

Valentines Dinner Message (Couples Conference)

by Stuart Briscoe

Stuart Briscoe's sermon emphasizes the importance of trust, love, and understanding in marriage through personal narratives and biblical insights.

Duration: 50:01

Scripture: Matthew 6:28-29, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:31-32

Topics: "Personal Testimony", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal journey of struggling academically and living a wild lifestyle while attending a teacher's training college at Cambridge. He was warned that he would not be able to stay unless he changed his ways. The speaker then talks about how Jesus entered his life and brought about a remarkable transformation, making two very different individuals into one. The sermon also includes a humorous anecdote about the speaker's struggle to deliver a sermon with three points and a lesson he learned from a helpful gentleman in the audience.

Transcript

I'm sure we're delighted to be with you this evening, because at our age we're delighted to be anywhere. Thank you very much for inviting us to come here. Some of you, of course, didn't invite us, so thank you.

Thanks for nothing. You've been here a long time. We were given 45 minutes, so check your watches.

We will stop in 45 minutes. It will seem considerably longer than that, but we'll do our best to make it as pleasant as we can. Your job is to listen.

Our job is to talk. If you finish your job before we finish ours, feel perfectly free to leave. We've heard this talk, it's not all that great.

Actually, we're looking forward very much to having the opportunity to open the scriptures with you, to talk about what the Bible says about marriage. There's a lot of people talking about marriage at the present time. There seems to be some degree of confusion, I would have thought, so it's rather good to get back to the original documents on the subject.

We plan to do that, but we don't plan to do that this evening, because you've already been here two and a half hours, and you've had a heavy meal, and you didn't bring your Bibles anyway, so we'll just talk to you this evening. We thought we won't preach, we'll just talk. The difference between a talk and preaching is just decibels.

We thought we'd tell you a little bit about our individual stories, and then tell you how these two individual stories converged when Jesus got involved in our lives and brought us together. He did a remarkable thing. He made two people one.

The two that he made one are very, very different people, as you'll see very quickly. But we believe that the new whole that he's made, W-H-O-L-E, is greater than the sum of its parts, which is one of the stories of marriage. I was born at a very early age in the north of England.

I'm serious, I really was. I was born in the north of England because my mother was there at the time. I hadn't really thought of that before, it just occurred to me.

My parents were believers, good, solid believers, very much committed to ministry in the context of their own secular lives. As long as I knew anything, I knew the Christian gospel. One Sunday morning, it was rather intriguing actually, I was delighted to hear that my younger brother was not well.

The reason for that was that he had to stay home, and my mother had to stay home to look after him, and to my intense delight, she said I could stay home too, and I did not therefore need to go and listen to my father, who's the lay preacher in the church. I remember getting a little stool and putting it in front of the fire in England in those days. We come from England, perhaps I should have explained that, because some people think I have a terrible impediment, and they think how well he does public speaking with that awful handicap, but anyway, we call it English.

The homes in England in those days had one fireplace that was designed to heat the house, in actual fact it heated about one square meter, and the rest was like a refrigerator, and I put the stool as close to the fire as I could get and sat on it, the stool, not the fire, and the front of me fried while the back of me froze, and then when I couldn't tolerate either any longer, I turned round and fried the frozen and froze the fried, and this is where the expression moving in evangelical circles originated. And I wasn't watching television, my children are incredulous, my grandchildren are aghast when I tell them I didn't watch television when I was a kid, and they say, why not? And I say, because it wasn't invented. That is beyond their comprehension.

And they say, well, if you didn't have television to watch when you were a kid, what did you do? And I said, weird stuff like read and think. And that's what I was doing. I wasn't reading, I wasn't watching television, I wasn't listening to the radio, I wasn't doing anything, I was just sitting there thinking, and I suddenly thought, I'm not a believer.

Just right out of the blue. I'm not a believer. So I jumped up from my stool, and I ran to the bottom of the stairs, and I shouted to my mother, I'm not a believer.

And that got her attention rather quickly. And she came rushing downstairs, and she grabbed a Bible on the way, and she sat me down, and she took me through Revelation chapter 3, verse 20, totally out of context, and she said, she explained about Jesus was knocking on my house door, and you know, you know the thing, and how if I invited him in, he would come and sup with me. And I said, what's up? That

didn't make any sense, but fortunately, she knew what it meant, and was able to put it into my kind of language, a small boy.

