

Building the Body of Christ - 4 Building Our Homes for God

by Zac Poonen

Building strong Christian homes requires building strong Christian relationships, speaking the truth in love, and praying for each other.

Duration: 57:05

Scripture: Romans 12:21

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose for the home and highlights the attacks on Christian homes by the devil. It draws parallels from Adam and Eve's marriage, showcasing how sin leads to accusations and separation. The sermon stresses the need to ask for forgiveness quickly, appreciate one another, and overcome evil with good, reflecting Christ's love and forgiveness in our relationships.

Transcript

In many churches they don't have meetings for married couples. But I believe in the time in which we live, we need to understand God's purpose for the home. Because everywhere I see a tremendous attack on Christian homes by the devil.

Right from the time God established the first home, that was Adam and Eve. As soon as they were united in marriage, we read immediately that the devil came, next chapter. So the devil was just waiting for them to be married to try and confuse their life.

And it's the same today. We mustn't forget that the Bible begins with Satan attacking a Christian home. His aim was not only to separate them from God, but also to separate them from each other.

And how do we know that Satan came between them? Because as soon as God comes and asks Adam, did you eat of the tree? He points at his wife and says, she's the cause of the problem. So we find that that's what sin brings. Sin immediately makes us accuse others.

And that tendency to accuse the wife or the husband has come down through all these 6,000 years. And if we say that Jesus has saved us from sin, we have to ask ourselves whether Jesus has saved us from this poison of accusing one another. Adam could have said, Lord, I'm sorry, I ate that tree.

Adam could have said, Lord, I'm sorry, I ate that fruit. He didn't need to accuse his wife. The wind didn't force him to open his mouth and feed him the fruit.

So why did he need to say that the wind had fed him the fruit? This is the evil of Satan's nature. That we're not able to see our own fault initially. Even when standing before God.

That's amazing that we can stand before God and still not see our own fault. That's amazing that we can stand before God and still not see our own fault. This started from the time of Adam, the work of the guilty soul to separate.

When the work of separating the husband and wife happens, the children also go away from God. It's the next thing we read that Adam's first son became a murderer. Killed his own brother.

So, if you want to bring up your children properly, you better learn as husband and wife to live together. Because the devil tries to bring a separation so that he can come between into the house. And both of you may be strong, but the children are weak.

So the devil gets the children first. And I've seen that in many homes. That where husband and wife are divided, it's difficult for the children to be spiritual.

And then they start blaming the children. They blame each other, now they start blaming the children. Satan is the great accuser.

He's always accusing. And we've got that poison in our system from Adam. To me, this is one of the big differences of being in Adam and in Christ.

You know, we all say we've been cut off from Adam and grafted into Christ. But have we been cut off from this poison we've got from Adam? You know, it says about Satan in Revelation 12. Revelation chapter 12 and verse 10.

Where in the middle of that verse it says, Satan is called the accuser of our brethren, who accuses them day and night before God. Who accuses them day and night before God. He works 24 hours a day.

And you know, he may tell a lie to us, but he can't tell a lie to God. No, Satan. Satan tells us lies.

But he can't tell a lie to God. But Satan cannot tell a lie to God. So he cannot go and tell, say, God, you know, that child of yours murdered somebody.

No, because that's a lie. So what does Satan accuse before God? Only what is true. He can't tell, God lies about me.

No, no, no. He can't tell God lies about me. No, no, no.

He speaks the truth. So, he can only say what I actually did wrong. Now, why am I saying that? Because I've heard many times when people accuse somebody, they find comfort in the saying that, but I'm speaking the truth.

Well, Satan also speaks the truth to God, but it's accusation. So, we don't find comfort that what I'm speaking is the truth. That's not the important point.

What is your spirit? Is it a spirit of love? Or is it a spirit that wants to tear down that person? We can tear down a person, speaking the truth. And that's because there's a little bit of hatred in our heart for that person. You may say that you love somebody.

But the Bible says in 1 Peter 4, in verse 8, that love covers a multitude. But the Bible says in 1 Peter 4, in verse 8, that love covers a multitude. So, if you really love, you will cover.

For example, supposing your daughter is fooling around with some boy. She's fooling around with some boy. You won't tell everybody about it.

You may know it's there. But you'll try your best to cover it. Because you love your daughter.

But if it's somebody else's daughter, then you'll talk about it. Even if it is somebody else in the church. So, you know there's very little love among believers, even in the church.

