

The Call To A Rock Solid Marriage

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[0:00] The common theme when you talk about marriage, you talk about relationships in that regard. You want to focus on love. And there's a lot in Scripture as far as love and what love is.

I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew 7. Matthew 7. I guess I should turn there as well. So we're going to spend some time in the Gospel of Matthew today as we look at the call to a rock-solid marriage.

Now, some here are not married. So I want to encourage you, don't check out. Some are a long way from seriously considering marriage just by mere age.

Stick with me, guys. Don't check out. Some have been married here for a long time. For a long time. Long time.

[1:07] Well, you know who you are. And if that's you, I want to encourage you to pay attention to the Scripture and what I'm going to be talking about this morning.

Because it's an opportunity for you to grow. No matter how long you've been married, if you're married at all, we can always take from the text of Scripture and the Word of God something to be learned for every person.

That's something I focus on as we've gone through Titus, the qualifications for elders. You may not be an elder. You may not ever be qualified to be an elder. But you can take principles from the Word of God.

So today, the focus, yes, is a bit on marriage. Intentionally, can you imagine that? We have a vow renewal at the end of this service. Of course, I'm going to spend some time on marriage and the focus on that.

But even in this text that we're going to be looking at today, actually, to be honest with you, is not even a text on marriage. But I feel it is very applicable to relationships, to marriages, and of course, to you individually as followers of Christ.

[2:13] This passage we're going to look at is at the end of a sermon that started in Matthew 5, verse 3. And in this sermon, Jesus has covered a variety of topics, including anger, dealing with anger, lust, anxiety, integrity, vengeance, forgiveness, giving, fasting, praying, and other topics as well.

And He has effectively, through this sermon known as the Sermon on the Mount, has raised the bar of morality. He has rebuked the religious elitists, and He has called people to commit to following Him.

So what exactly does all this have to do with marriage? Everything. Everything Jesus talks about in the Sermon on the Mount, and let me just, you know, I don't need to qualify it.

I should just say anything Jesus says applies, is very important to marriage, to our lives, in every aspect. Think about this.

What is marriage? Well, marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman that is witnessed by God and others, and is a living example of Christ's relationship with the church.

[3:28] Every marriage consists of two sinners. The best marriage is one where those sinners are united in their love of God and their commitment to serve one another.

Through marriage, you can expect to learn how much sacrifice is involved in loving a sinner through all the ups and downs of life. Ruth Graham has stated, Those of you who have been married for any length of time or been in a relationship for any length of time, you understand the need to forgive and to be forgiven.

Ultimately, marriage is a picture of how Christ loves us. In Ephesians chapter 5, that's a great chapter as well. I had my pick of verses and chapters to go to as I was dealing with this topic.

Ephesians 5 is a great passage. But verses 31 and 32, it states, Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. So in a passage of Scripture, and we're going to get to reading it later in Ephesians 5, verses 22 through 33, this passage of Scripture on marriage, Paul makes this concluding statement that this mystery is profound about a man and a woman coming together and becoming one flesh.

[4:55] And then he's saying, but this is, I'm referring to Christ and the church. Marriage is a, it is a, it is a symbol, is a picture of what Christ, the relationship between Christ and the church is to be.

Martin Lloyd-Jones has said, you cannot understand marriage unless you are a Christian. And that's true. I mean, we can understand coming together and spending time together and having a relationship and loving someone else, but you don't truly grasp what marriage is unless you are a Christian, unless you understand that this is a symbol of Christ and the church.

No one understands the love of Christ more than someone who has had their sins forgiven by Him and someone who has committed their life to following Him. Now that brings us to the passage in Matthew 7, verses 24 through 27 that I'd like to read now.

Jesus says, It says, What does it mean to have a rock solid marriage?

Well, it means to build our marriages on obedience to Jesus. In verse 24, Jesus makes a clear statement, Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock.

[6:53] That means actively putting Jesus and His words at the center of our day-to-day lives, whether it's including our romantic life with our spouse, our relational lives with friends, co-workers, family members, and any time we have conflict enter our life.

Jesus' words are to be at the center. James chapter 1 verse 22 says, To be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

A healthy and strong marriage will seek ways to draw Jesus into the marriage. Reading together, especially the Bible, praying together, singing together, giving thanks together for the good and the challenging times even.

Every marriage learns quickly that it takes special spirit-filled intentionality to keep from drifting off the rock. Just like in our lives individually, it's easy to slip off the rock.

It's easy to be a follower of Jesus and know that His word is important and want to put importance on it and put it at the center of your life, but the reality is we all slip from time to time.

[8:09] And if that can happen to us individually, it can happen even more so collectively in the bonds of marriage. When tensions arise in our relationships, we naturally put up our defenses.

Right? When things get hard and conflict enters the equation of any relationship, we want to put up our defenses. Whose fault is it?

Because it's certainly not mine. What was the thing that was said or done that got me angry? Or what needs to be done to make things better for myself? I mean, that's ultimately the center of conflict is always me and I.

And that's the thought process, though natural for us, is not reflective of what we believers are called to. Think about conflict in your own life. Now, what was it that brought that on?

It was you had an expectation. Or you had a, you know, I expected one thing to happen one way. Or, you know, I don't deserve to be treated this way. Right? And so we get defensive and angry and upset.

[9:15] And so then our flesh starts to churn a bit. And so the way we respond encourages more conflict. But what are we called to as believers?

Philippians 2 verse 3, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Romans 12.10, Love one another with brotherly affection.

