

A Very Good Marriage

by Zac Poonen

God wants our marriage to be very good and has provided a solution for unhappy marriages by acknowledging failure and saying 'that was my mistake, I'm sorry'.

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Scripture: Matthew 19:6

Topics: "Marriage Counseling", "Faith Transformation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our need for God's help in our marriages, highlighting the root cause of problems as selfishness and the need to have faith in God's ability to transform our relationships. It encourages couples to seek understanding, work towards a happy marriage, and apply the principles from the Bible to guide their homes towards harmony and peace.

Transcript

Let's just look to the Lord in prayer before we begin. Our Heavenly Father, every good and perfect gift comes from You. There is nothing we can produce that will ever be good or perfect.

We pray that Your presence by Your Spirit will be here. You will speak to us according to our need this evening. There are needs here which are known and unknown.

We pray that You will speak to all of our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen. I want to show you something very interesting in the very first page of the Bible.

Now if you are a Christian, I'm sure you would have read the first chapter of the Bible. Even if you didn't go very far in the Bible, you would have read the first chapter about how God made the heavens and earth. He created the heavens and earth and then over a period of six days, He remade it when it was spoiled.

And the thing we notice here is, God is Almighty and of course He could have with a snap of His fingers done everything in a moment. But He is a God of order and there was a reason why He did that making of the earth and heaven in over a period of six days. It's from that creation and the seventh day of rest that we have our week, where we have one day of rest in seven.

But what I want to point out to you is, every day God made something and then He examined it. The first day it says He made light and He said it was good. And then the next day, He made something else and the next day He made something else and the next day He made something else and He kept on saying,

that's good, that's good, that's good, that's good, that's good, all the way up to the fifth day.

And then on the sixth day, God suddenly says, not good. Have you noticed that? Five days He says good, good, good, good, good and then suddenly He says, not good. What was that? That was when a man was single and Adam, He first made Adam and then He said, it's not good for man to be alone.

That was on the sixth day, you read a bit in Genesis 2.18, He said it's not good. So it's something like, you know, a teacher correcting an answer paper and saying, tick, tick, tick, tick and then a cross, it's wrong, something is missing here. Then we read, that God made a wife for Adam and brought her to Adam and united them and then He said, very good, it was not just good.

So you got to see the progression there in Genesis chapter 1. It's very interesting to see it. Good, good, good, good, good, not good and then very good. What was it which was not good? When a man didn't have a wife.

And what was it that solved that problem and made it very good? When he got a wife. Do you feel like that? About the wife you have? Anyway, even if you don't, I want to say that's what God wants it to be like. And that's what we see in the first chapter of the Bible.

He wants your marriage, not just to be good, when all the rest of the world is good, He wants your marriage to be very good. Then how is it that when you look at a lot of marriages today, and even a lot of so-called Christian marriages, we have to say, not good, not at all good, it's in a pretty pathetic situation. I mean, I've been in Christian work for nearly 40 years and I've had the occasion to counsel and talk to a lot of Christian families and I tell you some terrible things that go on in so-called Christian homes.

You don't hear much of it outside because everybody is very pleasant and they go to church, they look so holy, but if you only could see what goes on in their home, it's not good. And what I want to say is, you've got to believe that that is not God's will. You know, once you accept that, oh well, that's normal, that's how everybody else is, well then it's never going to change.

Once you accept that state of affairs as normal, it'll never change. But if you can come to the first chapter of the Bible and say, well that's not supposed to be how my married life should be, that's not the way God intended it. You know, just like if you buy an expensive product and the instruction book says it's supposed to work like this.

You have that problem sometimes with computers. You get a computer with a very fast processor and then it's working so slowly. It takes such a long time to load a program.

And you say, hey, something's wrong. It's not the way such an Intel Pentium 4 is supposed to work. And you call the person who fixed it and say there's something wrong here because it's slow, it's crashing so often and something's wrong.

You wouldn't, I mean if you're a person who is using your computer everyday, you'd want it fixed immediately. Why aren't you so eager to fix your marriage? Which is so sluggish, crashes so often, just like the computer. And something better than an Intel 4 processor you have, that God gave you, something which God himself in the original model, he said, very good.

That's the way it's supposed to be. And the man who fixes the computer comes along and says, hey, you went and did something wrong here, that's why you messed it all up. But never mind, we can fix it.

There's a guarantee on it. And the wonderful thing about marriage is that God gives you not a one year guarantee, a lifelong guarantee. He says, come back to me, I'll fix it up anytime.

That's not the way it's supposed to work. Your computer is not supposed to crash every so often. No! What do you think of a man who accepts his marriage crashing everyday with explosions and all types of things? No.