And even among husband and wife. If you're not careful here, the devil will come right in. If you're not careful here, the devil will come right in.

What does Jesus do? Does he shut his eyes to all the faults in his children? No, we read in Hebrews 7, in verse 25, He always lives to make intercession for them. That Satan is always accusing them, accusing us. And Jesus is our advocate, always praying for us.

So, we see here that I do something wrong first. And when Satan sees it, he immediately accuses. Jesus sees it and he immediately prays.

Can you see this picture? I'm doing something wrong. Satan sees it and immediately accuses. Jesus also sees it.

He immediately prays. What do you do when you see that? You know the answer. And in that moment you know whether you're like Satan or whether you're like Jesus Christ.

No, no, no. Whether you're like Satan. Like means... We know because Jesus is praying and Satan is accusing.

Jesus is praying and Satan is accusing. So, in our home, you may say that you love your husband or your wife. Are you behaving like Christ or the devil? I've always told people who want to go and correct somebody.

Don't do it before you've prayed for them. After you pray for them, then you are fit to go and correct them. If you don't pray for them, you're not fit to correct them.

See, the Lord has got every right to correct us because he's praying for us. So, this is one of the very important things in married life. And you must pray, Lord, this first thing that Adam did, please get it out of our home.

What is that? Blame your wife. Blame your husband. No, I'm not saying that we should pretend that they are not doing anything wrong.

Yeah, we need to correct one another. All I'm saying, first pray. And cleanse your spirit that you correct in a spirit of love.

See, Ephesians chapter 4. There's a very beautiful verse here. Verse 15. It says, if you speak the truth in love, you will grow up to become like Jesus Christ more and more.

If you speak the truth in love, you will grow up to become like Jesus Christ more and more. If you read Ephesians chapter 4, verse 15. Yeah, in Prem.

Speak the truth in love. Then we will grow up to become like Christ. See the balance there? That you have to do both.

He doesn't say you shouldn't speak the truth. Yeah, speak the truth to your husband and wife. To your husband and wife and children and everybody.

But, if you can't speak it in love, don't speak it. A lot of speaking the truth is not spoken in love. A lot of speaking the truth is not spoken in love.

And then it does the work of the devil. So, if we want to be on God's side, we must wait till we have come in our spirit to love. Then we can speak all the truth.

Then we will grow up. Then we will bring that spirit into our home. You don't realize that when you say something which is not in a spirit of love, you are actually bringing a satanic spirit into your house.

When you are not speaking it in love. So, we have to be very careful. And if you are not sure, then it is better to keep quiet.

And if you are not sure, then it is better to keep quiet. If we keep quiet, we won't do any damage. Because our whole aim, even in speaking the truth, is to set something right.

And if we do it in love, it will be right. And if we do it in love, it will be right. So, this is the first thing we have to learn from Adam and Eve.

And the second thing we see in Genesis 3, in verse 12, the first thing, he blamed his wife. And the second thing we see in the same verse, was he blamed God. Saying, you gave me this wife.

You need to ask yourself whether there is anything in your heart which is like a complaint against God. You know, deep down in your heart, if you begin to think, Oh, why did I marry this woman? Oh, why did I marry this man? You may think, oh, if I had not married this man, some other man may have been better. Or, if I had married some other woman, she would have been a better wife.

Perhaps you are wrong. If you had married somebody else, your life may have been much worse. So, there can be a spirit of complaining against God, saying, why did you allow this to happen in my life? Why did you allow these circumstances to happen in my life? And you know, in Indian marriages, it's not like Western marriages.

Because here, when we get married, we don't just get married to a person. We get married to a whole family. That's part of our culture.

It's not so much in the West. Because there they break away from their parents very soon. I don't believe that is right.

I don't believe we are right either. See, Indian culture and Western culture are both wrong. Christian culture is somewhere between these two.

We see the example in Jesus. The Bible says that when we get married, we are to be detached from our parents. So that we can be united to our partner.

And that's in Genesis 2.24. That you leave your father and mother and claim to your wife. Leave your, verse 2.24. So you have to leave before you can join to your wife. Now leave doesn't mean that you don't care for them.

Because we must honor our father and mother, even if we are 60 years old. That is still the end of their life. We must honor them.

Because they cared for us when we were helpless babies. So when they are old, we have to care for them. But this means that we must not allow them to run our life.

It's very interesting. I ask people this question sometimes. Can you tell me the first commandment in the Bible? Not what he told Adam, because that is for the Garden of Eden.

