

Do Not Fear to Take Mary

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will and guidance in all aspects of life, especially in matters of marriage and decision-making.

Duration: 59:42

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Genesis 24:4, Proverbs 18:22, Proverbs 19:14, Matthew 1:20, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 7:9

Topics: "Engagement"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about his search for a wife. He emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance in relationships and shares how God spoke to him through a Bible verse. The speaker encourages the audience to pray and seek God's will when considering engagement and marriage. He also highlights the potential challenges and pitfalls in relationships and advises caution.

Transcript

The theme is engagement. I'd like to speak about that. And the text is Matthew chapter 1. Verse 20b.

And this verse is very relevant today. It fits perfectly. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife.

And he said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife. And he said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife. Now, Ralph was praying for a girl so he could get engaged.

And God spoke to him through this verse, Ralph, don't be afraid to take Mary, in Zulu and in German, it's Maria, as your wife. If you want to get engaged, it's good that you pray about it. Because boys-girls relationship, that's slippery ice.

It's more slippery than ice. Many go wrong, make the wrong decision. They don't ask God, they don't pray about it.

They just go and look. If they find a girl to their liking, got the figure as they like, then they think that's the one. But it's not God's will, it is their will.

The Zulus say, the most beautiful peach has got the biggest worm inside. The old time, our parents, the old people, when they wanted a wife, they looked whether she wasn't lazy, whether she could cook. But

nowadays, that's thrown away overboard.

It just goes according to the figure, like a Coca-Cola bottle upside down. That's a man. But if you put it the right way, it's a woman.

But the young people nowadays, just the figure, and then they get married to the person. And the person maybe doesn't even know how to bake a cake, potatoes, rice. You want some nice rice and it turns into a porridge.

And then you'll have to start teaching her. And whoa, if you don't know how to cook, then you're both in the pit. And if you pray, make sure that you pray to the right God, not to the wrong one.

You can pray to yourself as well. That's wrong. You know about the girl who was so troubled? Her years were going on, and she counted them, and she didn't get a husband.

She didn't get a husband. She didn't get a husband. They got engaged left and right, and they didn't know.

She didn't know what to do. She was so, what's the right English word at last? So desperate that one night she says, I'm not afraid of a lion or an elephant or a snake anymore. She went out into the dark, under a huge tree, and she knelt down and prayed.

She says, God, please give me a husband. She got so emotional, louder and louder and louder at last. She literally yelled and said, oh God, give me a husband.

And she didn't know there was an owl in the tree. And the owl awoke out of the sleep. And the owl said, who? She said, just anybody, Lord.

Just anybody, Lord. She said, who? She said, just anybody, Lord. Just anybody, Lord.

Don't waste girls. Don't waste your time to pray for a man. There are more important things to do and to pray for.

God knows if you need a man, he'll bring. Even if you're a widow, don't worry about it. I said last Sunday, you are free to serve the Lord.

But you men, pray about the right one. And let not an owl tell you or your own personal feelings. You ask, is it God? And I asked Ralph, Ralph, why do you want to get engaged to that girl? And then he told me the story that he prayed and God spoke.

Take Mary. And this girl's name is Mary in English. In German, Maria.

But he didn't want to take it literally. He thought maybe it just means that name symbolically. I think he even shared it with his father or mother.

Sometimes that is very good if a child is close to the parent. And then one Sunday when he came here, he says, Lord, I don't know. But I pray.

If you've got someone for me, grant that if I go into the auditorium, she'll be there. And when he went to the place where he sat, who was here in front of him? Mary. Maria.

And then he was shocked. Could it really be this girl? Literally. He prayed again.

He opened his Bible. And he read the portion about a virtuous woman. A virtuous woman.

Blessed is he who can find a virtuous woman. She is worth more than pearls or diamonds. And she is a virtuous woman.

How she can run a business, not going bankrupt, but making money. That's the grace of God as well, to work forward and not backward. And then he said, Uncle Elo, I say yes to God's will.

Now, I want to tell you this morning, many know my story. But I want to tell you how I got married. I hope that it will help some young people.

When Jesus came into my heart as a young man, I had no feeling for the Zulus. But when Jesus came into my heart, the first thing I wanted is that the Zulus would experience what I have experienced. I want the Zulus to experience what I have experienced.

Tennis was my idol. If I didn't play tennis, I was sick. Literally sick.