There's a virus. You got to get rid of it. That's the only way.

And that's the solution the Bible gives. You can have a marriage which when it's examined down to the deepest detail inside your home, the way it works in your home, that almighty God himself can certify it's very good. See, man certifying that your marriage is good means nothing.

Because they don't know your marriage. I mean, think of the people who know you best. How much do they know of your marriage? I mean, whenever they come to visit you in your home, you're always on your best behavior.

They don't know what really happens there when they're not there. But almighty God, think if he can certify, very good. One who examines every area of a married life, think what a wonderful marriage that is.

So the very first thing which I wanted to establish in your mind is this computer is not supposed to work so slow. It's not supposed to crash. The original model which God made, was God certified it's very good.

It's certified, examined, it's supposed to work much better. So what am I saying? Therefore, don't accept that substandard marriage that you have right now. Don't accept it.

Right from the beginning of your married life, God wants your marriage to be very good. He doesn't want it to be not good. He wants it to be very good.

So, I wish I could convince you about that. Because once you're convinced about that, then you'll really seek for it. Otherwise, you know something of a fellow who's ignorant of computers, who's all that he's seen is the old, what they used to call PCs, which work so slow and then he expects the same speed here on this Intel Pentium 4. And somebody says, hey listen, this is not supposed to work like those old models.

This is supposed to be very fast. It's supposed to be very good. That's what I want to say about your marriage.

It's not supposed to be like all those marriages that you see in the world around you. It's supposed to be very good. If you can be established in this one truth, that God designed married life to be excellent, to be very happy.

God is the designer and producer of happiness. Everything he does is to make us happier and better people. The Bible says that God sends only good and perfect gifts.

Marriage is a gift from God. And God wants our marriage to be supremely happy. When Jesus spoke about marriage once, he was talking to some people who asked him about divorce.

You know, I mean in western countries, you know divorce is very common. They say it's almost 50% of marriages end in divorce. And the sad thing is even in Christian churches, the average is the same, 50%.

Which proves that these fellows haven't got real Christianity. How can real Christianity make our marriages as hopeless as the marriages in the world? There is something wrong there. Something fundamentally wrong.

So, in Matthew 19 we read that Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him, Is it right to divorce your wife? And Jesus said, No, not at all. I mean, he said in the Old Testament, Moses permitted it because you fellows, your hearts were so hard. If you didn't divorce your wife, you would have hammered her and killed her.

So God said, OK, please divorce her. But that's not God's original plan, Jesus said. If you go back to the beginning, which is Genesis 1 and 2, that's what Jesus said there.

In the beginning, that was not God's will. You read that in the first few verses of Matthew 19. He says, In the beginning God made them male and female, and he wanted them to be one.

And there is a beautiful expression, he uses here in verse 5, The two shall become one. If you want a description of marriage, here is it in the words of Jesus himself. Two shall become one.

Now that's God's standard. You know, recently they were celebrating the 50th anniversary of climbing Mount Everest. I was a young boy in Delhi, in school, when I read one day in the papers that these fellows, Hillary and Tenzing, had climbed Mount Everest.

It was 1953. I was just about 13 years old. You know, that was a mountain that had challenged so many people.

So many people had tried and died. People had tried to go up and never reached the top and came back. And one day, they succeeded.

And once they succeeded, I mean in the last 50 years, so many people, there are people who are paraplegics, who can't walk, got artificial limbs to climb Mount Everest. It's amazing. From all types of angles, from difficult angles and all, they climbed it.

Because there was a tremendous passion in man to conquer this mountain. And that's what drove them, even though so many people tried, didn't succeed. It was the same with the conquest of space.

You know, I mean, people thought it was all science fiction in our school days, when people talked about going to the moon. But, I remember the day my first son was born. We read in the papers, man had landed on the moon.

We'll never forget that day. And it was an amazing thing. That which looked like science fiction, which you'd gone back to people in 1960.

Even in 1960, 9 years before they landed on the moon, it was difficult. But they did it. You know, man's drive took him to the moon.

It's been like that. They tried, they failed, they tried, they failed, they got, finally, they landed on the moon. It's been the same in many areas.

And I want to say to you, they did all of that without, they didn't pray to God or ask God's help or anything. It was just human intelligence and science and technology. We did all that.

Now here, we're trying to climb another mountain. That's a marriage where two have to become one. Think of that as a Mount Everest.

Think of that as a space challenge. And here's something where God has promised, you can do it. And here's something where God says, I'll help you.

How many of you really want to climb this mountain? How many of you really want to reach the top, even if it takes time to get there? Say, Lord, our marriage has been pretty unhappy till now. It's not been what it should be. You know, I find that the first step in any of our dealings with God, whether it relates to our personal life or to our married life, the first step is to acknowledge our failure.