Outdo one another in showing honor. Ephesians 5.21, Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. As believers, as those who are in Christ, we are called to be others-minded and others-focused.

The world, on the other hand, is all about self. Our natural being is all about self. Our sin nature is all about self. And you think about what is so popular in the world.

Self-help, self-love, self-transformation, self-empowerment. Thus our natural, worldly, sinful mind defaults to self-preservation and self-interest.

[10:24] It's all about self. It's all about me. And in a marriage, when you've got two people where it's all about me, you're going to get a lot of conflict.

On the other hand, the gospel is all about others. Matthew 7.12, So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

The golden rule, right? Do unto others as that you would have them do unto you. Matthew 22.37-40, And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend on all the law and the prophets. Jesus has given you, told you, what are the two most important commandments in all of Scripture?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Guess what? But nowhere in there is love yourself because you already do that.

[11:30] But the gospel calls us to love others, to love God, and to love your neighbor. John 13.34 and 35. A new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. I used to be, when I was younger, conflicted by that.

What does this mean? A new commandment that you love one another. Hasn't God already commanded us to do that? I mean, He already said the greatest commandment is love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. Then I realized, then it clicked one day, years ago, not like recently.

I figured it out by now. But it clicked. The new commandment is this, that you love one another just as I have loved you. It's new because the disciples had experienced the love of Christ.

They had spent three and a half years of their life with Him. They had seen His compassion. They had experienced it for themselves. And now He's saying, as I have loved you, go and love others.

[12:40] And that's the call for the believer. As Christ has loved you, go and love others. And that's the call for our marriages. Each individually, part of that, the husband, the wife, as Christ has loved you, so love your spouse.

In the 1990s, there was a boom among youth group kids who wore bracelets or other paraphernalia with the acronym WWJD. What would Jesus do?

Of course, the trend died not long after commercialism got its grubby paws on it and monetized it to its grave. But that question is worth having permanently at the front of our minds.

It should be the filter through which we engage the world. What would Jesus do? What would Jesus do in response to what that person said about me on social media?

Or, what would Jesus do in response to what that person said about me to that person? What would Jesus do in response to a tailgater blowing by me on Main Street while sharing with me their IQ score as they drive by?

[13:57] How would Jesus respond? What would Jesus do in response to the angry spouse who's being very unloving in their words or actions?

That question, what would Jesus do? It's not just a bracelet. It's not just a thing to wear on a t-shirt. It's not a fad, a trend for commercial use. But it is a filter through which we engage the world.

It is a filter through which we analyze and understand everything that we encounter in life. What would Jesus do? I want to go back to Matthew 7, verses 24 and 25.

Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

The wise, obedient follower of Jesus has a house. They have a life whose foundation is solid that can weather the storms that come along.

[15:13] And that's saying a lot given recent days with Hurricane Helene. The damage done Southeast, South, yeah, Southeast, sorry, North Carolina, Florida, entire towns, roadways, houses completely destroyed because of a storm that came through and wiped them out.

the wise, obedient follower of Jesus has a house whose foundation is solid and can weather the storms of life no matter how strong and devastating they seem.

The wise, obedient couple have a marriage built on the foundation of the word of God which can weather the storms that come against it. So what benefits us individually is also a benefit to us collectively.

We must strive for the decisive factor in our relationship to be what Jesus wants most. What does Jesus want from us in any situation in our relationships in our marriages?

We won't always know precisely what Jesus wants at any given moment. The more we are in the word the more we are studying the more we are reading the more exposure we have to it the more knowledge we'll have.

[16:42] The more the spirit has to work with to bring to our attention and to remind us of what we have learned and what we have studied. But even though we won't always know precisely we must have a commitment to trust and obey him above all else.

And in every situation we must resolve we must resolve our tensions we must resolve our conflict with the word of God and what Jesus wants for us.

And when we do that imagine the the resolution and tension and conflict and the and the benefit to marriage as a whole. Continuing in verses 26 and 27 and everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was the fall of it.

The foolish disobedient person refuses the solid foundation in favor of some beachfront property that cannot stand up to the storms that come along.

When both people in a marriage are foolish you can be sure that the shaky foundation will not hold up long to the storms that come against it. Divorce is almost not it's not even a it's not a problem to people anymore.

[18:16] It's a convenient out. Divorce I've stopped following it years ago but at one point divorce rates were around 50% 51% somewhere around that 49% to 51%.

Why? More often than not not always but more often than not it's because they don't have a foundation on which their marriage is built.

They don't have the word of God they don't have Christ at the center of their relationship. And even if they're both believers I can still make that statement because if Christ is at the center and glorifying God is the goal then you'll have no need to get to that end of a divorce.

But in our culture that's not the case. We are far from God as a nation and so we reap that fruit in these types of decisions and where we're at.

When the forecast darkens and the clouds crawl in and the winds begin to howl and the showers start to fall we feel whether our love is built on solid ground or not. Are we more committed to obeying Jesus than getting our own way?

[19:39] Do his words or our feelings consistently win the day? Are we ready to take the hard costly steps that he calls us to take? Are we ready to do it again and again and again every day?

Is our house built on rock or on sand? Father I thank you for your word today.

I thank you for the call to a rock solid marriage and Lord it starts with us individually choosing to follow after you Lord to commit our lives to knowing your word and obeying and doing it and Lord for those of us to whom it applies our marriages Lord I pray that you would be at the center honoring and glorifying you would be our goal and our utmost desire thank you for this reminder and this time and Lord I just pray that you would be glorified and we would be encouraged through what we've looked at today and for what remains in Jesus name Amen Thank you.