

Jesus in a Bad Marriage

by Steve Gallagher

The marriage between Jesus and the harlot is bad because the harlot was never truly committed to her husband and was never truly submitted to him, representing spiritual idolatry and a love for the world.

Duration: 56:17

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-38, Ephesians 5:22-27, Revelation 17:1-2

Topics: "Marriage"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher, Paul Washer, shares an illustration about his love for his wife to emphasize the natural response of a believer towards God's commands. He highlights the importance of having a genuine love for Jesus and how it protects believers from being led astray by the devil. The sermon then shifts to the topic of the purpose of life on Earth, stating that God's ultimate goal is to procure a bride for His Son. The preacher references Ephesians 5 and Revelation 17 to explain the concept of spiritual adultery and the judgment of the great harlot.

Transcript

The following message is provided by Eternal Weight of Glory. For other sermons, teachings, and articles, please visit EternalWeight.com. I'm going to be sharing out of Ephesians 5 and Revelation 17, if you want to be opening there. But I want to ask you a question.

A thousand years from now, looking back on earth life, what was the point of it all? You know, kind of like, what was that all about? Why? Why did God do things this way? Well, I'm going to give you the answer now. You don't have to wait a thousand years. I'm going to go ahead and tell you this morning, because I'm such a nice and generous-hearted person.

I'm going to tell you what it's all about right now. That God the Father has arranged all the circumstances of earth life during these 6,000 years for a purpose that He has in mind, and that is to procure a bride for His Son. A picture of it is when Abraham sent his servant back into the regions of Babylon to get a wife for Isaac.

It's kind of like that, in a certain sort of a way. But I want to focus, you know, we've been talking about the apostasy in this series, and you know, some of the aspects of it and so on. Well, this time I want to focus in on the personal aspect of it, the relationship aspect of the apostasy.

And in this passage in Ephesians 5, starting with verse 22, Paul's making a point here. He's on a flow of thought, and I'm kind of cutting into it, and he kind of takes a little diversion here for a second and talks about what a godly marriage looks like. And he uses as his model Jesus Christ and His marriage to His bride.

Let's just read this. Verse 22, Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her. There's the purpose.

So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. Okay, now you have to project out ahead to the end of earth time for this 27th verse to really mean something to you. That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.

There it is right there. The bride of Christ without spot or wrinkle. That's the point of it all.

That's what Jesus is doing. That is the love of Christ that we feel and that we sing about and talk about all the time. It's the love of a very loving man towards a woman.

Now in the book of Revelation, we see the unfolding of the judgments of God as He's bringing all things under subjection to Jesus Christ. And so all the way through the book of Revelation, we're seeing all these terrible judgments coming upon earth because mankind is in rebellion to God's authority. So He's shutting everything down.

It's the final death throes of planet earth in the book of Revelation. And yet all the way through it, we're given little glimpses of the bride of Christ shining in all her glory. In Revelation 6, she is seen in the martyrs who gave their lives for their beloved.

In Revelation 12, she is seen in those who overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and because they did not love their lives in this world. In Revelation 14, she is seen in the faithful saints who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. In Revelation 19, she is seen in the great marriage supper of the Lamb.

And then finally, in Revelation 21, we see what Paul is referring to. The bride of Christ and all her dazzling eternal beauty. All of these pictures, all of these sights of this bride of Christ, they all are a picture of the devotion and submission and love that a woman has for her husband.

All right. And then in Revelation 17, something else appears. When you start studying out the bride of Christ, you get that feeling of a wonderful, marvelous relationship, a marriage where two become one.

And, you know, the one is absorbed into the other's life and so on. And it's just filled with love and so on. But look here in Revelation 17.

I'm going to go ahead and read these first five verses, although I know by doing this is going to raise all kinds of questions and I don't want to get into an explanation of all these figures and all of that stuff. I just want to make one point out of this, but let me read it. Verse one, then one of the seven angels who had

the seven bowls came and spoke with me saying, come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.

Many waters, I'll just tell you as many people. Verse two, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality. Now, this immorality, anytime we're talking about spiritual things is spiritual adultery.