If you can acknowledge failure, that's a very, very big step. And those of you who are married sitting here, you know that that is one of the most difficult things for a man or a woman to do. To say, that was my mistake.

I'm sorry. Do you know those six words? That was my mistake. I'm sorry.

Are some of the most difficult words to produce from our mouth. You try it. If you don't believe me.

Some of the most difficult words for us to say are these words. That was my mistake. You know, like we teach children, Baba black sheep, we got to teach parents.

Say it with me. That was my mistake. I'm sorry.

You'll forget it. By tomorrow you'll forget it. Very difficult rhyme to learn.

But it can change your life. To acknowledge, that was my mistake. I'm sorry.

You who are married for some years, you know how difficult it is. Something has happened and you always think it's the other person. But that didn't begin with you.

It began with Adam and Eve. It's very interesting. That this wonderful marriage over which God certified very good, couple of days later it was a different story.

It was not good at all. It was very bad. Very good.

Two days later, very bad. On the sixth day, very good. Two days later on the eighth day, very bad.

How did it happen? Because they disobeyed the maker's instructions. Just like we have all disobeyed the maker's instructions in our married life. The end result is where we are today.

And then, what I was coming to was that when God came to Adam and asked him, if I were to paraphrase his words, did you disobey my instructions? And, you know, it's like you call the computer chap and he says, listen, did you follow the instructions of the booklet? You say, well no, my wife came and did something here and I don't know what happened. That's exactly what Adam said. My wife, she doesn't know anything.

She just came and messed up this whole thing and that's why we are in the mess today. Adam said that actually to God as if he could fool God. As if he could fool God.

He said, my wife. So this business of putting the blame on others started way back with our first parents. And that's one of the first lessons we want to learn in marriage.

To finish with that old filthy habit which we have all acquired from Adam of putting the blame on the other person. That's why I said like Baba Blacksheep, we've got to learn that was, you remember the rhyme? That was my mistake. I'm sorry.

Learn it. Repeat it again. That was my mistake.

I'm sorry. Even single people, you try saying it. It's pretty tough.

It's tough for single people as well. But you learn it when you're single, it'll be much easier to sing it when you're married. I tell you.

It's a good rhyme. It's changed your life. Very important to learn these six words.

Some of the toughest words to learn. But if you learn it, say it from your heart, it'll change your life. Adam couldn't say it.

All he had to say was, when God said to him, he says, that was my mistake. I'm sorry. He didn't say it.

And think of the number of times, can you think of some of you who are married for so many years, when something went wrong in your relationship, how many of you said that? You know why I say it's a difficult rhyme to learn? Immediately, we begin to justify ourselves. And even if 90% of the fault is with us, we pick on that 10% which the other person did and say, but you did this. And you know in the depth of your heart that it was only 10%.

But you pick on that. Because you don't want to take the blame. I want to say to you, my dear friends, brothers and sisters, that if you are unwilling to get rid of that habit, I can't predict that you're going to have a happy marriage.

And I want to say, it's not such a humiliating thing to say that was my mistake. I'm sorry. Because I want to tell you something.

There's only one person, not on earth, but in the universe, who never makes a mistake. You know who that is? That's God. So if you're in the same category, well, you know what you think you are.

I have no problem saying that was my mistake because when I say that, all I'm saying is, fellas, I'm not God. Got it? That's all I'm saying. Is that a very humiliating thing? Supposing I put that same rhyme in other words, easier words.

Let's start with easier words. Can you say, I am not God. That's easy, isn't it? Very easy.

That's an easy rhyme to pick up. I am not God. But this is the same thing.

Second verse. First verse is I am not God. Second verse, that was my mistake.

I'm sorry. It's the same thing. Why can't you sing the second verse? Because all you're saying when you say that is, I am not God.

God's the only one who doesn't make mistakes. Yeah, I know I've been married 30 years, but I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

I mean, don't say it in that tone. Say it now. Tone is very important.

You can say, I made a mistake. I'm sorry. Nobody will believe you if you say it now.

Say it like you sing the hymns. I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

And you mean it. But that's so important to acknowledge failure. Do you know that Jesus first did a miracle at a wedding? Isn't that wonderful to read that in the Bible? That the first thing you read in the Bible in Genesis 1 is a wedding.

And then you come to the New Testament and the first miracle that Jesus does is at a wedding. That's pretty good. That means God must be very, very interested in marriages.

That the Old Testament and the New Testament begin with a wedding. And the first miracle that Jesus did was in a wedding ceremony where they ran out of wine. That was in those days.