But strangely, when Christ came into my life, the first thing I had a craving, I had a desire. A yearning that the blacks could experience what I experienced. I had dreams of making money one day because of sport.

But when Christ came in, it just changed. Sport wasn't there anymore, and my sport was now to go from hut to hut. Sometimes the huts were full of smoke, and I would sit down and speak to them about God.

But when Jesus came into my heart, the first thing I wanted is that the Zulus would experience what I have experienced. Many was nothing. I said, I don't worry about my inheritance.

I'll go with my broken suitcase and some clothes in there. If I've just got a bicycle, I prayed for a bicycle that I can drive up and down the hills to tell the people about Jesus. If I've got a bicycle, I'll pray for a pickup.

And if I've got a pickup, I'll pray for a tent. When I've got a tent, then I'll go and preach to the people in the hills, in the countryside. And if it is God's will that I should get married one day, I'll get married after that.

And I went to my parents, and I said, God has called me, I'm going. I didn't know what my father would say, how he would react. It was easier to speak to the mother.

But I remember I went to him and I said, Papa, I feel God wants me to preach the gospel, that I should forsake everything. And he said, Elu, I'm so glad. Then I'll have at least one son in my family who will be praying for me every day.

And it didn't worry him. He wasn't ashamed of the fact he'd go and tell other people that my child is going to become a preacher. And I went to my parents, and I said, God has called me, I'm going.

And I went to my parents, and I said, God has called me, I'm going. I had a friend who was very close to me. We were like twins.

And then one day I said, God, if you call me, call my friend as well, then I won't be alone, we'll be two. He attended another school. Then he came during the holidays we were together.

And I wanted to tell him about what happened to me. But before I could say something, he told me about girls. And he said, Elu, do you know, boys can sleep with girls.

And you know, during the holidays, when we come together, then the boys come, and they tell us with how many girls they have slept. School boys, sleeping, having intercourse with young girls. Whites.

Whites. One would expect that of the heathen. Whites.

How the white man has fallen. Like Lucifer. That angel of light.

And he became a devil. Angel of light. Angel of light.

I can understand why the white man is in such a position as he is in South Africa. I can understand it, and why some have left. God's blessing can't be upon it.

Only a curse. The white man has brought a curse upon himself. And one Sunday afternoon or Saturday afternoon, they said, Elu, come along.

So we were a bunch of boys in the car. We went to Lilienthal Church on the way to the cemetery. And suddenly there were a few girls.

And then the one boy opened his window, hid out of the window, the other one hid out of the window, the other one. And they kissed the girls outside. And that was the last straw.

Then I said, you are all of the devil. I never went with them again. My best friend isn't my friend to this day.

Some that were close to me are always parted to this very day. By God's grace, I went alone, and I preached the gospel. Till I was close to 40 years old.

It was 40 years I had my first child. I never thought that I'll get married. And there was a vision one day that I'm a priest of my own choosing.

Priests usually don't get married. Catholic priests, some other priests as well, they don't get married. You know that at Curlinan, we always preached in 52, 53, not far from Curlinan diamond mine, where they found the biggest diamond.

And there was a little village, and a Jew who came from Germany, fled Hitler, came to South Africa, and had a big butchery. And there was a Catholic priest who always came and bought meat at this butchery. And he said to the Jew, hey friend, when are we going to eat pork? A Jew doesn't eat pork.

A Muslim doesn't eat pork as well. It's a terrible thing. And it hurt the Jew.

And he always played the fool with him. Hey, when are we going to eat pork together? And this Jew thought many Jews are bright up here. And then he came in again, like a cocky rooster.

Hey, Jew, Jew boy, when are we going to eat pork together? He says, look my friend, on your wedding day. Now, they don't get married. But that priest never touched pork again.

So, one day, I took my Bible and I read. And I read in Isaiah. I think it's 42, round about there.

Where God says, I will pour my spirit upon your children. Now, I should have taken it spiritually. But I took it literally.

And I said, no Lord, I closed my Bible, I knelt by my bed. Here in the hospital room building. I said, no God, I can't get married now and have children.

Now, you can imagine having a child. The first child was 40 years. If the child is 1 year old, 2 year old, you're 42 and you can't roll around and play with the child.

And so my eldest daughter always said, Papa, come play with me. Play. I said, my child, I'm too old.

I'm too old. I can't play with you anymore. And then she wrote a composition at school about her father, and she says, my father is very, very old, but he's not stupid, he's clever.