And to cut a long story short, she prayed with me, and I prayed with her, and it was a very simple prayer, really, asking Jesus to come into my life. And I distinctly remember, at the end of that prayer, turning to her and saying, did he? And, which in actual fact was a very serious question, did he? And she said, did he what? And I said, did he do what he said he would do? She said, yes. I said, how do you know? How do you know? And she said, and this has stuck with me for the rest of my days, because when Jesus speaks, you always remember that these are the words of a gentleman.

Now in those days in England, they used to say, an Englishman's word is his bond. They say all kinds of other things about Englishmen now, but that was what they said then. An Englishman's word is his bond.

And the point of it was this, that when my mother told me that you can rely on what Jesus said, because these are the words of a gentleman, what she was instilling into me was a fundamental principle upon which my life has been built. And it is this, that the words of Christ are truth. And because they are truth, they are trustworthy.

And because they are trustworthy, those who put their trust in him and what he says will have a solid foundation upon which to build their lives. And the person I am today is to a very large extent predicated on what my mother told me that day. That the words of Christ are truth, and totally trustworthy, and you can build your life upon them.

So I started to build my life upon them. One of the problems I had as a child was that my father had a small business, a grocery store, and I used to go in and out past this candy counter. And that was, you know, you've heard the expression, as happy as a kid in a candy store, don't believe it.

Because I had been told, those candies do not belong to you, we never touch what is not our own. That was the principle. We never touch what is not our own.

If you want a candy, you ask, and the answer will be, no. So I went in and out past the candies all day, and all I heard was, no. I wasn't even asking a question.

No. No. We never touch what isn't our own.

We never touch what isn't our own. But one day, I did touch what wasn't my own. I did it with a very athletic, dexterous movement, quicker than the human eye could observe.

Or so I thought. And then I heard the voice of God. Stuart, come here.

And I realised it was not the voice of God, it was worse than that. It was my father. He said, come here.

And I didn't realise that he was standing behind a display of ham and jam, and had little peepholes. And he was keeping an eye on what was going on. I remember dragging myself round to confront my father at that moment.

He used to wear a starched white apron with a big bow tied in the middle. I remember staring him straight in the bow. And looking at this impenetrable, glistening, white, starched exterior.

Totally intimidated with this booming voice coming from the clouds. And he was explaining to me how I had now embarked on a life of crime. That I had become a sociopath.

That I would break his parents' heart. And I was thinking, wow, for one little candy I may as well have had a fistful. If this is what I have embarked upon.

Then he said to me, look at me. Look at me. And funnily enough, that was the last thing I wanted to do.

And my eyes slowly traversed this glistening, white, impenetrable, starched exterior. Slowly, slowly, slowly, I looked at his face. And I heard his serious, solemn words.

And they had gone deep, I can assure you. But there were two things that made these solemn words bearable to a small boy. And the first one was that I detected in the corner of his eye the trace of a tear.

And at the corner of his mouth the trace of a smile. Which told me two things. My dad was deeply upset.

I defended him. But he knew that he too was human. And he understood.

And he was concerned about me. And he loved me. And I got a picture of God that day.

In his holiness, he wears a starched, white apron with a bow in the middle. Intimidating, impenetrable, glistening, starched. He speaks to us solemn words.

With a touch of a smile in the corner of his mouth because he understands. With a trace of a tear in the corner of his eye. That's why I'm the person I am today.

Because as a small boy I was taught that the word of Christ is totally trustworthy. And that the Holy God is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. And loves us to distraction.

God usually brings two totally different people together. And when I'm listening to Stuart I realize how different my background was all over again. I was born to wonderful parents.

They were just about as good as they could be without God. Know anybody like that? Godly, ungodly people. And lived in Liverpool, which was not a good idea, in the Second World War.

And we just got hammered every night. And I was not brought up as Stuart was with the name of Jesus all around the house all the time. Even though my mother's background was Presbyterian, somewhere back there.

And so I never went to church. But during our school hours we would recite the Apostles' Creed. Because that was official in every English public school.