I mean today, the equivalent of your chicken biryani in today's wedding is the wine there in those days. Imagine if your chicken biryani ran short and all the fellows are standing in the queue and there's nothing left. Can you imagine how embarrassed you'll feel? That's exactly how they felt.

They ran out of wine. Thank God Jesus was there. See that wine in the New Testament is a picture of a very happy life.

In the Old Testament, there's a verse which says wine to make the heart of man glad. So fullness of wine is a picture of a very happy marriage. And when the wine runs out, it's a picture of a marriage where all the joy has gone.

The marriage is still there. We don't divorce in India not because we are happier but because society frowns on it and it's difficult for a woman to go and find a job on her own and find a house on her own. And if she goes back to her parents, in many cases the parents say hey we can't feed another mouth, go back to your husband, adjust and get along.

So just because there are no divorces here doesn't mean our marriages are any happier than in the western countries. No. The joy has gone out of the marriage.

And what I wanted to point out is that when that happened, you know how the problem was solved? We said Jesus solved the problem. But when did he do it? He did it when somebody came to him and said they have no wine. The wine has run out.

You see the same principle? We have failed. The joy has gone out of our married life. It was the acknowledgement of failure instead of pretending oh yeah yeah there's plenty of biryani, it's just around the corner, it's coming, just hang on.

It's not there, it's all finished. To acknowledge failure. You know as human beings we are all basically good actors.

We are very good actors. We want to act happy, come to church, we act holy. And a lot of people when they become Christians they become better actors than they were before.

Because now they've got to act super holy and better than everybody else and they become top class hypocrites. It was like that in Jesus' time too. You know the worst people in Jesus' time were the people who went to church every Saturday those days, the synagogue.

They were the worst people of all. Jesus was in a running battle with them all the time because they were the biggest humbugs and hypocrites and what was their problem with them? They were unwilling to acknowledge their failure. That's all.

And there were other terrible people in those days in Jesus' time. There was a woman caught in adultery. Jesus said, Oh, I forgive you because what did she have? She acknowledged her need.

Lord, I have no wine. I'm an adulterous woman. Oh, you acknowledge your need? Okay, you're forgiven.

And the other side, standing on the other side were all these holy, so called holy people who would not acknowledge their need. And Jesus always finding these two groups of people, a group of religious hypocrites who would not acknowledge their failures and their need, who would not say, That was my mistake, I'm sorry. And then on the other side, there were these people whom the religious people looked down upon.

In fact, there was a prostitute among that crowd. Her name was Mary Magdalene. I think she was a prostitute.

Anyway, she had seven demons. She was a terrible woman. And Jesus cast out the demons, forgave her sin, and she became a great saint.

Saint Mary Magdalene. Imagine what Jesus can do with people. How did she manage that? Because she did not pretend to be a holy person.

She said, Well, Lord, I'm just a sinful woman. That's all I am. I'm demon possessed too.

If you can help me, help me. That's what they did in that first marriage. They came and said, We have no wine.

No problem. He solved it. So I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, When you fail, acknowledge it, and the Lord will solve your problem.

God can solve every problem. I'm telling you the truth. I've been a Christian for 44 years, and I've experienced the truth of this verse, of this fact, that God can solve every problem.

I'm not putting a sales pitch here for something I'm trying to sell. I'm telling you the truth. It's absolutely true.

There are going to be problems, but God can solve them. In fact, all the miracles that Jesus did was just to highlight this fact, that God can solve every problem. You know, when they were going in a boat, and the waves and the storm came, and the waves came into their boat, and Jesus stilled that storm.

They said, Don't you care that we're going to perish? He said, Of course I care. You're not going to perish. Don't worry.

Every miracle He did. You know, we think nowadays of the difficulty of trying to make both ends meet. Whether our income can meet our needs.

They came across such situation in Jesus' time too. They had 5 loaves and 2 fish, 1 boy, and they had 10,000 people out there. 5,000 men, plus a number of women and children.

How can you feed 10,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish? Jesus said, Give it to me. He could solve that problem too. Can Jesus help us to make ends meet with our limited income? Yes.

That's the message in that parable. You don't have to get into debt. He didn't send His disciples, say, Go and find some businessmen who can lend you some money, and go and find some shops that are open, and borrow, borrow, and then spend the next 50 years repaying your debt.

He didn't tell them all that. He said, I can help you meet your need without your getting into debt ever. But you've got to acknowledge your need first.

There's no food, Lord. We've just got this much. My income is this much, 5 loaves and 2 fish.

My needs are 10,000 people. You say, Impossible. Not with God.

That's the message of all the Gospels. When you read the Gospels, read it like that. That's the message God has for your marriage.

