

The Great Reward for Sacrificial Communication

by Jeff Keehn

The sermon emphasizes the importance of sacrificial communication and holy conversation in hastening the coming of the day of God, and encourages listeners to cultivate intimacy in their relationships with God and with others.

Duration: 1:41:05

Scripture: Malachi 3:16, 1 Timothy 3:15, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 10:19-20, Hebrews 10:35-36, Hebrews 13:16, 2 Peter 3:11

Topics: "Communication"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of plowing with a horse to illustrate how life can sometimes throw us off track. He emphasizes the importance of refocusing and not dwelling on past mistakes. The speaker also discusses the qualifications for those who want to prepare for the Lord's return, highlighting the importance of ruling one's own household well. The sermon concludes with a message about the great reward for sacrificial communication and holy conversation, urging listeners to be ready for the signs of the Lord's coming.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Good morning. Praise the Lord for being our great conductor.

The symphony that he brings us, the themes from Sunday to Sunday. I've heard the theme of loving relationships being lifted up once again in our midst. And it's been such an encouragement.

You never know sometimes if you're hearing from the Lord and the direction He's telling you to go. But through what's been shared already this morning, I have that assurance in my soul. We want to continue to look at God's love for us.

In fact, I believe it's the greatest love story in all of Scripture. So, we'll open our Bibles in a moment, but let's pray to the lover of our soul. Father, we do thank you this morning for loving us so much that you gave your only begotten Son.

And you express your love for us through Jesus. And you even use relationships that we can understand. And that of little children to their fathers and mothers.

That of brothers and sisters. And perhaps most intimate of all, that of husband and wife. Father, we thank you that we are the beloved bride of the Bridegroom that cometh.

Oh Lord, would you open up to us this love letter this morning. We want to see Jesus. We want to know His love.

We want to know His mysterious yet wonderful plan that is about to unfold for His church. For the Bride of Christ. Father, I pray that you would give me utterance this morning.

That I could speak your truth boldly and clearly as I ought to. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The title of the message the Lord has given me to share this morning is The Great Reward for Sacrificial Communication and Holy Conversation. The message title comes from a combination of three passages of Scripture. I'd like to read them to you first.

Then we can turn to their contexts. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 16 says, But to do good and to communicate, forget not. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

And then 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 11 says, Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. And then the third passage in Hebrews says, Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise for yet a little while.

And he that shall come will come and will not tarry. I thank my brother John this morning for listening to the Lord and giving an opening. And even for some of the illustrations he chose to use.

Illustrations that we can understand. He made mention of another John, John Esch. And his trip to a distant land.

To John, was it be engaged or was it the courtship? Your trip to visit, is it your fiance or I don't know the other term. You are engaged. That's something that we all can relate to.

One of the things I've enjoyed so much in the last seven years of living here and fellowshiping with this, my home fellowship, has been the way we lift up weddings and marriages. And not only the wedding and the marriage, but the process that leads up to it. It's been beautiful.

It's been so encouraging. You know, as I have reached back into my past and tried to share with my family and some of the people that I used to fellowship and even minister to, it seems that despite some of the

conservative choices we're making and what they would call radical Christianity, when I start talking about courtship, when I start talking about the way our youth court one another and how it leads to beautiful, godly marriages, it seems that barriers come down. And countenances lift up.

But marriages are hurting. Families are being attacked. We're at war.

Satan despises marriage. So when you mention a godly courtship, even that's a strange word for the world. We talk about dating.

Some bring it even lower and talk about shacking up together. But courtship and a young man seeking to be engaged to a young woman and the pure process that they go through, boy, eyes and ears perk up. I want to talk about that.

The greatest courtship that's going on in history. The greatest engagement that's going on in history. And very soon, the greatest wedding that history will ever know.

That is that of the bridegroom and his bride. I don't want to talk about the theological or the eschatological aspects of it. I think we could get bogged down in that and miss the love relationship that's revealed in it.

That's what I want to talk about this morning. The great reward for sacrificial communion and holy conversation, the great reward is the marriage of Jesus Christ to His bride. I believe very possibly in our generation.

But there is a condition for that to be made. Just as John's fiance had a condition. She had to say, yes.

I desire this. I'm willing to move forward. What a beautiful picture.

Going to a distant land. To find a bride, to become engaged. Then to go back home and make preparations, only to return some day and to be married and to take Him back to the land of His Father's.

His Father's house. It's a beautiful picture. This young couple is courting.

Yet we've seen it many a time. It's supposed to be that way. The marriage supper of the Lamb shouldn't be something controversial or confusing or worth debate.

It should give us one thing and one thing only. The Bible says comfort one another with these words. Oh, it's a great comfort.

It really is a great comfort. Now, turn with me to the context of the verses that I read. And let's examine them together.

Let's look at this love letter that the Lord has for us. I'd like us first to turn to Hebrews chapter 11, beginning with verse 5. I read to you from Hebrews chapter 13, where it says that good communication is something we shouldn't forget to do, to engage ourselves in, because with that kind of sacrifice, and that's an interesting word, it's well-pleasing to God, the Bible says. And over here in Hebrews chapter 11, we're going to see the word please again come up.

Verse 5, it says, By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. There's that word again.

Enoch had something about his relationship with God that was pleasing. He was a man of faith. We read this morning, the onset of the message, that God is well-pleased with the sacrifices of communication.

It seems to me that we need to define what communication is. Communication is the building blocks of relationship. There's another word for it.

There's a number of ways to communicate. We can communicate in a casual way, in a light way, as one acquaintance would to another. Or we can communicate as friend to friend, heart to heart.

That's the deeper kind of communication that I want to talk a little bit about this morning. I turn with me to 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 11. Again, paying attention to the context about conversation.

2 Peter chapter 3, verse 11. And here's the result. Looking for and hastening.

The word unto is not there in the original language. Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. We'll stop there.

A bridegroom and his bride in close, intimate, holy conversation hastens the day of the wedding. I think of some of the courtships that seem to have hastened right along. I wonder how much communication was a part of that process.

I'm sure it was a great part of that process. Think of the bride awaiting her bridegroom. Think of how, especially as my wife and I recorded, it was long distance.

I was in one state and she was in another. Oh, I couldn't wait to get a letter from her. I'd run out to the mailbox and I'd read it and no sooner did I finish reading it that I'd sit down and write one.

And sometimes I'd send that letter and get another response before that one even got there. And vice versa. We love to communicate in those years.

It hastened the day of our wedding. It made time fly. But I think it's even deeper than that.

I think from God's perspective, it's even deeper than that. As we look around today, we see signs of His coming that should excite us. We see signs of His coming that should encourage us.

The Bible says that these signs would comfort us if we're ready. If we're in communication. If our communication is sacrificial.