There was no separation of church and state. For which I'm very grateful. How would a little British school girl like me have ever heard of Jesus otherwise? And so I heard about Jesus in my public school every day through the Apostles' Creed.

Which is wonderful theology. And I was proud to have learnt it by heart. I was six years of age.

When one night in the air raid shelter, which we all slept in. I can't remember sleeping in a bed in those days. I remember waiting for the bombs to fall.

And it was one of the worst blips of the war. Just never stopped. And my hands were over my ears.

And I frantically tried to remember the Apostles' Creed. And I remember being quite proud to remember. I believe in God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

And Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. Who was born of the Virgin Mary. And I was reciting it over and over and over again to stop thinking.

And then the word the Holy Ghost came into my mind. I couldn't remember how it all fit together. I believe in the Holy Ghost.

And suddenly my mind was riveted on this. Who is the Holy Ghost? Did I believe in the Holy Ghost? Did the other girls in school believe in the Holy Ghost? I didn't know. But somehow, at that point in my little life.

God walked into that air raid shelter. And sat down by me. And I was aware, though I knew it.

I knew nothing of doctrine or Bible. Or anything other than that Anglican help. Morning by morning in my school.

That somehow He did have something to do with me. And it wasn't for years and years and years later, of course. That I found out who He was and what He had to do with.

But I do remember that night. Coming out of the air raid shelter. And I had prayed frantically, Lord stop the war.

I remember. Just stop it, stop it, stop the bombs. Please stop it, stop it.

And I came out of the air raid shelter. And looked at our house. And the whole of the back of the house was damaged.

And a bomb had just taken the facade right off it. And I remember standing there thinking, well. And looking up at heaven and saying, well.

You're either not there or you don't care. And so I had a lot of lots and lots and lots of questions. Coming out of those childhood days.

But I watched my mom. Because my dad was in the war. He was in the air force.

I watched her rise to that occasion as Britain did. To a man, to a woman from the Queen. Who would go among all the rubble.

Night after night in London. Refused to leave Buckingham Palace. Even though she was begged to do so.

So she could be among her people. And I remember the way that the war brought us all together. But I also remember the way that it deepened my mom and dad's love for each other.

And for the family. It's a funny thing the way that crisis and trouble does that for the family. And many, many times she would just tell my sister and I stories.

About how they'd met. And how they loved each other. And all of this.

And so I was surrounded with a non-believing situation. And yet a family that were modeling what family and God and love was all about. And so we came from very, very, very different backgrounds.

And yet what happened to me in the war. And as a family we struggled and clung together. And grew through those crisis days.

Of course has a lot to do with the sort of person that I am today. When I was... Thank you very much. Well you take what you can get, don't you? When I was 17 I achieved my lifetime ambition.

Which was rather precocious of me. But I really didn't have much ambition actually. My lifetime ambition was to leave school.

And I achieved that with distinction. When I was 17. Got a job and was transferred to another town.

And went to a small church there. The same variety as the one in which I'd grown up. And about the third week I was there at a youth group.

A total stranger came up to me and he said, How old are you? I said, I'm 17. He said, it's time you were preaching. And I said, I can't preach.

He said, have you ever tried? I said, no. Well he said, if you've never tried, how do you know you can't do it? It's a very good question. I've subsequently discovered the church of Jesus Christ is full of people who are totally convinced they cannot do what they've never attempted.

There's no way they can know. But that's another subject. He said, you will preach a week from Tuesday.

Which was a surprise to me. And your subject, he added, is the church at Ephesus. I was not aware at that juncture that they had a church in Ephesus.

But I became an ardent student of the old things Ephesian. And the great day came when I was to give my sermon. I dare not look at the crowd, I dare not look at the clock.

So I buried my nose in my notes. Which incidentally, when we were moving a few years ago, my wife in an old box found my notes on my very first sermon, 56 years ago. To my intense embarrassment, she has framed them, they hang in our house.

Friends come and see them, they shake their heads and say, there is no discernible improvement. I knew I was supposed to have three points. I don't know why, but British preachers have three points.

So I got three points. I got through the first one and stole a surreptitious look at the clock. And to my horror, I discovered that I was already past finishing time.

And I had two more points. I know what I intended to say. What I actually said was not exactly what I intended.