But always the first step, you know, I like those instances where a blind man would come to Jesus. And Jesus would say, What do you want me to do for you? Even a stupid fellow like me knows what he wants. Why does Jesus have to ask him? If I were there, I would say, Lord, I can tell you he wants his eyes open.

Why in the world does Jesus have to ask that question? You know why? Because he even wanted that blind guy to acknowledge his need. That's the reason. It's not because Jesus didn't know.

Of course he knew. The Bible says Jesus even knew what was going on in people's hearts. When they were thinking, he knew.

Leave alone, when you see a blind man coming to you, everybody knows what he has come for. But why did he ask him, What do you want me to do for you? And the fellow had to open his mouth and say, I'm blind. I want my eyes open.

And the Lord comes to you today and say, What do you want me to do for you? And you say, Lord, the wine has run out. It's a storm here in my home. Can you still it? I'm not sure.

Acknowledge your need and believe that he is almighty. That's why I started with Genesis 1. God's standard. This is the way your computer is supposed to run.

But it's running at such a slow speed. Something is wrong. It's not the way it's supposed to run.

It's not the way your marriage should be. Have faith that God will help you to come to the top of that Mount Everest. He'll come help you to reach that standard.

Which standard? Not the standard of a good Christian home. Sometimes you see a very happy couple. And you begin to think, Oh, I wish our marriage could be like that.

Don't aim for these little hills. Okay? Aim for Mount Everest. That little happy marriage that you see is a little hill.

You can go higher than that. But you must have faith. Imagine these fellows went to the moon.

Believed that they could do it. You think any guy would get into that space rocket if he had some doubt whether this is going to reach the moon or not? He was absolutely sure. We're going to go to the moon.

And not only that, he told his family, we're going to come back. Otherwise, I doubt any of them. You think anybody would take a one-way trip to the moon? However exciting it may be and however much your photos may be flashed on the earth.

I'm sure nobody wants a one-way trip to the moon. They were absolutely sure they'd come back. They had faith.

They got in. Can't you believe that Almighty God and all that He said in His word can change your marriage however much it may be on the rocks to like a ship that's hit the rocks and broken that He can fix it all up and get you sailing on the sea of life once again. It's not a ship really.

It's a small boat actually. You know the old fishermen in Europe had a little prayer that they used to pray when they used to go out in their little boats in the early days when they didn't have outboard motors and dissolved sails and oars years ago. Their prayer was Oh God the sea is so great our boats are so small please help us.

That is the prayer of those fishermen. Oh God the sea is so great our boats are so small please help us. You know the world is something like that.

Such a huge world with so many problems. It's like a vast ocean with a future that's unknown. It's a vast ocean and you and your wife and your children are in a small little boat trying to go in this ocean you don't know where the storm is going to come from.

Your only help is God. I thought of that in relation to the world in which we live. There is a song we sing because he lives I can face tomorrow.

One verse of that song says how good to hold a little baby in your hand and to see the joy it brings into your heart and then to think I'm expanding on the words of that song that this baby has to grow up in a world full of bombs and missiles and terrorists and traffic accidents and evil. You'll be dead and gone and your child is growing up in this world and it goes on to say how good to know that you can commit your child to Jesus and because he lives we can face tomorrow and because he lives my child can face tomorrow even after I'm dead and gone. You see, it's wonderful.

That's the hope we have. God can solve every problem but you've got to have faith because he lives because Jesus Christ has conquered death because I see in God's word that God's plan for me is to have a happy marriage. He can do it for me.

So we've seen acknowledging our need is number one and then we saw faith. Faith means you've got to believe like these fellows believed they could conquer Mount Everest and these folks believed that they

could go to the moon and come back. Now, we have a much stronger faith than that because you know that some of those folks who went up to space even recently never came back.

There was that Indian lady among them. Never came back. They thought they'd come back.

The technology failed and that happened even once before when the Challenger spacecraft went up some years ago. Never came back. They hardly took off before they all got burnt up.

But here we have a promise in scripture where Almighty God himself has promised to support us. Acknowledge your need. Believe that it is God's will to make your life extremely happy.

And I want to show you a verse in 1 Peter which speaks about married couples. And there's a phrase there which I want to take out from there. In the first letter of Peter chapter 3 in verse 7. It's addressed to husbands but you can also apply it to wives.

The phrase in verse 7 is in the middle of that verse Live in an understanding way with your partner. Live in an understanding way with your partner. Husbands with your wives that's what's mentioned here but we could reverse that.

Wives live in an understanding way with your husbands. Take that as a little motto when you go away from here. Live in an understanding way.

And you know that understanding about any subject takes time. You can teach yourself. I taught myself to use computers.

But it took time to understand. You know children go to school and they take years to understand chemistry or physics or biology. I mean child takes a long time to learn long division.