If our communication is a holy conversation. The signs that are before us should encourage us. Listen to what the Gospel of Luke says.

And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. Quite a paradox. The bride is anticipating His coming.

And she's excited. She's looking forward to it. There's no fear.

There's a longing. But everything around her is in perplexity. There's turmoil.

There's the exact opposite. There's a dread. There's a fear.

Right now a lot of the Jewish people and interestingly enough a lot of some of my former friends and acquaintances the denomination that I grew up so to speak in are talking a lot about the year 2014 and 2015 because there are some particular signs that their eyes are upon. The Jewish people especially observe feasts. Passover.

Tabernacles. The Feast of Trumpets. Rosh Hashanah.

The New Year. They observe these feasts and in addition to the feasts they tend to look for signs of the coming of Messiah. It seems that certain denominations are just as intrigued.

And they put a lot of time and effort into studying the signs. In the year 2014 and 2015 there's going to be an interesting coincidence. Two solar eclipses and four lunar eclipses.

All of them occurring on Jewish holy days. The last time this happened was in 1948. Then it went quite a while.

Then it happened again in 1967. Right during the time when Israel became a nation and then when Jerusalem became her capital. Are those coincidences? The Jewish rabbis say that coincidence is not a kosher word.

Lunar eclipses predicted for Passover on April 15, 2014. Another one, October 8, 2014 on the Feast of Tabernacles. And then another one on April 4, 2015 on the Feast of Tabernacles.

Or the Passover. The Feast of Tabernacles, September 28, 2015. And then two solar eclipses are predicted.

Nisan 1st or the New Year which is March 20, 2015 and the Feast of Trumpets, September 13, 2015. By the way, these aren't predictions. These are facts.

This will happen. Just astronomical facts. You can study the course of our planet, the moon, and with a great deal of accuracy know exactly when these are going to happen.

But then there's others who are predicting we're not even going to make it that far. Have you heard about the end of the Mayan calendar? The year 2012. Supposedly on the winter solstice, December 21, 2012.

On that winter solstice the Mayan calendar ends. There's not a December 22nd. People have noted that this was one of the most advanced civilizations in history and they too could predict lunar and solar eclipses within seconds.

Our current calendar, 360, what is it, 5 1/4 days was in effect in the Mayan culture. These are smart men. They were very cultic as well.

For some mysterious reason they chose to end their calendar on December 21, 2012. Deciding that great cataclysmic changes would happen at the conclusion of their calendar. Others are saying we're in for an even rougher time, even closer in the year 2010, which we're now in.

Meteorologists are predicting that it's going to parallel the 2005 hurricane activity. Remember when Hurricane Katrina hit? At the time it was first spotted there, it was just a small tropical storm. Interestingly enough, it was spotted on the day that President George Bush's roadmap to peace for the partitioning of Israel was ratified.

Recently I was traveling to the airport to pick up my brother Ephraim and his family on the return from Ireland and the plane was delayed. There was an Iceland volcano that erupted. They just got out before their flight was delayed, but soon after several thousand flights had been canceled.

Another eruption is predicted to happen soon. Politically, North Korea is selling nuclear arms as well as technology to Syria and Iran. In her own country, President Obama and his administration are pressuring, like never before, a faithful ally, the nation of Israel, and calling for her nuclear disarmament.

That could spell the end of Israel as a free state. Her weapons are deterrents. Without them, her small size and small military is really no match for some of these massive armies that could easily invade her.

The U.S. debt load has tipped to 13 trillion. How much longer can this artificial stimulus of the economy keep up? Bank crises in Europe. Truly, as I read through some of these signs, Luke 21-25 is being fulfilled.

There shall be signs in the sun and the moon and in the stars and upon the earth. Distress of nations with perplexity. The sea and the waves roaring.

But what happens if all these dates, if all these signs, if all these predictions come to pass, kind of like Y2K, the year 2000 and nothing happens? We hold our breath for 2012 and the end of the Mayan calendar and nothing happens. We hold our breath again for 2014 and then 2015 we watch these lunar eclipses and these solar eclipses and nothing happens. Does Scripture speak of that possibility? Or is it just full of signs and wonders and dread and perplexity? And other Scriptures even address this.

And this one has me wondering. You're there in 2 Peter. Just go back a few verses and look at the context again.

Remember, in Scripture, context is king. We have to study Scripture in its context. Interpreting Scripture with Scripture.

2 Peter 3-4 and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of. By the word of God, the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water were by the world that then was being overflowed with water perished.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, there's our theme. It's what we've heard talked about already this morning.

We've been hearing again and again through the Holy Spirit. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing. That one day is with the Lord is a thousand years and a thousand years is one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved.

What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness looking for and hastening, hastening the coming of the day of God. The great reward for sacrificial communication and holy conversation. Could we be a generation that will meet our bridegroom in the air? It's an important question.

But here's an even more important question. Do you desire that this morning? Or does that bring perplexity? What bride wouldn't want to be with her bridegroom? Could it be that in the busyness of life when we should be slowing down and having a deeper, more intimate relationship, not only with God vertically, but with one another horizontally, could it be that such intimacy scares us? We pray to Jesus, whom we have not seen, but to see Him face to face. It's almost startling.

It's almost shocking if your system, if your spiritual system isn't used to that kind of communion, to that kind of communication, to that kind of interaction. You know, I didn't see my bride for some days before we were married. We wrote.

But I should have thought about her. I should have listened to her voice on the phone. I should have studied her letters.

It was though she were there sometimes. I looked at her picture. I counted the days.

Yesterday, we just celebrated 18 years of marriage together. I like to look back through my journals. I've been an avid journal writer for a number of years.

Somehow it's brought stability. It's brought courage to my world. And I've looked back at those days counting down to May 29th, 1992.

I remember when I hit the ten day mark. How exciting it was. I couldn't believe it.

There's that passage in the Scriptures that says we were like people who dreamed. That was me. I couldn't wait to be with my bride.

It wasn't a fearful thing. You see, we'd been preparing. We'd been communicating.

Great sacrifice. It really wasn't a sacrifice at all. You should have seen our phone bills.

Great sacrifices. But it had a goal. We wanted to know each other.

We wanted to understand each other. We were making sacrifices to communicate. Both of us came from broken homes.

Was there the possibility that our marriage wouldn't work out? That we might lose interest in one another the way we had modeled to us growing up? We wanted to make sure that we were sure. And I'll tell you what. When that wedding day came, I was so sure.

I still lost my breath as she walked into the room. I still just about fainted. It was an amazing time.

Of all pictures, our Father chose to make this one between His bridegroom, the church, His bride, and His bridegroom, His Son. It's interesting to study signs. But to me, the greatest sign of the Lord's coming, the greatest indication that Jesus Christ is coming is when people began to communicate intimately with God, lovingly with God.