That's what that's all about, is this woman, this great harlot is known for spiritual adultery, spiritual immorality. All right. Well, anyway, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.

It's intoxicating. And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

Now that's the spirit of Antichrist right there that will drive the redeemed world into a collision course with God one day at Armageddon. And it's a spirit that is very powerful and is growing in strength day by day, even now. Verse four, the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.

And on her forehead, a name was written, a mystery, Babylon, the great mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth. All right. Now, I do.

I just want to make a point and move on, OK? We're not going to be preaching through either of these passages, really. I've got something else in mind I want to do. This woman here is not the world.

She is distinct from it. She's riding on the spirit of the world, the spirit of Antichrist. You know, she is attached to it in some sort of a way.

And yet she's distinct from it. She's a different person. She's not the world, but she's also not the bride of Christ who we've been hearing about all the way through the book of Revelation.

She's not that. And yet she's trying to present herself as that. She's trying to look like she belongs to Jesus Christ.

But the reality of her inward life, if you can look under the surface, she's full of abominable things. In other words, she's not the world and she's not the bride of Christ. She's some kind of weird hybrid, if I could put it that way.

She is a worldly bride. All right. Now that I've given you that, I'm going to tell you the title of my message, Jesus in a Bad Marriage.

Jesus in a bad marriage, because that's what's happening here. And I know it's a little bit of an awkward thing because, well, we've been taught, you know, polygamy is wrong. And how could Jesus be, you know, have two wives? Well, I don't know.

I'm sorry. It doesn't all add up exactly right. But this is what the Bible says.

And that's good enough for me. You know, some metaphors in scripture, some parables in scripture, you don't want to push them too far because then you get out of the range of the point that they're making. Jesus is in a bad marriage.

That's the truth here. That is what the harlot is. She is the adulterous wife of Jesus Christ.

And throughout New Testament, it's just kind of sprinkled throughout. It shows what the form of spiritual idolatry takes. Let me just give you an example, James four, four.

I'll read it out of the Phillips. You are like unfaithful wives flirting with the glamour of this world and never realizing that to be the world's lover means becoming the enemy of God. And then in verse five, another translation says, And do you suppose God doesn't care? The proverb has it that he's a fiercely jealous lover.

That is exactly right. So, you know, we see here that the form of the spiritual adultery is a love for the world and the things of the world, because it's the spirit of the world who is at work here. The spirit of the world is the lover that this false bride, this faithless bride has taken up with.

Now, the reality is, you know, if we extend our metaphor out a little bit, you've got two wives living with one husband, you know, and there's this creep that's just kind of hanging around and every chance he gets, you know, the husband's out of the way a little bit and they're kind of the wife, whichever wife, the good wife, the bad wife, whichever this creep is constantly trying to entice that woman away from her husband. Well, we know who the creep is. It's the devil.

And that's exactly what he is. But you know something, when a wife is content and in love, nothing can lure her away. Nothing.

Now, my wife loves me and I don't care. I know some of you guys think you're the sexiest man on earth and, you know, People magazine somehow missed it that they didn't get you on the cover or something or other. I don't care how good looking you are.

I don't care how muscular and fit you are. I don't care how rich you are. I don't care how influential you are.

I don't care how famous you are. I don't care who you are. My wife is in love and my wife is completely contented with our relationship and there is not a man on this planet who could lure her away from me.

Do you believe that? Only four of you. The rest of you are still in a delusion, aren't you? Every woman loves you. That's what you think.

Bradley, they need a little more work. Well, whether you believe me or not, I'm just telling you it's true. My wife is completely content and no one is going to pull her away from me.

And that is what it is like. That's really what you're hearing from Pastor Jeff. What he was expressing.

That something happened inside of him and he fell in love with Jesus. And I have watched the devil for all these years. You know, more the early years.

I remember the early years. We had another guy working for us who kind of became the devil's agent. I hate to say it, but the devil was using him to try to destroy these two.

And they resisted and they stood fast through it and they made it through. But it was the enemy, that leering creep, hovering around, looking for every opportunity to draw away from Jesus those who have committed themselves to him. All right, so Jesus is in this bad marriage.