I mean you folks can do division easily now. You know your multiplication table. But think of your children how they are struggling with something that you already know.

They have to understand it. And it's the same way in married life. Now think if your child never goes to school.

There is no interest in understanding multiplication and division. You think it will ever understand multiplication and division? No, not at all. You got to make an effort.

There is absolutely nothing in life that you can learn without making an effort. If some of you are doing well in your professions today many of you are college graduates. Did you get your degree without any effort? And after you got your degree what about your profession what you are engaged in now? Did you learn that without any effort? You got a new job and you tried your best to learn your profession.

Even if you are in business. You have to learn the secrets of business. So in everything there is understanding but when it comes to marriage I find that very few husbands seeks to understand their wives.

They say hey we got married, that's it. Oh very few wives seek to understand their husbands. And no wonder there are problems.

Think if your child said Oh I got admission into school, that's it. Now I know addition, subtraction, division. You don't know anything my little boy.

You just got admission in school. You don't know a thing. You got to work hard if you want to learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, division square root, calculus, all the way.

You got to learn. You got to apply your mind. Why is it in every area we are willing to understand we know it takes time to understand we make an effort to understand why is it many of you in your jobs have worked so hard to understand your profession and that's why you are doing so well.

And that's why you are making money. Think if you didn't care to understand your profession where would you be today? You'd be a failure in life. How do you understand the reason for failure in marriage? Live in an understanding way.

Seek to understand. The Bible says Seek to understand. Say Lord please help me to understand my wife.

And your wife say Please Lord please help me to understand my husband. Please help me to understand the laws of marriage. You didn't need to.

You couldn't learn that when you were single. I mean single is all theory. See basically you need to understand that from the time Adam and Eve sinned and the very first thing Adam did was blame his wife Why was it the very first thing he did? I mean who gave him this bright idea to blame his wife? I'm sure it was the devil.

When God came to him and said Did you do it? Satan whispered in his ear Hey put the blame on your wife. He did it. And the wife put the blame on the serpent.

So from that day a poison has entered into our system which is the cause of all the problems in our married life. This poison. And Jesus came to remove that poison.

He came to deliver us from it. Not only to forgive our past failure. I want to tell you the good news is that even if you made a mess of your married life you need two things.

One you need forgiveness from God for all the wrong things you did in your past and you need to forgive one another also. Husband and wife. The second thing is I mean forgiveness alone doesn't solve the problem.

It's like your child supposing your child wets the bed. All children do when they are born. But don't you hope that one day your child will stop wetting the bed and dirtying the diapers napkins.

Sure. Every parent is looking forward to the day when you can remove the diapers. I want to tell you God is also looking forward to the day when he can remove the diapers from his children who are always dirtying it every day with sin.

When are we going to grow up? Of course when the child wets the bed you can change the sheets. Wets it again you can change the sheets. Wets it again you can change the sheets.

It's now 15 years old still wetting the bed you change the sheets. When is it going to grow up? You have been married 15 years and you yell at each other and dirty your napkins. Okay change it.

When are you going to grow up? It's the same question. God can help you. In the early years of married life the fact that we have disagreements, rubs and explosions is probably as normal as a child wetting a bed.

But I want to tell you that just like you don't expect your child to keep on wetting that bed forever your marriage is not supposed to continue like that forever. You got to learn to stop wetting your bed. Wetting your marriage bed.

With fights and quarrels and God can help you. But we got to recognize this poison inside which makes us selfish. The biggest, the root cause of all sin is selfishness.

Let me paint a picture here of a tree. Get the picture of this tree. This tree is called sin.

Okay. And the roots, you dig up and examine the roots. The roots are selfishness.

Selfishness. From those roots come this massive tree that through the years becomes a solid tree full of sin and all the bad fruit it brings out of bad words and bad actions and bad thoughts and bad attitudes and all types of things. Now how do you get rid of it? I told you first you got to say I am sorry I made a mistake.

But that doesn't solve the problem. Because that only deals with what has already been done. But are you going to keep on doing it forever? See we have two problems.

One is the past and one is the future. In the past we have already made so many mistakes and we need forgiveness. But we also need help for the future that we are not going to wet the bed again.

We are not going to keep on doing this thing forever and ever. And for that the Bible says Jesus came to lay the axe to the root. You read that in Matthew chapter 3. Jesus came to lay the axe to the root.

In the Old Testament Moses came with a pair of scissors and just cut off all the bad fruit. Looks a nice tree now without all the bad fruit. That's what the law did.

Ok. Don't commit murder. Don't commit adultery and don't steal.

Don't bear false witness and cut off all the fruit. But the root is still there and again it comes out. You got to keep going around with your scissors all the time.