I blurted out, I'm terribly sorry, I don't know how to stop. Which was perfectly true, I didn't know how to stop. But there was a very helpful gentleman sitting on the back row who gave me my first lecture in homiletics.

I didn't know that was what you called them at the time. He said, shut up and sit down. So I did both and felt highly relieved that my rather brief preaching career had come to an end.

The man who got me started, however, came to me and he said, you didn't finish. I said, no. He said, you'll come back next week and finish it.

So I dutifully showed up. You see, this was a long time ago when teenagers didn't know they could rebel. In those days we thought we were supposed to do what we're told.

Now I have teenage grandchildren. That's a different scene. A grandfather incident.

My definition of a grandfather is he's the old boy with teeth marks in the end of his tongue. You spend half your life just biting your tongue. So I did what I was told.

But I made sure I finished the next time. And I thought, that's great. That was a great preaching career.

And it ended in a blaze of glory. But I was wrong again. The man came to me and said, there are a lot of little churches around here.

They don't have pastors. And he said, they're Methodist churches and they have a circuit. And I put you on the circuit.

And you go and preach and take the service. I said, how did you do that? He said, how many services have you sat through? I said, all my life I've sat through them. He said, then you should know how to do it.

It's amazing, isn't it? Amazing. We sit through church service all our lives. You're for us to do one.

We say, how did you do it? Where are our heads? I said, well, what do I do? He said, well, do what you usually do. And preach a sermon. I said, what do I tell them? He said, tell them about the church at Ephesus.

So that's what I started to do. Started to go around the Methodist circuit. And then it's amazing that they asked me to come back.

And then one thing led to another. And it was amazing. As time went on, I discovered I could do it.

Then I discovered that people responded to what I was doing. Then I discovered that I was experiencing what C.S. Lewis calls the stab of joy in doing it. And then to my total amazement, people started getting converted.

And incredibly, the church started to affirm me. And then it dawned on me. I'd discovered a gift.

I'd discovered a gift. And now it was up to me to develop the gift I'd discovered. And I didn't discover a gift by going to a seminar.

And I didn't discover a gift by having a booming voice from heaven say, I want to make a preacher out of you. I just saw something that needed doing and did it. And started doing it badly.

And got doing it a little better. A little better. And then discovered the inner joy.

And then discovered the evidence of blessing. And then saw God's hand was in it. And then was affirmed by the church.

And that's how you discover your gift. Did you know that the church is full of people who haven't a clue what their gifts are? Now, the greatest spectator sport in the world is not played on Sunday afternoons. It's played on Sunday mornings.

It's called church. Some people have said the contemporary church in America is like a football game. Where on the field there are 22 men desperately in need of rest being watched by 75,000 people desperately in need of exercise.

That's the modern church. But if you're interested, and I don't know why you would be but if you're interested in knowing who these strange people are who have been invited to come here and talk to you this evening now you're beginning to get the picture. This part of the duo is just an ordinary person who believes that the word of Christ is truth is totally reliable and you can build your life upon it who believes that God is holy and just and righteous and loving and merciful and gracious who gives gifts to his people to identify and exercise.

That's all I am. Meanwhile, I had applied for college and found myself to my amazement at a teacher's training college up at Cambridge. I struggled to stay there academically and so decided to major in the only thing I knew how to major in and that was just having a good old wild time and getting an A for it.

And I was cautioned that unless I shaped up and changed my lifestyle that I wouldn't be there much longer. So I tried to reform but I found that I couldn't and that I didn't have the power to change as I knew I needed to change and shape up. Well it was just at this very dangerous part of my first year up at Cambridge that I got sick and I was rushed into hospital and there in hospital I was packaged for healing and placed in this bed in this huge ward next to me there was a girl who knew Christ.