And it shows in the way they relate to those closest in their lives. I've gotten a bit weary of the signs. There's been a lot of them, especially where I came from.

But there is one that I do not get tired of. And that is the intimacy that I see happening. When brothers and sisters get right with the Lord, they get right with those closest to them.

Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes you feel like you're losing your mind. And you really are.

You're losing your natural mind and having it replaced with the mind of Christ. He's preparing you for a wedding. He doesn't want you to faint as that day draws near.

He wants you to run with anticipation and confidence. You're invited. You're His bride.

So let me ask again. Do you desire that day? And if so, what are you doing about it? You say, well, I didn't think I could do anything. It's just kind of up to Him.

Oh, the Lord gives this analogy of a bride and a bridegroom because He wants us to see that there's a relationship. It's a mystery, but there is a relationship. But this word hastening that somehow implies we have a part to play in how soon He returns.

He wants us to see the human, the tangible aspect is such a tremendous mystery. That of His coming. We play a part.

That's the most encouraging sign there is. But to do good and to communicate, forget not. For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death And his baptism was not found because God had translated him. For before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Think about the key generations down through biblical history who were rewarded by significant events. Open your Bible and don't just look at the event, but study the lives of those that were there.

Think about Noah who was delivered from a tremendous event, the flood. Noah poured himself into building an ark. He poured himself into his sons and his wife.

You know, in all his preaching, his wife, his three sons, and their three wives were his converts. Think of the communication that was happening. As these young men are building an ark and one by one, as perhaps he and his wife found a suitable helpmeet for them, and then those courting young ladies had to explain to their families, I'm engaged to the guy whose dad's building the ark.

Think of the level of communication that had to happen. Ham looked to his father and said, Dad, are we really sure this is right? This is right. Dad, it's uncomfortable when I go to the lumberyard and get the materials I need and people look at us and ask, how's the ark coming? What's rain? We've never seen rain before.

How are we going to get this thing to the ocean? Noah had a plan and he communicated it with his sons. They didn't lose heart. We could chuckle at that, but I think it was very real and I think it lasted for a very long time.

There were some heart-to-heart talks. You can imagine how relieved every one of them was when they stepped into that ark and the rain began to fall. And then outside, after the hand of the Lord had closed that door, fists began to pound.

We didn't want anything to do with that kind of communication. You can bet, you can be assured how comforting it was to look back on. We listened to Dad.

Mama's eye was sharp when she helped find a suitable helpmate. Never mind what everybody else said. I listened to Mama.

I listened to Papa. I've got a wife and we are in an ark and we're safe. That was not an accident.

That came under a great deal of relationship and relational strain. Think of Abraham, the father of faith. Chosen the father of a nation.

When he left Ur of the Chaldeans, You know, if you do a careful study in the book of Acts, his father Tir was called. But he didn't go. He settled down in a place called Haran and with his son, he named it after his son.

And they got into industry. They built a name for themselves. He got comfortable.

But Abraham, he set out with faith. Think how he and Sarah had to communicate. Think how they had to communicate with their household.

Think of the depth of the conversation they had as year after year went by and there was no child. No promised child. He was as good as dead in his body, the Scripture says.

But he didn't waver in his faith. What does faith come by? Hearing. And hearing by the Word of God.

Who knew the Scriptures better in his household than his own wife? Think of the intimate fellowship. She had heard the Word of God and was standing on it. He had heard the Word of God and was standing on it.

Yet, even with all that, they failed. They got an Ishmael. Then there was repentance.

They got an Isaac. Hallelujah. The sacrifice of communication.

Think of two men named Jephunneh and Nun. The father of Caleb. The father of Joshua.

Men who were stuck in Egypt. But watch their little boys growing up and there was something different about them. These weren't slaves.

They weren't made of the stuff of slavery. And the names of Jephunneh and Nun are mentioned whenever Caleb and Joshua are mentioned. Often they're mentioned, I should say.

Think of the communication between those fathers and those sons. Your lives are hard, boys. You're under the hands of cruel taskmasters.

But there is a promise land coming for you. There is a wilderness journey to get there, but there is a promise land coming to you. Don't lose heart.

Don't get discouraged when the whip cracks. Keep your eyes on God's promise. Think of the sacrifice of communication between these two old men who've been born and raised as slaves, but they had a vision to the degree that they could impart it to their sons.

Think about how they fielded those doubts. Those heartaches. As year after year under the taskmasters ruled by.

There was a sacrifice. There was holy conversation going on. Think of David and Bathsheba.

David was a polygamist, but it seems late in life he got very monogamous. He lasered his interest in on Bathsheba, and you know that she raised two very important sons. One we know is Solomon.

You can read about his lineage in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew records Jesus' kingly lineage. But the other was Nathan.

He was the grandfather of Mary. From Solomon was Joseph, and from Nathan was Mary. The line of Messiah.

Think of the way David had to work through the shame of his adulterous relationship. This woman who had been his by adultery. She'd be the father.

She would be the wife. He would be the husband of a king. The grandfather, Messiah.

Think of the hours they had to spend communicating, encouraging, so they wouldn't lose their way. God was watching. God knew what was coming.

God was brooding over those discussions. They mattered a great deal to the Lord. Think of Simeon and Anna.

Turn with me to Luke chapter 2 verses 25-39. Key generations throughout Bible history that were rewarded for diligently seeking God by communicating with one another. Simeon and Anna in Luke chapter 2 beginning with verse 25.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And the same man was just and devout waiting for the consolation. Interesting word.

It means the comfort. We get the word for the Holy Spirit as the comforter from this word. He was devout and waiting for the comfort or the consolation of Israel.

And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple.

And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms. And he blessed God. And he said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. The light, the light, the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel. And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.

And Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. And for a sign which shall be spoken against, yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Think of the relationship between Joseph and Mary who treasured all these things in her heart.

Could share them with her husband. Think of how close they were living alone in Egypt. And then of all places returning to Nazareth where they were labeled as fornicators in their hometown.

And they're greeted by this man named Simeon. The Bible says deep calls to deep. Here's this couple deep in love, deep in their relationship with God and with each other.

They know who's been born to them but it's a secret. They've talked into the wee hours I'm sure many a night and he's here. And all of a sudden someone comes up and they see a look in his eyes that reminds them of the look that they have in each other's eyes.

This man knows intimately a secret. He has been in communication with his father and through the Holy Spirit it's been revealed to him he'll not see death until he sees Messiah. And this man comes up and this young mother maybe 16 years old places this baby, the Messiah into the hands of a stranger.

Why? Deep calls to deep. She could see it in his eyes. He knew his father.

This little baby's just as safe in his arms. And Simeon lifted him up. I've seen with my eyes the glory of thy people Israel.