And they went around with those scissors called the law for 1500 years and it never solved the problem. Because the root was still there. And then John the Baptist came in Matthew chapter 3 and he said now Jesus has come with not a scissors.

He has come with an axe. And he is going to lay the axe to the root of self-centered selfishness in your life and then you will find this problem of bad fruit to solve. Do you know that that's what Jesus has come to do? He has come to deal with this self-centered selfish life.

Now when you were single you could handle this self-centered life because I mean you know how it is when you are a single person supposing you are working, you are fellowshiping with somebody and that fellow has a problem. You can leave him and go and find somebody else. And then if you had a tough day in the world and everybody is causing problem for you, you can go back to your room at night and at last you are alone.

But now you are married and when you go back to your room at night there is somebody else there whom you can't escape from. And she is also a selfish person just like you. And here are two selfish people now trying to live together in the same home.

Can you imagine the problems? Unless the Lord comes and does something about this. And if you can acknowledge this and say Lord all the problems have come out of my selfish thinking only about my convenience, my feelings, the way I was brought up in my home, the way we have always done it in our home is like this. And I don't want to yield to another person who has always done it another way.

And who has always brought up in their home another way. Then comes the conflicts. In spending money, how we spend our time.

So many things. I want to say to you my dear brothers and sisters, married couples, the most important thing in your home, please remember this, is that both of you are happy and glad in Jesus Christ. The most important thing in your home is not to give other people an impression but that it must be real.

The most important thing is not just every room in your house must be neat and you can have good food. Those are not the most important things. The most important thing is happiness between husband and wife.

I remember a story that I have often quoted of a very God-fearing couple that I knew. Dead and gone now, very elderly couple. Where the husband was a very orderly type of man.

You know how some people are. Everything is orderly. Everything is arranged neatly and the tables are always neat and they always put their shoes in the proper place and they hang their clothes in the proper place.

There are a few people in the world like that, believe it or not. There are a few people like that who are like that. And then the wife was exactly the opposite.

Was here and there and it is really exciting when two such people get married, you know. A lot of opportunity for taking up the cross and denying oneself. So, this brother, one particular thing I remember, he would go to the kitchen to help his wife wash up.

You know one of those things which we Indian husbands don't do. But they do that in the west. They help their wives to wash up in the kitchen and put the plates and spoons and all in the right place.

And being this disorderly type of wife, her kitchen was a mess. Plates, spoons, forks, all sort of haphazard. And here is this orderly husband doing the washing up one day when his wife was not well.

And he sees all this and look at the wisdom of this man. That's what I want you to see, the wisdom of this man. He cleans up all the plates and forks and knives and all and puts it in the same disorderly way that it was there.

Completely contrary to his nature. Chaotic. You know why? I'll tell you the reason.

Then you'll see the wisdom of this man. He said, if I arrange this kitchen and make it perfect, my wife will come and say, boy, I can never do it like this. Like my husband does.

And she'll get more discouraged. I don't want my wife to be discouraged. I don't care if the kitchen is chaos.

I want a happy marriage. He was a wise man. What does it matter if in your kitchen the plates are here and the forks are there and all.

It's a big mess. If you have a happy marriage. Far better than somebody who's got everything lined up neatly and they are fighting with each other.

That was wisdom. That he didn't want to do something that would make his wife feel small compared to him. That is living in an understanding way.

To think, how will she feel if I do it like this. As I said, we don't start like that. We usually start with expressing our opinion pretty openly and giving people not just a piece of our mind but whole mind.

We give to people and she gives her whole mind to us. That's how we start. Then as we grow the pieces become smaller and smaller.

And a day will come when we begin to think a little more of what the other person is thinking and okay, I want a happy marriage. I don't want a neat and tidy home. If you can have a happy marriage and a neat and tidy home, praise the Lord.

Have it. But if you have a choice between the two, my dear brothers and sisters, don't be fools. Choose a happy marriage.

What's a neat and tidy home for? To show other people. What's a happy marriage for? It's the best thing in the world. The computer is working perfectly now.

It's working faster than what even the company said it would work. Think of that. Think that you can have a marriage like that.

If you are willing to just say, Lord, like my child studies chemistry, physics, biology, help me also to understand this thing called marriage. To let Jesus be Lord of my life. See, that's why it's very important.

Let me conclude with this. You know, this book, as I told you, the first Old Testament begins with the marriage, New Testament begins with the marriage. There's no book in the world, if you want a marriage guidance book, here it is.

You follow the rules in this book, you'll have a perfect marriage. You'll reach the top of Mount Everest, you'll reach the moon, you'll reach heaven! Not only the moon. And not only that, heaven will come down into your home.