Probably the first, as far as I can honestly remember the first person I'd ever met in so-called Christian England that I could say was a believer. I'm sure there must have been believers around me but I can't remember anybody else. And so I was frightened, I was pretty sick they didn't know what was wrong with me and I just kept getting worse higher temperature and pain in my stomach so they took my appendix out but it wasn't that so I thought, well this is interesting I wonder what's next and that didn't help and the nurse, Janet who is in the next bed to me, she was sick herself was a young believer herself and she took me on as a project and even though I was very, very sick she skillfully, very, very skillfully drew me into conversations about a God who was real who walked down the stairway of heaven with a baby in his arms and put him in a bale of hay and set the world on fire and I had honestly it was like I was hearing about Jesus Christ for the very first time in my life even though I'd heard his name even though I'd learned the Apostles' Creed this was absolutely way out in left field I had no idea such belief existed and as soon as I heard the Gospel I grabbed it with both hands and my first question is why has nobody told me about this before I can't believe I'm 18 years of age why in so-called Christian England how could it be? how could it be? and I said to her are there people that really believe this you know, in every town in Britain would there be some people like that in my town my school well how? how could it be?

I'm 18 I didn't know where have they been? and maybe it was my own experience that right from the beginning of my conversion has driven me to make sure that people hear about Jesus because I do not believe people have rejected Christ I believe they haven't had a chance to receive him like me and every time I am among so-called nominal believers even I'm asking that question have they ever had a chance? are they like me? and will they say how could it be I live in America? how could it be I live next door to you? and I never ever knew so I came to Christ irrevocably totally absolutely devastated by my sin and

quite hugely then concerned about my condition as I was still very very sick and I remember going to sleep one night very soon after my conversion in that big big ward and Jenny

saying to me Jill do you believe in the Holy Ghost? and suddenly everything came back from that night in the shelter and I said tell me about him and she explained it was the Holy Ghost as we called him not the Holy Spirit in those days that has come into your life Christ without his body you've got all you're going to get she said Jill I said I have? she said yes he's a person you can't receive a bit of a person you have all you're going to get but he hasn't received all of you that's going to take a lifetime but you have all of God in all of you Christ in you and she said I just want to go to sleep tonight head on the pillar of that promise Christ in you the hope of glory I didn't understand it I didn't know what was ahead I had no idea about this laughing life this grand adventure that

I'd just begun on absolutely no conception of the life that lay ahead but I do remember that marvellous, marvellous day in hospital and from there I went back into my college got my life sorted out now I had the power to change made a big difference and was allowed to get on with what I was doing without the staff wondering what to do with me and went back to Liverpool to teach and ended up in a city school absolutely impossible situation gangs in the classrooms knives around fights breaking out it was pretty difficult days in Liverpool and I remember taking off one day I lived in a beautiful home wealthy home in the suburbs and just telling my parents I'm just going downtown getting on a bus going down to Lyme Street in Liverpool wandering around seeing if I could find my kids I thought

if they don't like me they're not going to listen to me and if they don't like me they're not going to learn math or English or about Jesus or anything else and so I just thought I'd spend some time with them and I found them in the most incredible places the Heaven and Hell Club I mean they were only junior high kids they were that age but they were in the drug dives and hanging around on the streets and fighting fights and training dogs to fight the other dogs of the other gangs and the policemen always went in threes in those days down there in those places and so I just began hanging out with them and to my amazement it took a little time one of them to myself till they liked me till they wanted me to be there you're coming again tomorrow night miss and I'd just sit in the corner and

just watch everything that was going around try and draw them into conversation get to know them and eventually of course they began coming to Christ one after the other and like Stuart something needed doing I just did it somebody said to me in meetings last week when did you get your call when did you get your call to speak and I said I got saved that's when I got it it was just the mission feels between your own two feet that's what Jenny told me now go get it in fact the day I was saved she said now everybody everybody that comes to your bedside I want you to tell what you've done I said what do you mean she said well just tell them what we've just done how we prayed I said ok she said now look here's the head nurse coming tell her so I told her and she sort of marked me down on a

piece of paper you know and said well not so bad you know it'll get better and here's the next one try her and here's your friend and here's this and by the time I went to sleep that night there were six people that I'd stumblingly said once I was blind now I can see you know I mean as little as that bit and they'd come to Christ and so here is Stuart from his Christian background with all that Christian heritage which I've always been jealous about what must it be like to have that privilege of growing up in an incredible Christian home and yet now here I was with a chance to say to start a heritage like that and I remember thinking I will never ever get married unless I can marry somebody that loves Jesus to distraction that wants to go to the ends of the world turn the world upside