There's a problem in this marriage. And this is what I want to talk about in this message today is what went wrong. Now, having been involved in biblical counseling for many years, I'll tell you this, that in biblical counseling, even dealing with marriages where the husband's been involved in adultery and so on, even in marriages like that, it's never one sided.

Never. I have yet to meet a marriage that had problems that didn't have something on both sides. Now, the truth is in this setting, most of the time the man is responsible for, you know, 70 percent of the problem anyway.

But it's never completely one sided. But in this marriage, it is because Jesus has been the perfect husband to this wife. He has done everything right.

He has loved her. He has tried to win her affection by gentleness, by kindness, by sweetness. He has covered her.

He's defended her. He's provided for her. In fact, if you went through First Corinthians 13, that is a description of what Jesus Christ has been like to everyone who has entered that marriage vow with him.

He's been the perfect husband. The problem is not with him. The problem is with the wife.

And that's what I want to focus on. Three reasons this is a bad marriage. And I'll just mention that Jesus has such a high caliber character that he will not stay married to a harlot.

You need to know that in spite of what people try to tell you out there. All right. Number one, this bride was never truly committed to her husband.

This is the first problem with this marriage is that the woman was never truly committed to her husband. Now, just to illustrate my point here, I'm going to use my marriage as an example. In 1979, it was January of 1979 that I met Taffy.

And as soon as I laid eyes on her, that was it. It was over for me. She was going to be my wife.

I mean, I just. Well, it took a while for her to see the light, of course. And she resisted me for a while.

And she really had no interest in being involved with anyone. And I was pretty relentless. And I kept pursuing her.

And little by little, she started warming up to me. And eventually the time came where she knew she had to make a decision once and for all. I am either going to give myself to this guy or I'm going to cut this relationship off because I can't continue on with this kind of half committed mentality that I've had.

And, you know, there was something growing inside of her for me. And so she did it. In her heart, she flipped a switch.

I don't know if you guys knew women have a switch in their heart and they flip it on and sometimes they flip it off. And sometimes we can get them to flip it back on, just so you know, you know, but she flipped the switch on in her heart. And that meant something to her.

It meant something very real. It meant that she had she was opening her heart up to me. In her mind's eye, when she flipped that switch, she was giving herself to Steve Gallagher forever.

That was it. She was making that kind of a commitment to me. Now, I dug up our marriage vows and I'm going to read this.

It was the same for both of us, but I'm going to read what she said to me that day. This is what my wife said to me that day. It was in January 27th.

January 27th, 1980. You would think after 30, almost 32 years, I'd remember that. This is what she said to me.

I, Kathy Irwin, take thee, Steve Gallagher, to be my wedded husband, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honor, and cherish until death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I give thee my love. And you know, when she said those words, she was looking up into my face with love in her eyes. You know, she meant every word of it.

She meant every word of it. Well, it wasn't exactly that way for me. I didn't realize any of this.

What I'm about to share with you, I didn't understand it. You have to understand that I was just out of it. I was so full of myself that I was saying the same words, but they didn't mean anything to me.

They were just words. It was just part of the ceremony thing that I was doing. You know, I was saying the words, and I wanted to feel that way, but it just wasn't in me.

I didn't have the capacity to feel that way, I guess. You know, the reality was, I was going into this for myself and what I was going to get out of it. That's the truth of it.

And the reason I wanted to marry her was because I wanted to lock it up. You know, I didn't want her straying off after some other guy. When she flipped that switch, I wanted to stay that way.

I wanted to tie her into myself to make it harder for her to get away from me. You didn't know all that, did you? Oh, you did. Okay, so she did know.

Well, you didn't know it then, or you wouldn't have done it. You found out later. I'm going to read my vow to her, not as I thought it, because I honestly didn't think this way.

I wouldn't have, I just wasn't in touch with myself. But looking back now, 32 years later, I look back, and this is really what I should have said if I would have really been honest with myself. This is how it would have went.

I, Steve Gallagher, take thee, Kathy Irwin, to be my wedded wife, so long as this relationship proves beneficial to me, to treat you good enough to get by, until death do us part or you no longer fulfill my desires, whichever comes first, according to this meaningless ceremony that we're involved in. That's the reality of my commitment to her. Now, let's get back on track with the subject matter.