It's a light to the Gentiles. He prophesied. He was prepared to meet his Savior.

It wasn't a fearful, perplexing thing. It was glorious. And right on his heels no sooner had he placed this little baby back in Mama's arms.

Verse 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phinehah. Interesting. The way Scripture gives honor to a loving father who raised a prophetess.

Of the tribe of Aser, she was of a great age and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity. She was a widow of about four score and four years which departed not from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. Sounds like a lot of intimate communication sacrificial conversation.

And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord and spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.

And the grace of God was upon him. Old Anna and Old Simeon. That generation would have been about the age of Joseph and Mary's grandparents.

What about Joseph and Mary's parents? The Bible says that Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth. That probably means that Elizabeth's mother or father was the brother and sister or sister of Mary's mother or father. There was a close family tie here.

There was an ability to communicate intimately. Messiah's coming. And they encouraged one another.

And God saw this. I believe He wrote a book of remembrance. We'll talk about that shortly.

And from those kinds of intimate family ties came John the Baptist. Messiah. Take it.

Play it out a little further. Did you know that James and John were brothers? The Scripture says so. And that they were also first cousins of Jesus because their mother was named Salome and she was the sister of Mary.

These little boys grew up together. They were looking for Messiah. Salome and Mary may have had some very intimate conversations.

Things they had to treasure. Every virgin daughter in Israel longed to be mother of Messiah. Oh, you see this just bursting forth in Mary's in her song.

The praise. How God exalted her from her humble and lowly estate, the handmaiden of the Lord. Every generation that was rewarded for diligently seeking God I believe can be traced to intimacy in their relationships.

Closeness in their relationships. We have to have it that way. Because we are preparing for the ultimate consummation.

The ultimate intimate relationship that of a bride with her bridegroom. The church with Jesus Christ. You know what? It should result in confidence.

Are you confident this morning in your relationship with the Lord and your relationships with those close to you? Is there a confidence that there's nothing you can say that will startle, shock, surprise, cause rejection, cause bitterness or resentment with those who know you best? Are you confident of that? Turn with me to Hebrews 10, verse 35. Confidence is a key aspect to intimacy. We've got to have confidence in these end times because there are a lot of questions and there are only going to be more questions if these signs and dates and cataclysmic events pass uneventfully.

You're going to have to have a confidence in your relationship with your fellow Christians, with those who know you most, which rivaled only by your confidence in the Lord and His written Word and the Holy Spirit speaking to you even as He spoke to Simeon. Confidence. Hebrews 10, beginning with verse 35.

Cast not away, therefore, your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while on He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

What is the great recompense of reward? Jesus is coming and He will come for a confident bride. Not a timid, condemned, insecure bride who is uncertain of her relationships. How can we say that we love God who we cannot see when we do not love those who we can? How can we say that we're intimate with Him when we're not intimate with those that we can see? How can we profess a confidence with Him when we're timid or insecure with those closest to us? Oh, if that's where you're at, God knows where you're at and He has an answer.

He who has this hope in Himself purifies Him even as He is pure. Meditate on the coming of the Lord and see if it doesn't begin to purify your relationships with your brothers and sisters. How much would it matter if you knew you were going to die in a week's time? To carry on grudges, to carry on heartaches,

misunderstandings, hedging, self-defensiveness, self-justification.

How much would it matter? Wouldn't you gather those around you and in your parting breaths make your relationships right? I believe every one of us in this room would. We'd say, I'm sorry for not listening as well. I'm sorry for being defensive.

I'm sorry for not taking time to hear your heart and being busy on getting things done. And then with what was left over, listening to you and falling asleep. I'm sorry for that.

We'd get our relationships right. So appreciated John's analogy of obedience through fear or obedience through love. Death is a fearful thing and it is a motivator.

But imagine being motivated by love. You might go up in the year 20, 10, or 12, or 14, or 15, or sometime soon. Why not begin to make those relationships right now? Is any sacrifice too high? Is any price not worth paying? It's preparation for intimacy with the Lord.

And if we have great confidence because we know we're rightly related with those who know us well, there is a promise. There is a promise. Verse 37, For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition.

But of them that believe to the saving of the soul. So far this morning, we've been talking a lot about the great reward. Jesus is coming back.

Now we're starting to look at the confidence or the conditions for that reward. If we study just a few more passages, we're going to see just how important this boldness is, how practical it is. Paul understood it.

In his final works, 1st and 2nd Timothy, what you might call his opus magnum, his greatest, most practical work, that old warrior was going to be with the Lord. It had been revealed to him that he was going to be martyred. And so his last letters that he wrote was to shore up the church.

Paul understood he wasn't going to be caught up to be with the Lord. He was going to die a martyr's death. But he wanted to leave behind a bold, blessed hope.

And you read in 1st Timothy and it's preparation. And then you read in 2nd Timothy and it's consummation. Prepare yourself, bride.

Be bold. Be confident. And how does he prepare the bride of Christ? Is it by talking about educational requirements and how to get the right degree and how to present yourself with eloquent speech so you can be qualified to stand in a pulpit and preach boldly how to get ready for the Lord's return? He didn't do it at all that way.

Instead, he lists the qualifications. And they're very grassroots. They're very down to earth.

Look at 1st Timothy 3.4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man knew how to rule his own house, how shall he take care? For if a man knew not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Then it goes on to say, not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. How do you make a veteran? How

do you grow a novice into a veteran? Let him work through the refining fires of loving his wife and loving his children.

Learning how to communicate with them sacrificially. That will move him from a novice into a veteran. So when the Lord starts to use him, He says, ah, this isn't so great.

He's been using me for years in my home with my wife and my children. We've been conquering mountains. We've been having revival for years in my home.

If revival wants to break out through my preaching or through my ministry, hey, that's okay. My real passion is what's been happening in my home. That's the difference between a novice and a veteran.

They're qualified in their homes where nobody but their wife and children are looking. Brilliant! Paul understood it by the Holy Spirit and he wrote it down. His opus magnum.

His greatest work. 1 Timothy and then he has volume 2. 2 Timothy. How does he wrap it up? Talking about the consummation.

Go over to 2 Timothy. Actually, let me just catch one other phrase here. This is very important.

1 Timothy 1. Verses 11-13. Even so must their wives be grave and not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things. I'm still in 1 Timothy 3. Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

For they that have used the office of the deacon will purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness. Same word that we saw back in Hebrews translated as confidence. Great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

These things I write unto thee hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. With that, go to volume 2. 2 Timothy 4. 2 Timothy 4. Verse 7. His swan song, his last words to the church he dedicated over 30 years laboring for.

I've fought a good fight, he says. I've finished my course. I've kept the faith.

Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, a reward, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love what? His appearing. He preached about the bridegroom.