down for him and that I can choose to have that Christian heritage that he has had and that I haven't had When I was 18 we're obviously going to have to move I'm just still at 18 here but when I was 18 I got a very nice letter from the British government saying that they had a war on in Korea and they would like me to go and help them with it and so I said alright and I went for my medical and everything was fine and they asked me what I wanted to join and I said I didn't particularly want to join anything but it was their idea they said you've got to join something and there was a man there in a superb uniform and I said what's he? and they said he is a Royal Marine and I said alright I'll join them and they said no that's an elite corps and that's for volunteers only so I said well how

do you volunteer? and they said you volunteer it's a very complicated business so I volunteered and that's how I joined the Royal Marines When I got home my mother was very concerned about this whole thing and she said when she was nervous she repeated herself quite a lot what happened? what happened? and I said I've joined the Marines the Marines and she said what a day and I said I really don't know but you I think you start as a submarine and work up which I thought was very witty and she was not impressed and she gave me I remember she gave me a number of fleas in my ear first but joining the Marines like that anyway that's by the way there just happened to be in our home at that time a captain in the Royal Artillery and he more or less lived with us he was a single Korea Army officer

and when he heard that I'd volunteered for the Marines he said oh that's wonderful that's wonderful he said now the first night in the Marines you will nail your colours to the mast now let me explain that to you in case you're not familiar with that expression to nail your colours to the mast that was something that used to happen in the old days when the ships of the Royal Navy would go out to battle they would hoist the colours of the Sovereign to the main mast and then of course if they got into trouble they'd pull them down and hoist a white flag and surrender but sometimes the captain would send somebody up after they hoist the colours of the Sovereign with a hammer and nails and they would nail the colours to the mast and what that meant was no surrender this is who we are this is

whom we serve nothing is going to change that you will nail your colours to the mast he said it wasn't a question it was an instruction and so I said well did you do that when you joined the Royal Artillery he said yes I said what did you do he said the first night I was there I knelt by my bed and prayed I said what happened he said the men in the room threw boots at me I said what did you do I will never ever forget his answer he looked at me as if I'd asked the most stupid question in the world what did you do I said he said I cleaned them and returned them I thought this is a real man who has the guts to do that and the grace to do that so I arrived my first night in the Eastley Barracks you know Chatham Barracks in Kent England and I look at the forty men that I'm to share a barrack

room with and they look like the biggest bunch of cutthroats I've ever seen in my life and I thought I wonder how I got in this crowd and then I thought and I'm supposed to nail my colours to the mast and I'm going to be peppered with boots in a few minutes from now and I was less than enthusiastic about that and then I was even less than enthusiastic about meeting the captain in the Royal Artillery and telling him I didn't do it so I thought the only thing to do is to nail by my bed make it look as if I'm looking for something under the bed that they'll think I'm looking for something under the bed and if he asks me did I nail by my bed I can say oh yeah anyway as soon as I knelt down there was absolute silence in the room then I heard the creaking of floorboards and I realised that they

were all coming towards me and I braced myself for the inevitable shower of boots but strangely they never came and so I thought well I guess I've got to get up sometime and I didn't know what to pray so I

think I counted up to 25 and then I got up and they were all standing around my bed and they began to talk about me as if I wasn't there and they said what was he doing he said I think he was praying who to?

God who else do you think he was praying why is he looking under the bed I mean you know seriously this is what they were saying and then one of them a particularly rough looking character I found out he was actually the middleweight boxing champion of Great Britain but he never he didn't say much he just used his fist and he suddenly said consider the lilies they toil not neither do they spin and yet I say unto thee that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like unto one of these suddenly he said what's that I said I went to Sunday school once he said they taught me to say that he'd remembered it that was the sum total of biblical knowledge in that room that was all they knew they'd never seen anybody pray before they didn't know you prayed to God they didn't know where God was they didn't know the first thing about the Bible and they started asking questions and I spent my first night in the marines with about 40 men sitting on their beds just peppering me with questions about God and Jesus I tell you and it had nothing to do with me it had nothing to do with me because I was less than enthusiastic about getting in that fix but you see what I discovered was this that given half a chance God will take even the most unworthy unprofitable servant and work his wonders and if you're wondering who these people are who are with you this evening they're just very very ordinary people who in and of themselves are desperately unprofitable whom God chooses to work his miracles through and that's why we're here so he's coming from this background I'm coming from this background and we meet I take a whole gang of these street kids that I'm struggling to do something with up to a castle in the Lake District called Capenry Hall where you spent five years there were you Craig?