The teachers, they hear the stories from home. And I said, Lord, I can't have children, I'm too old. My brothers have their grandchildren and children, and I should start with children.

And then one day we had a co-workers meeting, the room was filled with co-workers, we were sitting in a circle. And my brother Heino was there, after I had given the message, and had prayed, he started. And he says, you know what kind of a wife Eilu has got to get.

And he went on in detail what my life, wife, must be like. Now this was a very sensitive thing in my life. It started boiling within.

But I can't show it, because all the co-workers are there. I can't be unkind to him. I just had to swallow it.

And he carried on. He says, when Eilu gets married, he's got to get such a wife and such a wife. If he doesn't, the whole work will break down.

And I had to wait still until he finished. When he had finished, I said, Ach Heinu, could you just come with me, round the corner. It boiled a bit inside.

I thought, well, I'll give him a piece of my mind. I said, Heinu, why do you speak about such a thing? About me getting married and getting a wife? He must have seen that I was a bit upset. And he was so innocent.

He said, no Eilu, I didn't want to say anything wrong. I was just saying, if you get married, you've got to get married to the right wife. If you don't get the right wife, it will be difficult for you and for the work.

But he says, I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I told you that I spoke. I couldn't reprimand him.

I couldn't find fault with him. He spoke in a perfect spiritual way. I said, all right.

We went back into the room. I said, Eilu, all right, there's no need to get married. It's not for me.

I'm just saying, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Eilu. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, Eilu. And then, my father, he always came and built here, the house I'm in, he built, many buildings he built. I said, Papa, sleep here.

No, he says, I've only got one bed. He'd drive an hour, plus minus, in a pickup, with people, the next morning he'd be here early, that's how he would go. So one evening, I said, Papa, can you do me a favor? Could you build onto my bedroom a porch, with glass, that the sun can shine into the room from the morning, till the setting of the sun.

I come back very late, twelve o'clock, one o'clock, sometimes two o'clock, the house is cold, but it would be so nice if I come home and I find the house and the room warm. And he abruptly says, no, I won't do it. I thought, I didn't know my father like that, he was always kind to me, not once that he said he won't do it.

All of a sudden, he says, no, I won't do it. I said, but Papa, why not? He says, I'll do it when you've got married. Before you get married, I won't do it.

I said, Papa, don't joke about such things. He says, Elo, I'm not joking, I mean what I say. Before I die, I want to see your little ones.

Before I die. And I won't do it. Elo, I'm telling you the truth.

You get married first, then I'll do it. I had to be quiet, it was my father. Now you can see it went over months.

I got sinned. I didn't have to run like my friend here that runs, is a springboard, runs 10, 5 kilometers. This was like in revival times when we prayed for revival.

And in that time, for weeks, I preached every day here at Sisabantu about God's will. And I took Abram, how he sent his servant to fetch a woman for his son, and the son couldn't choose. And he accepted her out of God's hands.

He couldn't say, oh, her nose isn't right. Oh, her face isn't as I like. Her figure isn't right.

No, he took her out of God's hand into his mother's room, and he was comforted and placed. I went one evening into my cold room. My father strucked, he won't build a porch onto it.

And I went into the bed. I don't know whether I was asleep. I think I was half asleep, half awake.

And I heard a person speaking in the room, three words in English. It is K. I heard it with my ears. I quickly switched on the light.

There was no room, no person in the room. I looked under my bed. There was nobody lying under my bed.

I got out of my bed, went into the bathroom. There was nobody in the bathroom. I got up through the passage into the sitting room.

Nobody there. I went into the kitchen. Nobody there.

The doors were closed. Oh. I said, now the struggle starts.

Was this God, or was this the devil speaking to me? The Zulus say a preacher and the wife can't be both good. One will be good, one will be bad. Now, if I'm kind to the blacks, and then they go to my house, they knock at the door, and the wife opens with a long, sour face, she will spoil everything.

I said, Lord, I can't get married. And I've got to know, is this God, or is it the devil speaking to me? I said, well, I must test it and prove it. I can't say, give me a dream.

I can't say, speak to me. Because I couldn't trust myself anymore. And I sat in my sitting room.

I said, now what shall I do? How will I get out of this mess? And then I thought of one of the co-workers. This person was always the same. And I respected this person.

I said, Lord, give this person tonight a vision that I needn't doubt again in my life whether it's of God or of the devil. I had not told one soul in this world for about three months what I had heard that night. And as I thought about that, I said, oh God, but I'm a real fool.