We're talking about people in the apostasy who have made a commitment to the Lord, but didn't know what they're doing. You know what I mean? They said the words, they said the prayer, they made the commitment, they went to the wedding ceremony, but the reality wasn't there in their hearts. They really were in it for the benefit package.

You know, escape hell, get to go to heaven one day, get God's blessings, God will help me, God will just give me things I want in life, and so on. That's what it's all about. Really, if they could be honest with

themselves, but this is the problem with apostate Christians, they won't be honest with themselves.

It's one of the greatest characteristics of the apostasy is deception, widespread, pervasive delusion. And the delusion is that they can take this marriage on their own terms. That's the delusion.

Now, the thing about giving a message like this, it's always this way. You know, we have two brides and there's two brides in here, just so you know. There's two brides and the one bride is a sincere bride and she has, she meant what she said, and her love and her devotion and so on has only grown towards her husband.

And so because she's sincere, when she hears a message like this, I say she, it's, you know, most of you are men, but when she hears a message like this, the first thing she does is start to do a moral inventory inside, to just examine, scrutinize, probably to a fault, some of the most sincere people in this room go overboard in their self-examination. You know, I mean, they take it too far. They don't need to go that far.

They, they've proven themselves to Jesus in a sense. But then on the other hand, you got the others who don't do that. They never want to face up to the reality of their lack of devotion to Jesus Christ.

They entered the relationship with their own agenda. They entered the relationship. It's all about me.

My devotion is to number one and I'll stay in this relationship as long as I'm getting out of it. What I want, if she could be honest with herself, that's what she would see now. And I need to say this when we're talking about the apostasy, when we're talking about what is the apostasy? It is the falling away of the greater portion of the professing church.

That is the apostasy. Okay. But it's, we're talking about individual people.

You know, it's a mass of people. They're individuals. But I need to make this clear that when I'm talking about an apostate Christian, really they aren't totally apostate until they cross the point of no return.

And only Jesus Christ knows where that is. Even though they're part of the mass of people that are moving away from God, it doesn't mean that many of them won't be saved still, turned around before it's too late. Now, the truth is most of them won't, but there will be those who do get rescued, who do come to their senses, who do finally hear the voice of Jesus Christ compelling them, calling them in.

Finally, they wake up. Most won't. Most won't.

All right. So the first reason why this marriage has gone bad is that this bride was never truly committed to her husband. The second is this bride was never truly submitted to her husband.

And look at Ephesians 5, 24, Paul said, but as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands. You know, and that is one of the key characteristics of a good marriage. In the case of this marriage, Jesus is perfect love and has the right to demand perfect submission from his wife.

He has the right. A.W. Tozer said, the truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred scriptures. Apart from obedience, there can be no salvation for salvation without obedience is a self-contradictory impossibility.

The essence of sin is rebellion against divine authority. And that is so true, even though a large part of the church is determined to refute the truth of that statement right there. Absolutely determined it is the enemy

at work within the apostate church.

Trying to create this weird hybrid thing. Where people can live however they wish. And deceive themselves into thinking they're in a happy marriage that they're not in.

One of the main characteristics, or I should say another of the main characteristics of the apostasy is lawlessness. And in that same passage that Paul introduced the apostasy, which is 2 Thessalonians 2, he spoke of the mystery of lawlessness. The term is *animos*.

It's literally it means without law. And you know, the temptation is to think when we're talking about lawlessness, oh, we're talking about terrible sin. They're just throwing themselves into all kinds of horrible sins.

No, it doesn't mean that. It just means they will not be governed by another. It only means self-will.

And apostate Christians are more than happy to go along with the evangelical movement. To go to church, to sing songs, to listen to Christian radio and so on. As long as the heart issues are never touched on.

As long as the heart issues aren't touched on. They're more than happy to go along with the crowd. Jesus said in Matthew 24 when He was talking about that great falling away, He said, because *animos* is increased, this sense of self-will, the sense of having the right to determine your own future, not really having to answer to God other than in a vague general way, just doing your own thing in life, that kind of mentality, that spirit, because that spirit is going to be growing and becoming increasingly more pervasive within the church.