We are not there. So that doesn't apply to us. That doesn't apply to us because we are not living in the Garden of Eden.

But what is the first commandment in the Bible? And the only commandment given by God before sin came into the world. Only one commandment. You know what it is? It's this one we just read.

Genesis 2.24 I have always thought about the wisdom of God. That in his great wisdom, the first commandment he put in the Bible is Leave your earthly parents and cleave to your wife, cleave to your husband. And the more I live in India, the more I see the problems, I can see the wisdom of God in that commandment.

This is the number one commandment disobeyed by married people in India. They disobeyed. And that is the cause of many, many, many problems.

People go to two extremes. Some become slaves of their parents, some neglect their parents totally. But what is the balance? Look at the life of Jesus.

Even when he was hanging on the cross, dying and suffering, his mind thought about his mother, I must make some provision for my mother to be taken care of. That is an amazing example that in the midst of his own suffering, he thought about caring for his mother. No, she was a widow, Joseph had died long ago, otherwise he wouldn't have thought about that.

And he was the eldest son. And he took that responsibility seriously, even while he is suffering in pain. And he took that responsibility seriously, even while he is suffering in pain.

This is an amazing example for us. Respecting and caring for our parents. And at the same time, when Jesus was in his mother's house, he obeyed her.

But the moment he left, and started his ministry at Kena, the marriage of Kena. He told his mother, what have I got to do with you, don't interfere with my ministry. Can you say that to your mother? Mom, please don't interfere in our marriage.

Please leave us to run our own life. Dad, please leave us to run our own life. If they argue with you, you can ask them one more question.

If they argue with you, you can ask them one more question. Mom, did you like it when your mother-in-law interfered in your life? Or dad, when your father-in-law tried to tell you to do something, did you like it? Or dad, when your father-in-law tried to tell you to do something, did you like it? See, Indian parents are very interfering type of parents. So that's the other thing we can learn from that first passage.

Don't blame God for anything. Don't wish that you had another husband or another wife. God has arranged, see marriage is not a thing where everything will go smoothly.

Our whole life is not like that. God allows our life to be like that stormy sea, the lake of Galilee where the boat was tossed around. But the wonderful thing was Jesus is in the boat.

We think that if Jesus is in the boat, there won't be any storm. There will be storm in our life, there will be storm in our married life, there will be storm in the church. But Jesus can still those storms, that's the gospel message.

So what sort of life would you like? A smooth life without any difficulties, any problems, any trials. That will be quite a boring life. Supposing the gospel stories were like this.

And Jesus went for a marriage in Cana. And there was plenty of food and wine, there was no problem, they had a good time and came back home. And they got into a boat and went across the lake, it was very smooth, so they had a good journey up to the other side.

And once there was 5000 people he was speaking to. But fortunately they had all brought their lunch packets with them so they could all sit down and eat. Even the Sunday school children will say, please don't tell us these boring stories.

What will be your testimony when you go to heaven? We'll hear about Daniel who tells us how he was thrown to the lions and the lions shut their mouths. And how all the different, how David killed Goliath, he'll tell us his testimony. And they'll say, brother, sister, you tell us your testimony now.

I prayed that I'll have no problems in my life. I never had any problems. And when I did have one problem, I complained so much that God never gave me any more problems in my life.

I don't want a testimony like that. I want a testimony where I can tell hundreds of stories of all types of things that happened in my life and by the grace of God I overcame all of them. Think if you had a very difficult mother-in-law, and you tell people in heaven, boy, you should have seen the mother-in-law I got.

But I conquered her by love. I decided that Jesus is more powerful than the devil. What a testimony that would be.

I'm not saying we should be foolish. But each situation may be different. And we need a lot of wisdom.

But what I want to say is this. To me, every situation is a test. Who is stronger, Christ or the devil? When people do something wrong to you, supposing they accuse you falsely, who are they serving? Christ or the devil? Definitely, they are serving the devil if they accuse you falsely.

See, as I've been serving the Lord now more than 40 years, I know the devil hates me like anything. I'm not afraid of him. But because he hates me so much, he gets all types of people to accuse me of all types of wrong things, false things.

But what's the use getting angry with them? I don't get angry with them. I say this is the devil. I want to now prove that Christ is greater than the devil.

But most of the believers, they don't prove that. That fellow serves the devil, they also serve the devil and hit back. He's absolutely foolish.