I can't remember how many years and I was told to take them there they'd know what to do with them I told them all I knew I was a young believer and they were leather jacketed young thugs basically but they'd come to Christ and yes they didn't look like it on the outside but you know the best way it's like an oak tree an oak tree has a lot of old leaves hanging on it all winter and you can exhaust yourself climbing the oak tree and picking off all the old bits if you like I'll tell you a better way just concentrate on getting the new life to fill the tree and the leaves will drop off and so I wanted to get the new life of Christ filling that tree and somebody said well there's experts up there they're youth workers take them up there so I arrived I've got 30 or 40 kids up there and Stuart

lived near there and had helped that mission organisation from the time it started and he happened to be there and it was an Easter Easter house party and he saw me struggling with these youngsters to try and keep from being expelled from this youth centre and he walked up to me and said would you like some help well that was his line anyway and I said yes please thought that was rather neat and so that's how we met in the context of all these young people and that's how God began to bring us together and I remember working together in that youth work whenever he was around he was a bank inspector by this time and he would come to Liverpool to inspect the banks and I was teaching in a city school and we would just work together with the kids and it's a wonderful thing I tell young people

all over the place in fact I was with students last week and I said you know one of the girls said to me how will I know if this man is the one that I should marry I said well are you serving together are you in a church are you doing something together I said I remember watching my husband wrestle with one of these youngsters on the floor and thinking he'll make a good dad and you get to know a lot about your partner when you watch them investing their life giving their life away and when you do it together and so we discovered each other and found out who we were very different people in the context of that youth work and there came a point where we decided that we were going to get married and I remember I'm an

English major and I remember thinking now this is going to be wonderful

will it be like what will he say to me will it be Shakespeare will it be Milton will it be words, words you know and I was savouring this and I remember Stuart was inspecting banks down in Liverpool and he said to me well why don't we get the ring and meet me at the lunch hour or whatever so here in the middle of the rush hour in Liverpool he says I've seen a shop it's over there and we nearly got killed we're getting into this shop and here was the ring we wanted we wanted the one I'm wearing three stones Jesus in the middle Stuart one side me the other and we bought it and dashed back across the street and couldn't hardly hear anything and I kept thinking never mind these wonderful wonderful poetry words are going to come I wonder what it'll be like so he gets in the car and he takes

the ring out and he puts it on my finger and he said well Jill that's that thinking well we have the whole of life to work on this yeah but anyway we got home and my mum who knew a jewellers had called Mrs.

Cannell I always remember she was on the phone to this woman and she promised her we'd get the ring from her it wasn't mother's business but she decided that's what we'd do so I come in flashing my ring at her and she's oh dear so she throws the phone at me and says you explain to Mrs. Cannell you've already bought it so all flustered I got hold of the phone and said Mrs. Cannell I'm awfully sorry we've already got it but maybe next time and it was then Stuart took that phone out of my hands and took me in his arms and said Jill there won't be a next time because of that and suddenly those two little words became the most romantic things he could have ever said to me and I would have never understood of course how could I that we were to go into missions and he was to become an evangelist and he would be on the road sometimes six, seven, eight months of the year and I would be basically a single parent raising kids for those ten years I had no idea what was around the corner of tomorrow and you never do do you I was telling the students at Gordon Conwell Seminary that this week MDiv students people going into ministry I said around the corner of your glad anything Lord there will be a oh I never expected this Lord Jesus yes there will and for me there was oh I never expected this and many many many times when I was very discouraged and very lonely and just about to pack it in I had it with everything with the mission with God with the lot with the students it was just huge pressure in those years I remember coming back to those two little words he said that's that and I believe him and I trust him I trust him out of sight and he's going to be able to trust me out of sight because that's that it's the commitment based on Jesus and that's what we've come to talk about tomorrow and that's what keeps marriages together and that's what stops us messing up however tempted we are however difficult it is that's that and only God can put his hand over two people that say and give you the power to be true to each other and for us it's forty-six years this year so so we pray and the secret is give your wife the last word ah

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7278.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stuart-briscoe/valentines-dinner-message-couples-conference/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net