Most people's love. Most people's love. Most will grow cold.

I'm going to read a portion out of my book, *Standing Firm Through the Great Apostasy*. Today in America, marriage is more of an equal combining of two lives, two careers, two sets of desires. But the role of the wife in biblical times was only a step above that of the family servant.

The wife forfeited her dreams and aspirations to attach herself to the husband's. She became his mate and submitted her will to his. There was a union of two wills, but it was almost a complete subjection of one to the other.

We as the bride of Christ are called to abandon our own interests, plans, and goals and subject them to our Lord and husband. It is his responsibility to provide for us, protect us, bring fulfillment to our lives. When we meet him, we align our lives with his plans and submit our wills to his.

It is part of the marriage agreement, and to refuse to do it really does mean that we have never actually entered into it. When Jesus calls them lawless, he wasn't saying that they didn't do a good enough job of keeping the rules. He was saying that they had reserved the right to run their own lives.

In our current church culture, people think nothing of making their own plans, deciding for themselves what they want to do in life, and living for themselves. But from the heavenly perspective, this lawlessness is very evil. Well, I'll just leave that at that, but it's all through the New Testament.

All right, we need to get moving on. Number three, this bride never truly loved her husband. Now, we all know this verse.

Jesus quoted it from the Old Testament. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment.

You know, can I just say that Jesus wants a bride who really does love him? He wants a bride who really, sincerely loves him, who really does. He wants someone who will reciprocate the love that he pours out on them. But when you're in it for the benefit package, you have a completely different mindset.

Anyone who does their Christianity by trying to keep this vague list of do's and don'ts, rules that we have adopted, and somehow we all know what they are in the evangelical movement. I don't know how it is that we all just know it. We all understand what the rules are.

And if your Christian experience is one of just keeping the rules, then the underlying attitude that's going to be part of that will be, how much can I get away with? That's really a core of it. How much can I get away with? How much do I have to do to get by? And the other part of that, if I could put it in a negative context, what does that mean that I can do that I don't have to answer for? That's really what it is. But that is not the love that compels a wife to submit to her husband, to surrender her heart to him, to give herself to him, as Kathy gave herself to me.

Have you given yourself to Jesus in that way? Lock, stock, and barrel. No reservations. No holding back.

No if, hands, or buts. No, you know, if this, if that. No, I'll do it later.

I'll make my full consecration at another time. Have you really committed yourself like that? Do you really love Jesus with all your heart? Or is it just some glib saying that you've learned to throw out there? Do you really love him when you sing these songs like we were singing this morning? Are you singing them from a true heart of love for him? Or are you just mouthing the words as you do every Sunday? You're the only one who can figure that out. I don't know.

I mean, I suppose if I got around some of you and was following you around, listening to how you talk and watching the way you do life, I suppose the reality of what you really love would come out. You know, I suppose that where your heart really is, where the treasure of your heart really is, would quickly manifest itself if I hung around with you for a while. Well, Jesus sees it all.

Some people act as though there is a fool on the throne of heaven. You know, they're only deceiving themselves. If I'm describing you here today, you have only been deceiving yourself because God sees in your heart and he knows what motivates you.

He knows what you love. What you treasure. He knows you can lie to yourself and you can lie to others, but he sees it for what it is.

And yet he loves you. He loves you. He still wants you for himself.

He's still hoping against hope. He's still hoping. He wants you for himself.

When you live your Christian life, keeping the list, you know, keeping the list of rules, you don't know what Christianity is. If that's your experience, you don't know what Christianity is. You haven't yet crossed the line.

You haven't come into the real thing. Paul Washer gave an interesting little illustration. He was overseas when he gave a message and he was talking about the same list of rules that Christians keep.

And he said, you know, when I get back to the States and I see my wife after being away from her for a couple of weeks, I'm not going to have to go run to the marriage manual and go to page 525 and say, OK, now what am I supposed to do when I first see my wife? How should I react? Show me exactly what I'm supposed to do. He said, I don't need a marriage manual. I'm going to run up and I'm going to kiss her because it's in me.