See this lovely verse. Romans chapter 12, verse 21. He's talking about your enemies.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink. Verse 20, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

So overcome evil with good. Which is stronger? Evil or good? Satan says evil is stronger. We say no.

Christ is stronger. Good is stronger. The devil says prove it.

I'm going to prove it. See we must be in the place where nothing can take us out of love. Nothing can remove love from our hearts.

This is the real proof of being filled with the Holy Spirit. That nobody can bring me out of love. Love must be my permanent address.

That I'm always there. I'm never going to shift from there. If I make a mistake, I say Lord I'm sorry.

If I hurt somebody, I say I'm sorry. See that's the other thing we must learn as husband and wife. To ask forgiveness from each other.

We must see that sin, even a small one word that we speak which is hurtful, is like a thorn coming into our foot. Now if a thorn gets into your foot, how long will you wait till you take it out? You won't even wait five seconds. Whatever work you're doing, you'll stop.

And say I've got to take that out first, otherwise it'll destroy my foot more. Sure. When you hurt somebody, you have hurt him with your words.

But you have hurt your own conscience much more. See when people called Jesus Bilzibul, Prince of Devils, When people called Jesus Prince of Devils, Did it hurt Jesus? No. You couldn't hurt him.

You cannot hurt Jesus. They hurt themselves. If people call me the devil, they're not going to hurt me.

They hurt themselves. Anybody who tries to hurt me is actually hurting himself. So when you say something which hurts somebody, actually you hurt yourself.

Now, a thorn has got into your foot, a bad conscience. A bad conscience is like a thorn in your foot. How long are you going to wait till you take it out? You must go immediately and ask the Lord to forgive you and go to your husband or wife and say I'm sorry, please forgive me.

In my anger I said that. I'm sorry, it was my mistake. And you don't allow the devil to come into your home.

And at the same time your conscience will not be destroyed and your relationship in the home is restored. But if you leave that thorn there, it'll get infected and it'll become pus around it and kill your conscience. So that's the first step.

As soon as you're aware, you must ask for forgiveness. The second thing is that we must forgive also quickly. Sometimes if your husband or wife comes and asks for your forgiveness sometimes we can act very proud and big.

We act as though I'm not going to forgive you so quickly because you have behaved so badly for the thousandth time. Who are you ruining? You're ruining yourself when you don't forgive someone. I use my imagination sometimes to think how God is doing things in heaven.

This earth is full of so many people who do wrong things. And there are many people asking God from the earth Lord, please forgive me. If you think of in one day how many people are on the millions of people are saying, Lord, please forgive me.

Even unbelievers. What is God doing in heaven? He's immediately forgiving. He doesn't wait for somebody and say, okay, I'll tell you tomorrow whether I've forgiven you or not.

Immediately, forgiven. And then somebody else from there is asking for forgiveness. And from the other side of the earth somebody is asking forgiveness, forgiven.

I use my imagination to think what God is doing all the time. You know what he's doing? He's saying, forgiven, forgiven, forgiven. That's what he's doing all the time.

All the time. What about tomorrow? He's doing all the time. Many of us say, Lord, I want to be like you.

Why not be like him in this area? As soon as somebody asks forgiveness, forgiven, sure. One minute later, they do the same thing again. One minute later.

Forgiven. After one minute, again the same thing. Forgiven.

If you want to be like God, be rich in mercy. It's the most important area for us to be rich. I remember once one married couple came to see me.

They were not from our church, from some other church. I didn't know them. They had read some book of mine.

They came rushing into my house one day. They said, Brother Zak, we've got to catch a train in a few minutes. Can you give us some quick advice for our married life? They didn't even sit.

They had to rush. I said, okay. I said, ask forgiveness quickly and forgive quickly.

Okay. Go and catch your train now. You'll have a very happy married life.

In almost all marriages that I conduct nowadays, I tell people this. Before you go to bed at night, just make sure that everything is settled between you and your husband and wife. Don't keep any retained anger in your heart or any unforgiven matter.

Get rid of it. Just like you throw away bad food. You don't keep it because if you keep it, it'll stink tomorrow.

So at night, it says in Ephesians 4, verse 26, don't let the sun set on your anger. That means in those days, people used to go to sleep when the sun set. No, no, no.

When the sun was setting, they'd go to sleep. So he's saying before you go to sleep, get rid of your anger. So a brother came to me and said, Brother Zak, you conducted our marriage 20 years ago and you gave us this advice at our wedding.

Don't go to bed without settling all matters between both of you. And he said, I want to testify today. He's a brother from our church in Bangalore.