He'd written about the bridegroom. He has clothed the bride in righteousness through the epistles that were written. He was beaten countless times in sacrificial communication for the bride.

His last words to her as a reward, simply in longing for his appearing. It's an indication of your right priorities. It's natural.

It's supernatural. If you're in love with God's people and long to be with them and communicate with them, it's only right and natural that you will long for his appearing. And you'll get a crown.

And where is the crown placed? Upon the head. It's a symbol of lordship. Love for Jesus.

His authority governing my thoughts. He was my king on the earth. He was my beloved.

My bridegroom. And I his bride. Those thoughts crowned my head.

And that crown is placed on ours and we cast it at his feet for all of eternity. We've looked at the reward of sacrificial communication, the Lord's return. We've looked at the evidence of boldness and confidence to communicate.

Next we have to ask what is exactly sacrificial communication and holy conversation? What does it look like between two people? Let me give you a simple definition and then I'll illustrate it with a few more scriptures. Sacrificial communication. The flesh dies when we communicate.

You talk about the weather, the flesh doesn't have to die. You talk about sports and politics, the flesh doesn't have to die. But you begin to talk about your walk with the Lord, the flesh dies.

We call this being transparent. We call this being real. It connects us one to another.

Paul said when he discipled the Thessalonians, he was pleased not only to share with them the Gospel, but his very soul. He wasn't afraid of being transparent. He knew he had flesh.

He boasted in his weaknesses because they weren't active. They were nailed to the cross. And it gave others whose flesh was active comfort that theirs could be nailed too.

And it knit them together. What is sacrificial communication and holy conversation? It's the outworkings of a self-denying, other-serving soul that expresses itself in loving, relational conversations. A little simpler way of saying it's in Colossians.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man. Your conversation is salty. It gives a thirst for more of Jesus.

When you're with somebody and you're being transparent, you're sharing your successes and your failures. There's a saltiness, there's a thirst that comes about. That kind of communication is priceless.

It's also very costly. I so appreciated Brother Rick's message during Revival Week. The message this morning is really a follow-up or an outworking of his message on forgiveness.

So much of sacrificial communication is learning how to humble ourselves in our relationships and going to a person who we sense something just isn't right with. And saying to them, are we okay? Are we dwelling together in unity? You know, the early church understood that principle. And what was God pleased to give them during their Revival meetings? Fire.

The fire of Pentecost. Again, we've examined some generations who had great outpourings of God, had great deliverances, had great events in their lives. From Noah to Joseph and Mary to the generations in between, right up until the generation that gathered together in the upper room at Acts.

They met certain conditions that made them right, that made them worthy for God's blessing. Turn with me to Acts 2. And let's look at verse 1. We're familiar with this passage, but sometimes the Scriptures we're familiar with, we blaze over if they're only in one or two verses. Again, I invite you to think.

Put yourself in the shoes of those people gathered together in the upper room. Acts 2, verse 1. Jesus had ascended into Heaven ten days earlier. He's not there anymore.

There's about 120 people gathered together. You look at the context. Verse 15.

And in those days, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said, the number of the names together were about 120. Men and brethren, the Scripture must needs have been fulfilled with the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David's spake concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. The dwelling in one accord and the fellowship suite and the conversations intimate.

By the way, they're in one room and there's 120 people and if Peter's wife and children were there, there were probably other wives and children and there could have been some fussing babies and this was going on for quite some time and they were dwelling in one accord. Don't miss that little fact. Sometimes together when we gather in our Wednesday night cell group and we're longing and striving for one accord and we've got, what is it, 27 children in our cell group and some babies are fussing.

I get a little picture of what was going on here. And we're trying to share the Word and this one needs a discipline and this one needs a diaper change and so on, you know. They were in one accord.

There was a level of communication and intimacy going on and Peter stands up and it doesn't mean they were perfect. Hear me this morning. Don't be condemned.

Peter stands up as the leader and I think he launched into a blunder. He was still thinking Old Covenant and basically they cast lots and replaced this disciple with one that you never hear of again. I think the Lord had chosen Paul.

But never mind that. Never mind the theological aspect of the early church and the leaders finding their way in theology. There was something deeper that the leaders were rooted and grounded in.

Oh, theology is important. But the expression of it in relationship, of loving one another. Because that's the greatest commandment.

That's what was happening in the upper room. And when the day of Pentecost, chapter 2, verse 1, was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven as if a rushing mighty wind.

And it filled all the house where they were sitting. That's sacrificial communication in holy conversation. Those are selfless souls dwelling together in one accord.

Now you want to see a paradox? Take this beautiful scene where people are getting along in difficult circumstances difficult situations. See the beauty. See the relationship.

See the intimacy. Let your sanctified imagination enter into that upper room and observe what's going on. Practically speaking.

Mothers, children, husbands, singles. People gathered together waiting for the promise of Pentecost. Waiting for God to send the fire.

Leave that scene with me now to Jesus' words. in Luke chapter 12, verse 49. Luke 12, 49.

It's a huge paradox. I am come to send fire on the earth. Okay, that sounds familiar.

That's what Pentecost was about. And what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with. And how am I straightened till it be accomplished? Suppose ye that I came to give peace on earth.

I tell you, nay, but rather division. For from henceforth, from here, shall be five in one house divided three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, and the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And then he goes on again to describe that's how it's going to be at the day of his return. What's going on? The generation that saw Pentecost versus the generation that could see his return. What's happened? I believe the Bible gives us an answer.

It was an answer that John, the beloved, carried with him his whole life as his mission statement. The early church knew the greatest commandment, to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and the second which was like it, to love their neighbor as themselves. The early church knew it theologically, but more importantly, they knew it relationally.

You see that happening in the upper room. The greatest priority in the early church was to love one another, was to make the sacrifice of being real and communicate. You see the proof in the pudding in the upper room.

But by the end of that generation, we come to the church of Ephesus, the letter that John himself wrote. Ephesus is a symbol or a type of that part of church history, the first hundred years. And he says in that letter, I have this against you, because thou hast left thy first love, remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.

When John was carried as an old man from church to church there, to the different churches in Asia, he was a little boy. He could no longer walk, church history tells us, stricken with years. And they would bring him in and lay him on a mat, and he would rise up on one elbow and he would say in a feeble voice, little children, love one another.

That was John's final sermon as an old man in his preaching circuit. He was in the upper room. He remembered how sweet it was.

He remembered how sweet it was. But in all the defense of the orthodox theology, and that had to happen, in all the church growing there through Asia, in the gospel going around the world, somehow in the defense and in the busyness, they'd lost their first love. You see, Satan knows that if he could stop the first love, he could stop the church.

He could stop the church. 2 Corinthians says, lest Satan should get an advantage for us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. What is Satan's main device? I believe Paul describes it beautifully in the book of Ephesians.