You know, I love my wife. And when I see her, when I get off that plane and there she is, it's going to be the thing that wells up from within. And that is the difference right there, really, between someone who's just doing it to keep the rules and and get by with what they can and someone who's in it because they love Jesus Christ and they want to be with him forever and ever.

It's the desire. It's the passion of their heart. That terrible section of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew seven, where Jesus said, Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, didn't we do this and didn't we do that? And his response was, I never knew you.

And to know in Scripture, when it's in the context of marriage means to be intimate. There's intimacy involved in a true marriage. And he said, Yeah, you kept all those rules.

You did all those things. You're in the presence of God in meetings and stuff. And you certainly felt my love coming towards you.

But you never reciprocated. We never bonded together as one, like a husband and wife becomes one in spirit when the wife becomes absorbed into the husband's world and life that never happened. When Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman in John four, you know, and she was all confused and well, the Samaritans worship God on this hill and the Jews are up there in Jerusalem and they're worshipping in the temple.

And you know, how's anyone supposed to know what's right? You know, and all that. And Jesus cut right through it. And he said, Listen, the father seeks for those who will worship him in spirit and in truth, in spirit and in truth.

In other words, in utter sincerity. Now, God is three persons. He's the Trinity, of course, the father, the son and the Holy Spirit.

And we are taught to say our father. OK, so I'm not disputing that or coming against that. That is a age old truth of Christianity.

But I just want to say something here that there is also in a certain sense that he's our father in law. You know what I mean? He's our father in law. He is the father of Jesus, who is our husband.

And I think in some of these passages and again, I don't want to press this too far, but to me, I could almost hear Jesus saying it this way. My father. Is seeking a bride for me, a wife for me who will love me in spirit and truth.

The father in law is seeking such worshipers. Such lovers for their son, you know, Abraham sending the servant to go get the wife for Isaac. That's the kind of wife.

That's why he sent his servant hundreds of miles away to go find just the right wife for his son. That's the heart of the father. For Jesus, because we're talking about a very long marriage.

So what does that mean, the worship? And I, you know, I don't want to take this too far either, but it really comes forth in a devotional life. When I hear that Christians say that they don't have a devotional life, a solid devotional life, or that it's hit and miss, or when I get around to it, those kinds of statements, I'm sorry, but the first thing I think is this is someone who is not in love. This is someone who's not in love.

Now, I understand that a devotional life is a discipline. It's a spiritual discipline. It takes some time.

You know, when you've lived in the flesh your whole life, it takes some time to get disciplined, to get that established. But when you have the love of Jesus Christ compelling you, you'll do it. It's not that you'll always be perfect at it and all that.

And it's not that all your prayer times are going to be full of brimming life and joy and all that. And I'm not saying that, but you have some desire. Listen, I want to be with my wife.

We're together all the time, and I like it that way. I'm not looking to get away from her, you know. I love being with my wife.

And when I'm gone overseas or on some long trip or something, I can't wait to get back to my wife. Well, I feel the same way with Jesus. There is nothing, no segment of my life that means more to me than my morning times with God.

I love my time with God in the morning. I love it. It means everything to me.

All right, I'm going to wrap it up now. I want to say it this way. You know, I think that a lot of times one of the mistakes people make is they look at God in an impersonal way.

You know, He's this ethereal being up there, and we've got to keep Him happy, you know, or He'll get mad at us or something or other. But can I just tell you that He is a person with feelings? In fact, can I say to you that no human being who has ever lived on this planet, including all the females, no one has felt more deeply than Jesus felt in life. No one loved more deeply.

No one was as completely given over to people as Jesus was. He cared. You know, when we're talking about God, God loves to be able to love means that you are a person with the capacity to care for people.

Right? Isn't that true? You can't be a being of love without the capacity to really give yourself, to make yourself vulnerable, to open yourself up. That's what love does. It makes you vulnerable to another person.

And if you're not being vulnerable to another person, you're not loving that person. I never made myself vulnerable to her in those early years because I was in it for myself, because I really didn't love her. I loved the idea of having a wife that was devoted to me the way I wanted it.

And that's the way pseudo-Christians are. They love the idea of this sappy Jesus that they've concocted in their minds because He will give them everything they want and take them to heaven one day. But that isn't reality.

