want that? Yet - obsessions for possessions brings the opposite.**

**Late 1800’s Millionaire Bernard Baruch – one of the richest men alive at the time was asked, “How much money does it take for a rich man to be satisfied?” Baruch answered, “Just a million more than he has.”**

**There is no security and comfort in money – it is unreliable and only breeds more hunger and thirst.**

**1 Timothy 6:9 Those who want to get rich (When the desire to acquire goes haywire – thinking the more we have the more we will be happy) fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. (Plunge = to drown - money makes a terrible flotation device) 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (Money is not evil – it is neutral - love of money is the root…) Some people, eager (hungry) for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

**The more monster has an insatiable appetite.**

**We see this again and again even among Christians and even ministers. What is meant to be a tool turns into a trap!**

**We were created not to pursue things but to pursue the king**

**That is why the things of this world are never satisfying.**

**Luke 16:13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” 14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.**

**How do you know if you might love money? You hear this and tune out, sneer at it, or writing this off as stupid or even get angry.**

**This is why the Bible speaks so much about generosity and faithful giving to kingdom work – “laying up treasure in heaven”**

**It not only provides for kingdom work – but it also keeps money in its place – it breaks the chains of materialism.**

**Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have**

**\*\*Contentment is great wealth**

**You want to be rich - want to have true wealth? Be content.**

**1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**

**Learning to be thankful is vital to contentment.**

**Contentment is not a financial issue – but a heart issue.**

**(Paul says it this way) Philippians 4:11 I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

**Contentment is where we are in Christ – not where we are in life.**

**If I have a lot – God will enable me. It if I have very little – God will enable me. If I am sick, If I am healthy – if I am loved, if I am lonely. Because I know who is with me, I can be content – at peace.**

**We rejoice in who we have, not what we have!**

**Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (There is only one who can say that) 6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (What can the collector do to me, the bank, the economy)**

**\*\*The Lord’s faithfulness is completely satisfying**

**We can bring every concern we have to God - our help and comfort. Our hope is not in the market and investments**

**– but the LORD God who holds all things in his hands.**

**Maybe today you hear this word about marriage, sex, and money thin think - “I have blown my money and spent my life chasing my flesh…”**

**Let’s be honest many are guilty of both of these areas – is there hope?**

**At the heart of Hebrews is - we need to rely on the power of the cross**

**Hebrews 10:12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God…**

**Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.**

**Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”**

**Hebrews 10:17 …then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”**

**Hebrews points to the power of the cross…**

* **To forgive our failures – grace for our mess ups and sin**
* **To empower our future – hope after mistakes – new beginnings**
* **To embolden our present – temptation and confidence in Jesus.**