I'm a donkey. I'm an ass. Now I pray that you will show that person, and then that person knows what is in my heart in keeping me busy.

And then I said in German. I don't know what, can one say that in English? You can't speak through a flower, can't you? Durch die Blume, that means you don't speak directly, but indirectly and the person doesn't know what it is about. Like a missionary, he went to see some black men working in the field.

And when he got there, they said, oh, there's a white goat that is troubling us. Always when we work, it goes into the fields and eats everything. And he said, well, why don't you catch and kill that goat? And he didn't know that he was the white goat.

The Zulus can talk like that very well. You think they speak about that in the meantime they're speaking about you. That's how it is.

The people are always talking about what is going on in the world. If you want to know what is going on in the world, you should go and look for it. The people don't know what is going on in the world.

You go and you find out what is going on, and you know what is going on. That's what is going on in the world. That's what it's all about.

This is not about the world. I said, Lord, you can speak that that person won't know what it's about. And as I had said that, knock, knock at my door, come in, and it was this person.

I said, yes, what would you like? I said, may I visit Uncle Fredo at Mapumulu tonight and sleep there? He's invited me so often. And I thought, oh, things are working out the wrong way. I said, you can go.

And as the person left, I called, hey, come back. I said, when you go, take a pen along and a paper. You never know, maybe you have a dream or a vision.

Just write it down. The next person, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, the person doesn't come. What shall I do now? I can't show that I'm eager to hear.

I thought, well, this is the time to stay cool. Went around, saw the person. I said, hey, just come here.

I said, by the way, did you have a dream or anything last night? I said it again. She says, yes, but it's all dhirmakar. It's just a lot of nonsense.

I think I must search my life. There are things wrong. I just dreamt nonsense.

I said, oh, doesn't matter. You can bring it. I'll read it.

If it's just nonsense, you'll have to search your life and get right with God. And I bring it. She brought it.

He brought it. I read. I had to speak at the training college.

I said, oh, it's going there. She, my wife, taught at the teacher's training college. So I had to speak there.

And I got up. There were three inspectors that were judging what I'm going to say. The one, whether it's of the Lord.

The other one, whether it's biblical. The other, whether it's right. When I got into that hall, it was filled with students studying for his teachers.

I got up as an old man. I said, children, tell me, what is the name of my wife? They said, no, no, no, that's not fair. You can't ask us the name of your wife.

You are not even married yet. That's not fair. You can't ask us such a question.

You're not even married. Then I said, look, students, I can guarantee before heaven and earth that what I heard that night was the living God speaking to me. I hid my answer.

But it was still difficult. I will say this. He tried to evade the issue.

But time has passed. It's just about one o'clock. I must stop.

So you won't get the dessert of the matter and the cherry on the cake. I think that's enough. It still carries on for a long time.

One day, if we have time, maybe I can say how it carried on. That's how I got my wife. I never doubted once that this is God's will.

Whatever happened in health, in sickness, I could accept it out of God's hands. She was a teacher. It's not always easy going.

If you get married to a teacher or a sister, a nurse, because the teachers, they know. They speak to children. And the nurses know they have got to do with patients.

Take this tablet and now you've got to wash. Now you've got to do that. It wasn't always easy going, but by the grace of God, He gave me the strength that I could be there when she died.

And she says, the king is coming. And I rejoiced because it's the task of the man to train his wife, to sanctify her, make her holy, that she's without spot or wrinkle when she has to stand before God. God has got to work everywhere.

I can't say I never made a mistake, but to get married, boys, is one, is the greatest challenge in this world. You can't just say yes, yes, yes to your wife. You've got to love her as the Lord Jesus did.

You've got to cleanse her. You've got to sanctify her. You've got to put her before the throne of Christ without wrinkle and spot.

It's a challenge. And you men, you pray that you won't fail in your task. I've spoken enough.

We'd better stop now. Peter. And you men don't just behave anyway.

Sometimes the men behave worst before their wives. How can she honor you? How can she respect you? If you behave like that, wives are stupid. They've got sharp eyes to see.

Sometimes they look right through you. So, be a good example. As Christ was to the church, you be to your wife.

Shall we pray? We thank you, Lord, for this time of sharing. We thank you that it was Ralph's engagement. Everybody has got his calling.

Maybe some have still got thoughts of marriage. Teach them what it means to walk with God. That they won't take any step out of their own.

But look up to you and say, God, take my hand and lead me. Amen.

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