It's just a figment of their imagination. God is a God of great feeling. If that isn't the case, then what did the psalmist mean when he said the children of Israel pained the Holy One? Pained Him! And if it isn't true, then what was Paul talking about when he was exhorting believers not to grieve the Holy Spirit? That word grief in the Greek means an enormous amount of sorrow, mental anguish.

What does it mean? Why did Jesus weep at people's unbelief? If He didn't feel deeply when He expressed the sorrow. Oh, Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How many times I wanted to come to you, but you would not! That was the lament of a broken-hearted lover. Where are you in this? How have you treated Jesus? Now, I'm going to give an illustration here.

And I don't want to press this too far, okay? Because we are talking about a divine being here. But I don't want to get away from this truth that I'm bringing to you. With it just being a sterilized being named God up there, who just kind of throws out the orders and stuff.

No, He is someone with great, enormous love and has made Himself terribly vulnerable to people. What I have here on this sheet of paper are actual word-for-word comments that we got, Kathy and I got, from wives of men who had committed adultery. And these were the initial reactions that these women expressed here.

And they're all different women. And I'm going to read these to you, but I want you to try to get your mind out of the whole who the man was and the wife and all of that. Try to see it that this is what Jesus goes through when people reject and spurn His love.

Why am I so unlovable? What is it about me that makes Him reject me? I longed for a close, intimate relationship with my husband, but it seemed like He just wasn't interested. Another one. I couldn't understand why He married me when He knew He never intended to be faithful.

It was so unjust. Another one. We continued drifting farther and farther apart.

There was no intimacy in our marriage and no connection between us emotionally. Another one. When He admitted the affair, the first thing I said to Him was, but you were my best friend, and you promised you would never hurt me.

Another one. It hurt so much that I would often cry all night long because I felt so unwanted. I felt like I was so unattractive that even my husband didn't want me.

This is another one. The last one. The next month was like a nightmare that I couldn't awaken from.

The pain was unbearable. My heart ached constantly. The blood would run cold through my veins with each new admission.

The left side of my face would go numb. I went from 129 pounds to 113 pounds. My hair began to fall out.

I had diarrhea daily, and at times I thought that I would surely die. I really believed that I was losing my mind. I kept trying to convince myself it was untrue, but there it was staring me in the face.

If you don't think that Jesus hurts like that, you are clueless as to who He is. You know, there's a movement in the church now that wants to do away with hell. It comes and goes every 50 years or so.

There's some new heretic, some new false teacher that comes along and tries to convince us that God is all love, and a loving God could never send someone to hell. They don't know God. Even to make such a statement shows the utter selfishness that they have entered that relationship with themselves.

We all know the saying, hell hath no fury like a scorned woman. I wrote my own little statement here. The great fury of hell is in direct proportion to the great love which has been scorned.

The more love that has been lavished and then rejected by a person, the greater the depth of hell that they will experience. If you want to know how a loving God could send someone to a place of eternal torment, you need to take a good hard look at what His love cost Him. My dear Jesus, I don't know what to say exactly.

We don't deserve Your love. We just don't, Lord. I just think about how much I put You through myself, Lord.

I'm so sorry. I wonder how many times You experienced some of these statements and my actions, but the way I disdained Your love and treated it as a cheap thing, how many times did I hurt You? I'm not even talking about the sexual sin, Lord. I'm talking about stuff much deeper.

Just the turning away, the utter arrogance of someone who was being offered such a tremendous thing and being so high-minded to treat it as if it was nothing. Lord, I know there are people in here this morning who have done the same thing, whether they're men in this program or visitors. People who have given You a tiny portion of their lives, have given You Sunday morning, have kept the list of rules, but they have kept their heart from You.

They don't really love You, Lord. They never have. God, I just pray that even now they would see Your love for what it is, how greatly You want them for Yourself, the price You have been willing to pay to try to win their hearts to Yourself.

And time and time and time and time again, Your every effort has been treated with disdain. God, I just pray that You will open hearts and make it real. You're the only one who can do it, Holy Spirit.

You're the only one who has the power to go in and reveal truth. And I pray that You would do that even right now. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

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