And if you've ever studied Ephesians, the chapter of family, it's right next to what? The chapter of spiritual warfare. Jesus was right. Just before his return, Satan is going to try to stop the bride by destroying the family.

Paul understood it through the Spirit. So he puts spiritual warfare, techniques, strategies, understandings, right next to family relationships, side by side in Scripture. He wants them to overlap.

It's the proving ground for becoming a preacher of the gospel. It's the glory of the coming consummation when that gospel begins to bear fruit between the bride and the bridegroom. If you can get it in your closest relationships, you're going to get it with the closest relationship.

The marriage of the bride to the bridegroom. These things are not coincidences. They're divinely designed.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, Ephesians 6.12. I'll read it for you. But we wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. If Satan can get us to do just the opposite of that key strategy, then we're not wrestling with principalities.

We're wrestling with what? Flesh and blood. Or one another. He's the author of confusion.

If he can distort communication, if he can get you to hedge and presume and self-justify and miscommunicate, he'll wreck your marriage. He'll wreck your preaching. He'll wreck your church.

That's his scheme. And we're not ignorant of it. We have to recognize it.

We have to attack it. Praise God. There are some very key ways to do that in our closing minutes together.

I want to look at this. I want to look at this. It's been wonderful up until now talking to you about the Lord's return.

That is the blessed hope. It's my favorite topic to speak on in Scripture. Getting to be with Jesus.

I feel like Simeon. I feel like I have a promise. I'm not going to see death until I hold my Savior.

And I'm holding on to that, but I have reasons why I hold on to that faith. I have reasons why I hold on to that faith. Here's one of them.

I teach that to my family day after day after day. Our week is built leading up to Saturday night when we sit down and we talk about the bridegroom. Are we ready if he should come tonight? Or are we going to start another week? Because there's more to learn.

There's more to serve. There's more to overcome. We build our lives around Jesus.

in the Jeff Keen family around the coming of the Lord Jesus. It keeps our priorities the way they are today. It's my favorite topic in Scripture.

But I'm a visionary. And praise God, I was married to a detailed person. Honey, what does the rapture look like today? What's it look like in the outworkings of our home? And I say, good question.

What does it look like right here? Because I want to get there. And I know this is how I'm going to do it. And we talk.

We communicate. Sometimes until late at night. Understanding the souls of our children.

Understanding the souls of each other. Reconciling. Repenting of what we misunderstood.

We're communicating. And it's a sacrifice. Why did I pray and pray and pray and throw away my college degree so I could be a farmer? Because farming gives me time.

And I need time. It's my most precious commodity. Some of those nights when I'm up to the wee hours, it's nice to be able to go do my chores and then pass out in the afternoon.

I've done it many a time. Sometime in the chicken house. Sitting on a bucket.

I've done it. Praise God. He's given me a kingdom job so I can seek first His kingdom.

There's a price to pay. Go with me to Malachi chapter 3. I believe God had a price in mind all along for the coming of His Son. Is there a generation willing to pay the price for sacrificial communication? For holy conversation? There is a price you're going to have to pay.

It takes time. It takes energy. It takes listening ears.

It takes walking through being misunderstood. It takes persevering and not giving up until there is one accord again. In Malachi chapter 3 verse 16 we read these beautiful words that I said I was going to get to a little earlier.

Malachi chapter 3 verse 16 Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. They spoke often to one another. I think that's a key and we've seen it.

It's found in every generation where a significant event of God's hand is manifest. They speak often and intimately with one another. A book of remembrance is written.

God remembers. He hasn't forgotten. He's watching and He's listening and He's studying.

What's He looking for? The eyes of the Lord range to and fro that He might strongly support. His heart and soul are completely His. Because one day He's going to say, there, Jesus, there she is.

Go get her. There's the bride. There's the bride.

A book of remembrance is being written and there's a generation that's going to meet together. But you know, there's a price to pay. There's opposition if you want to number yourself in that generation.

Go back another page to Malachi chapter 2. Oh, I know we're longing for revival. We've wept for revival. We've cried out for revival and we're not alone.

There have been generations through history who've longed for a visitation, including Malachi's. Chapter 2 verse 13, And this have you done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, with crying out, insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, nor receiveth it with goodwill at your hand. Yet you say, wherefore? Because the Lord hath been a witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously.

Yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue of the Spirit and wherefore one that He might seek a godly seed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

The word treacherously, is a primitive root to cover as with a garment. Figuratively it means to act covertly. By implication it means to pillage, to deal deceitfully, to offend, to transgress, to eventually depart.

About four years ago, I began praying for our Saturday nights. I wanted to kneel down with my family and in one accord say, Lord, would you come tonight? I wanted to have unity. Even as the early church longed for Pentecost, I wanted to with my family long and pray for the Lord's coming to get us.

Hard times. You've heard my testimony. I was using my college degree as a communications major.

I was struggling to be a writer, a freelance writer. And times were lean. We were living on duck eggs and broccoli from time to time, you've heard me say.

We had three youth living with us for one season and walked with us through those years. Little babies were being born and raised. I spent many a watching, but you know on the pressure at all, it began to take its toll on my marriage.

And I can remember one time getting up, charging into the grind of another day, hoping to make ends meet, dashing into the bathroom, putting on my bathrobe and walking fast. And I kicked something in the carpet. It was a needle that was stuck in the ground and went right into my arch and snapped the needle off in half.

Oh, what did I just do? And I looked down, I pick up half a needle with thread hanging from it and I realized what I'd done. I went to prayer, came to Saturday morning prayer and I prayed, Lord, I need you to pull this needle out. I can't afford a surgery.

I didn't know, but because it snapped halfway, it made a barb and each time I took a step, it was driving deeper and deeper. You have an artery that runs along your arch and I didn't know it, but it was heading for that artery. And one of the sisters, Brother Mel's wife, my sister Barbie, came to her brother, her little brother and said, your prayers aren't getting answered.

I think you might need a surgery on your foot. She gently exhorted me and I took it to heart. I thought it was a word from the Lord.

So I went down to Lancaster. I had an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon and through orthoscopic surgery where he looks at a camera, he went into my foot and before he did, he numbed it and it was supposed to be numbed from here down and he numbed me with all these shots of Novocain and I sat there and he's got his camera and he's getting ready to cut and he's looking at this needle that he's got and he can see in his little camera and I'm saying, excuse me, doctor, my foot's not numb. I feel everything you're doing right now.

Oh, it's going to go numb. Any minute now, it's going to go numb. Cut and in he went.

It wasn't numb. I began gripping the sides of that gurney and a nurse saw what was happening. She came and started dabbing my forehead and trying to keep me conscious, to give me orange juice and I was in so much pain and he's digging around.

I said, it's still not numb. Hold still, hold still. I've almost got it.