You'll have two heavens. One here on earth and one after you die. That's the message of the gospel, that if you obey these words, your home can be like a little foretaste of heaven.

And if you don't obey it, it'll be a foretaste of hell. Then you have two hells. One now and one later on.

So you can have a choice. I think a lot of people have two hells or two heavens. Very few people have two heavens, but you can have it.

If you follow the rules and say, Lord, I want to... I mean, will some of you follow some of these two, three simple principles I said? First of all, acknowledge your need, learn that rhyme. Remember it or you've forgotten it already? It was my mistake, I'm sorry. And believe.

Faith, very important. You know, in the New Testament, Jesus said, believe that God wants you to have a very good married life. To work at it, like these fellas climb Mount Everest, like the fellas reach the moon.

You're gonna reach the top of this wonderful life where God can look at your marriage and say, Very good! And then, this last thing I said, in order to help you reach there, say, Lord, help me to understand. Help me to understand my wife. Help me to understand my husband.

Please give me the power of your Holy Spirit. Please forgive my sins. Let Jesus come and be Lord, not only of your life, but of your home.

You know, let this book, let the word of God, guide you and your wife, you and your husband, in the way you run your home. And if some of you, maybe your husbands are not interested in it, or your wives are not interested, never mind. You work at it.

And show that it works. You know, there's nothing like demonstration. We don't want to be preachers.

I say, if it doesn't work, don't preach it. The trouble with a lot of Christianity is, a lot of people are preaching something, and people are turned off from it, because they say, we look at these fellas' lives, it doesn't work. I mean, supposing I were selling this oil is guaranteed to restore hair on your head.

Guaranteed. How many of you will buy it? Tell me. I say, guaranteed.

Even if I say money back and everything else, you will not. You say, Brezak, I don't really feel happy. You say something nice to me.

You won't tell me the real reason. But you know the real reason. The thing hasn't worked in this fella's life.

He doesn't have it on his own head. Obviously it doesn't work. You know, that's how a lot of people are preaching the gospel today.

Oh, this gospel, take it, it will change you, heaven will come down and glory will fill your life, and all these fantastic things, and they come and see how you live at home, and thank you. We're not really excited about this, thank you. They say something nice and go away.

You know, we need to be ashamed of ourselves. If you're a Christian. I say, Lord, I don't want to proclaim something, I don't want to put a sales pitch to something that doesn't work.

I want to say to you, my brother, sister, I've been married 35 years. It works. I'm not selling some hair restoring oil.

I'm telling you something that really works. You can have a happy marriage. You can have a marriage where you never raise your voice at your wife even once in 365 days.

And 366 days in a leap year. Just by the way. Sure.

That's a guarantee. It's because God's word says that. But you've got to work at it.

And when you fail, you've got to say, Lord, it was my fault. I'm sorry. And tell your wife, husband, it's my fault.

I'm sorry. Forgive me. Do it, my brothers and sisters, and let's demonstrate to this country that Jesus Christ is all powerful.

He can give us happy marriages, make Him Lord of your life. How will you know what this book says? The manufacturer's instructions. You've read your computer instructions, your washing machine instructions, more than you've read the most important instructions.

Do you value your washing machine more than your marriage? Do you value some wretched computer more than your marriage? Let's be wise from today. And say, Lord Jesus, help me. He can solve every problem.

Acknowledge your need. Come to Him in faith. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

While our heads are bowed in prayer, remember the first step is to acknowledge your need to God first. Tell Him you have no wine. Tell Him the wine has run out.

Maybe you never had wine right from day one of your marriage. Tell Him. He understands.

Say, Lord, I want to work on my marriage. I want you, Lord Jesus, to come into our home and be Lord of our home and of our life. I'm sorry for having brought a bad name to Jesus Christ through my past years, but it's going to be different from today.

Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me in your blood. And Lord, give me the power of your Holy Spirit in my life so that I can be free from this selfishness that has destroyed my marriage.

Help me to see the way you walked of denying yourself and your life was so happy. Help me to walk that way, to choose that way, to find happiness in my life and peace in my home. And to bring up my children in an atmosphere of peace.

Lord, please help me. And Lord, help me to, I believe that you'll help me, I believe that we can reach the top of this mountain. And you'll give me grace for it.

And help me to understand my partner better. To take time to study, to understand how she's different from me, or he's different from me. And to bear with her, to bear with him.

And to accept my partner the way you made her, made him. That together we can manifest a beautiful married life for your glory. So we can bless other people.

I believe that many of you, if not all of you, are praying that prayer sincerely right now. I want to say to you that Jesus hears you. And he'll help you.

He will believe that. Believe that that little prayer you prayed in your heart to God now, he's heard you. Heavenly Father, help me pray.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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