I've kept that word every day for 20 years. I said, praise the Lord. That's a greater miracle than raising the dead.

What a testimony. Is it very difficult? Supposing I tell you before you go to bed, remove all the thorns from your feet then only go to sleep. You say, Brother Zak, can't I do it once a week or something? Why every day I've got to remove all the thorns from my feet? Every day? You don't wait till sunset to remove thorns from your feet.

You remove it immediately. I think this Ephesians 4.26 is for half-hearted people. Half-hearted.

Whole-hearted people won't wait till sunset. They'll settle it immediately. These are the little things which the devil brings in to ruin a marriage.

What is the opposite of accusing and criticizing people? What is the opposite of accusing and criticizing people? That is learning to appreciate people. That is learning to appreciate people. Now I want to read you something from the Bible.

You will think it is from some Hindi movie. It's not a Hindi movie. It's not a Hindi movie.

How beautiful you are, my darling. How beautiful you are. Son of Solomon, Chapter 2, Verse 15.

Son of Solomon? Chapter 2? Oh, sorry. Chapter 1. Verse 15. How beautiful you are, my darling.

How beautiful you are. Have you once in your life said that to your wife? Once? Once? Now that all the sisters are very happy. I want to ask the sisters.

Have you ever said Verse 16 to your husband? How handsome you are, my beloved. You are so pleasant. See, this is not a Hindi movie.

This is the Bible. The Lord wants us to learn to appreciate one another. The Lord wants us to learn to appreciate one another.

Why are we only ready to find fault? Why are we only ready to find fault? Supposing I were to give you all a piece of paper. Supposing I were to give you all a piece of paper. Without thinking, quickly write down three good things about your husband or wife.

Without thinking, quickly write down three good things about your husband or wife. And write three bad things about your husband or wife. And write three bad things about your husband or wife.

Which will you be able to write quicker? Which will you have to think? Which will you have to think? There you know whether you are more like the devil or more like Jesus Christ. Can you immediately think of

three good things that your husband has got? Or your wife has got? The devil makes us forget those things. Song of Solomon is a wonderful book.

Today we know it is a picture of Christ in the church also. Today we know it is a picture of Christ in the church also. But before Jesus came to earth And before there was a church For one thousand years after Solomon wrote it What was it referring to? For one thousand years after Solomon wrote it What was this book referring to? It was talking about husband-wife relationship.

It was talking about husband-wife relationship. The Lord was saying I want you to appreciate one another. The Lord was saying I want you to appreciate one another.

Very often problems arise because we are quick to criticize but very slow to appreciate. Very often problems arise because we are quick to criticize but very slow to appreciate. So we need to change that attitude.

And say Lord I want to learn to be quick to appreciate. You know Jesus was like that. Even in some of the worst churches in Revelation chapter 2 Even in some of the worst churches You know one church is so bad in chapter 2 that the Lord says if you don't listen to me I am going to take away the lamp stand and you won't be a church anymore.

and the Lord says if you don't listen to me I am going to take away the lamp stand and you won't be a church anymore. Because you have left your first love. But see how he begins the letter.

Chapter 2 To the leader of the church in Ephesus write See this is the bridegroom speaking to the bride. The husband speaking to the wife. Jesus is the husband and the church is the bride.

Ok what is he saying? Verse 2 I know your deeds Perseverance You cannot endure evil men. You put to the test those who call themselves apostles and you find they are false. You have perseverance You have endured for my name's sake You have not grown weary What a wonderful church No He says but I have got something against you He says all these words of appreciation Then he says the one thing Which is the worst church to which Paul wrote Corinthians They had so many things wrong with them So many sins They were taking people to court against each other They were tolerating adultery And he writes to them in 1 Corinthians 1 Verse 4 I thank God always for you You are enriched verse 5 In him in all speech all knowledge Verse 7 you are not lacking in any gift He will confirm you In the day of Jesus Christ verse 8 Then he says now verse 10 I have got to tell you some things It's a little principle We have to develop this habit of appreciating With our children also We criticize them so quickly Aren't there some good qualities In your children Learn to appreciate They will change much quicker The bible says God leads us to repentance by kindness God leads us to repentance by his kindness That is Romans 2 verse 4 We can also lead our children to repentance by kindness Let's pray Let's ask God To give us the power of the Holy Spirit To obey all that we have heard And let's pray that God will fill us with the Holy Spirit So that we can respond to what we have heard Thank you Father in Jesus name Amen

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