This went on for over 30 minutes, digging around in my arch and finally he said, oh, I've got it. He pulled it out and he lifted it up and he showed it to me like a trophy or something. Right about then, the Novocain

began to kick in and my foot just went to sleep so much so that I couldn't walk.

I couldn't drive home and I didn't bring anybody with me. Ever try to drive a stick shift when from your calf down it feels like a hunk of meat? I drove left foot all the way home stopping and stalling and my foot was finally numb. I'll never forget it, pulling up to the driveway, the Lord speaking to me.

You see why I didn't heal you? Your soul needed a surgery. You were dealing treacherously with your wife. See, I was starting to learn something in my marriage.

We had a lot of pressure and at night when I needed to sleep and needed to rest, my wife needed to process. She needed to talk. She needed to communicate.

I just didn't have the energy. So I learned how to hedge just ever so subtly. Just kind of nod, yes honey.

Uh-huh. Yeah. And different times during the day I found myself doing that because she could talk away but I was busy doing business and hey, this is working for me.

I'm not as exhausted. Starting to hedge. Starting to go numb.

Starting to clothe myself with a cloak. The Lord gave me a lesson that I've never forgotten. You see, men, we have a very important role.

It's a role that's foundational from the beginning of time. Go to Genesis chapter 2. If we can't get this one, we open up our houses to spiritual battle. We have got to learn to listen to our wives because if we don't, she starts listening to someone else.

Have you noticed, brothers, how spiritual this side of the room is? How sensitive they are, not only to the Father's voice, but to spiritual battle. They pick it up days ahead of us. Minutes ahead of us.

Hours ahead of us. Whatever time span, it's always ahead of us it seems. They sense when something's wrong.

What's the best thing you can do? Well, let's go to Scripture. Genesis chapter 2 beginning with verse 15. And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

That word keep is an interesting word. The Hebrew word is to shemar. It means to pull all the thorns out of the garden.

They must have been beautiful, razor sharp, three inch thorns. They were there pre-curse, pre-fall. Shemar means to take thorns out and build a hedge around a hedge of protection.

So picture Adam transplanting thorns, doing work in the garden. Why? Because the Father knew that there was a very real enemy. His name was Lucifer or Satan, the fallen one, the shining one, the bright one.

And he was trying to make his way into the garden. And I believe Adam was keeping him out. Just like we're called to do today, 6,000 years later, our homes are a refuge and our wives are sensitive.

I heard an interesting tape again. The tape was 14 years old, given by Brother Rick on homeschool weekend. In the tape he talked about, brothers, don't let your wives have a chat with the devil.

And here's Adam. The proximity, the language of the text is that Adam's right there doing his work and he's listening with one ear, he's He's talking to the devil. You can read down through there on your own.

But at some point she listened too long and she took the fruit and she bit it and then Adam had his attention. He walks up and he sees this woman who's just bitten the knowledge of good and evil and she is dead. And he sees a difference in her.

And he makes a desperate decision. She was deceived, but he wasn't. He makes a decision.

Give me that. I'd rather die with you than live eternally without you. That's not the decision our bridegroom made for us.

Jesus died for us to give us life. He didn't join us in our sin. What should Adam have done? He should have called his father and said, what should I do? Look what's happened to her.

You know what he would have said? Probably the same thing he said to the second Adam. You must give your life for her. You know, we are called men to be living sacrifices.

When we see our wives in a battle, the world stops. We sit down and say, what are you hearing? What's going on? And we focus in like a laser and we listen to her. I've got these thoughts.

I've got these temptations. Has God really said? And we listen. And if we will listen to our Father while we're listening to her, then we will not wrestle with flesh and blood.

But if we ignore our Father and we start to hedge and justify and say, well, what do you mean by that? I feel a little insecure as you say that about me and to me. I'm not spending enough time with you. Don't you know I'm working to make a living and I'm not tuned in to the children.

I'm not loving them. I'm harsh. What do you mean? Don't you see that they need to obey me diligently? I'm working hard.

When I come home, I want it to be peaceful. And she's sending signals. And if we're not treasuring and listening, those signals just bounce around.

And the enemy comes. And he adds his commentary. Pretty soon, there's treacherousness.

There's a division. There's a hedging that's no longer around the home, but between man and woman. We need to stop.

You see, there's something about our helpmate that we need to know, brothers. Genesis 2, verse 18 says, the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.

An ezer neged in Hebrew. One who helps, ezer, neged, by being your exact opposite. Your counterpart is literally what it means.

She doesn't think logically and systematically. She feels. She senses.

She perceives. She wonders. It's the opposite.

And as we stop and we listen to what she's saying, what signals with one ear and the other ear to our Father, He gives commentary. We don't wrestle and try to shut her down. Oh, you're saying that I'm not

spending enough time.

I'm not engaging at the supper table. I thought I was. Tell me more.

You see, I'm not insecure. I know who I am because my Father's speaking to me in the other ear. Let her talk.

Let her communicate. Oh, I'm so pleased with this sacrifice. Let your flesh die.

This is a pleasing sacrifice to me. I'm writing a book of remembrance while you listen to her. While you take notes, I'm taking notes.

Let her express. Let her communicate. Even if it doesn't come out right, don't point and say, now you're not honoring me.

You've crossed the line. End of conversation. She may not know how to get it all out right because it's been bottled all day.

And now it's just sort of coming out. Funny thing happens once it gets out. Honor is as natural as breathing.

You've listened. We've listened. We've heard from the body.

The head has heard. The body says, ouch, my thumb's bleeding and it's hopping around and it's sending signals. And the head says, I hear you.

I see you. Here's help. We don't say, stop jumping around.

We help. That's our responsibility. It's as foundational as the lessons we see here in Genesis from the beginning of time.

How many times, brothers, have we heard it said from our wives, I don't need solutions. I just need to be listened to. That's the solution.

And we don't understand. We want to fix. We want to correct.

We want to give a solution. She wants to be heard because she's tired of hearing the accuser. She wants to express and see you listen and accept and understand.

It's very healing. It's a sacrifice. Jump ahead 4,000 years from the Garden of Eden to 1st Peter chapter 2, verse 7 and listen to Peter's words.

The one family man, the one married apostle, he got it. 1st Peter chapter 3, verse 7. He understood it. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge.

The word there is translated when it's carried over into the Old Testament as intimacy. Closeness. Dwell with them according to knowledge.

Some translations translate it understanding and let's face it, we're never going to understand our wives. But we can dwell with them according to intimacy. We can be close to them by being close to God.

There are opposites. You get frustrated if you try to understand and fix. Dwell with them according to knowledge.

Stay close to God and stay close to them. Giving honor unto the wife is unto the weaker vessel. And as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Prayer is so important. Jesus is coming back and it might just be in our generation. But he's coming back to a generation whose mind isn't muddled with hurting relationships.

He's coming back for a generation whose minds are crystal clear. Their prayers are not hindered. You see, when your mind's clear, you begin to hear your heart's cry.

Let me say that again. When your minds are clear, you begin to hear your heart's cry. And what is our heart cry? When you hear your heart cry and you join in, that is effectual fervent prayer.

There's one in your heart who's crying out. When you hear his voice, it becomes an effectual fervent prayer. And I know of no more effectual, no greater fervent prayer in the Bible than this one.

This is the last verse I want to close with. Revelation 22, 17. If you'll turn there.

We'll finish here. This is what God is wanting us to pray. Because His precious Holy Spirit is already fastly praying it within our hearts.

And the Spirit and the Bride say, And let Him that heareth say, Come. 24-7, your heart's crying out because that's the Spirit. Come, Lord.

Come. When our relationships are right and you're clear and quiet, we join right with Him. And we begin to say, too, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Father, thank you that you've made eschatology and theology something we can see and relate and understand day after day in our own home. It's so close, Lord, we confess we sometimes don't see it, though. We see and hear and feel strange relationships.

Oh, Father, we want revival. We want you to visit us with Holy Ghost fire. I believe you've shown clearly many times in Scripture the condition that needs to be met.

Lord, we are longing to meet those conditions. And we need your help. Teach us how to communicate sacrificially with those who know us best.

Father, we invite you to do what we can't do. We invite you to walk us through the refining fires. We want to buy gold in the fire.

We want to have oil for our lamps. We want to be wise virgins ready to meet our bridegroom. And we need help.

We need help loving our brides, Lord, so they can turn around and say, Help me. As you say in Malachi, I raise up godly seed. Mighty in the land.

Like Joshua and Caleb who say, I'm going to take that mountain. Because I've watched my daddy take many a mountain in our home. Oh, God, that's our heart's cry.

But we need your help. Lord, I so long to be with you. Thank you for giving me a help mate who's tenacious with details.

I know that's how I'm going to get there. Make me faithful, Father. But I don't feel like it.

Make us faithful, each and everyone. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Brother Jeff. 1 Peter 1.22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Basically bringing out there, seeing, those of us who see we have been purified by the Spirit of God through the new birth, through being a child of God.

There's another see here. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. So let's allow God to speak to our hearts.

Meditate upon what has been shared this morning. Is there an area maybe an area of, how should I say, maybe God is speaking to us about our need of loving one another at a deeper level in regards to each other as the body of Christ and in our relationships with our families and children, wives, Brother Jeff. So I think we'll take time to have a few comment on the message or maybe a testimony that you have or get your hand up and a mic will be gotten to you sisters, brethren.

Yes, the Lord definitely did speak to me this morning especially with dealing with my wife. So just confessing my need and also the next two weekends our family won't be around. We're going to be in Kentucky and if you miss us, pray for us.

We're going to be down there seeking the Lord as far as the property there and where He would have us go from here. So yes, I was blessed to be here. Amen.

Here's one. Somebody in the back there have a mic. Tim.

We'll get John here next. Go ahead, John. I would be the first one to admit and confess that the many times I wasn't listening or only half listening to my wife and children seem to get so preoccupied in my own world and you can pray for me in that area.

I do want to extend greetings and blessings from Blessed Hope from Kentucky and we're looking forward to Emmanuel coming down and whoever else wants to come. I laid some brochures back there on the back of the church there if anybody's interested in coming. There's a map on it and everything.

I praise the Lord. I hear snatches through my sister of you all here and seeking the Lord and fighting the good fight of faith and it's just a blessing to hear and see that. One other thing I'd like to leave with you is where it talks about laying your hand to the plow and it gives an analogy of keeping our focus on Jesus Christ.

When I was young I had plowed with a one horse or a soul gate walk behind plow and the idea is you pick out an object so you can plow in a straight line and sometimes you hit a rock and it just throws the plow out of your hands and before you know it you have to make a big 90 degree U-turn get back on track and refocus and that's a little bit how our life is. Satan can throw things in our way and we just need to turn around 90 degrees and refocus where we seem to mess up when we keep looking back at our own self and all that and so that's what I want to encourage you and leave you with. Thank you.

Thank you John. So good to see you and your family here this morning. Amen.

By the way the meetings that are taking place down there in Kentucky is this coming weekend and Brother Emmanuel will be down there is what John is talking about having some revival meetings. Back in the back there. Yeah I kind of feel like I probably should ponder on this a while before I comment but there was just a few things that really were going around in my mind that I thought I would share.

First maybe on John's message on the motivation of love. We have a chapter in the Bible we call the love chapter in 1st Corinthians but as I thought about it we have a book in the Bible that is the love book and it would be 1st John and the last thing John says in that book is little children keep yourselves from idols. If there's anything that can get in the way of the pure heart love for God and for one another it is and it becomes the larger focus in our life than him, than the Lord himself.

And that it can be anything. And then in regards to Brother Jeff's message I could just want to say a hearty amen to the emphasis on the need for the strength and family in regards to the strength and glory of the name of God. And then I thought another thing that the Apostle John in his however old he was when Jesus came and had him write about the seven churches, he had an admonition, even a warning for every one of those churches that admonition was he that has an ear to hear let him hear.

And following that admonition I just noticed this morning there's a promise it varied with each church but there was always a promise following that admonition. So may the Lord give us ears to hear that we may have the promises that he has for us. Amen.

Thank you Tim. Okay we'll take time for one or two more. Jeff there in the back.

Anyone else have the mic? The other mic? Okay Brother Jeff. Yeah I'm not sure how to say it. I was thinking in the area of loving our wives.

My wife and I were able to take a trip early in May. We were celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary. And it was a great realization in my heart spending time alone with my wife and the recognition of the treasure I have that I felt like I've let down from over the years.

And the reality of the pressures of life, raising a family even ministry, work I had forgotten. And I would recommend you husbands to take that time. And you'll see the treasure you have.

And recognize something maybe that's been missed. Then we came back and went to a wedding. William Brazil's wedding.

And they read that scripture that very popular scripture in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 25. And it's a parallel to the church. Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

And there's that sacrifice we heard time and time again when Brother Jeff was preaching. We need to be that sacrifice for our wives. And I meditated all month thinking.

I found a key in our relationship with our family and in my relationship in my ministry and my work is to work on my relationship with my wife. And recognize when there's harmony and peace there, I believe other things will fall into place. This is just something I felt the Lord has been putting in my heart.

And I'm just praying that God will help bring that to fruition. Thank you Jeff for that testimony. It's just a blessing to hear what God is doing in some of our hearts.

How He's purifying this area of loving our wives and our love for each other as brethren.

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