

Five Choices a Husband Makes to Love His Wife

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Please be seated. Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. For those of you who are visiting, stopping through, welcome. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here at SBC.

I know you guys noted I said Ephesians 5 is where we're going. I've been in Romans for the last couple of months. We're going to get back to Romans, but just with what the festivities of the recent weddings that we've had in the last couple of weeks, plus the women's conference, I thought it would be pertinent to preach on marriage.

What role of wives, role of husbands, and how that all fits together. Last week the subject was wives, reality check for them, just based on 1 Peter.

This morning, we're looking at husbands, and I see a lot of men are shirked out by now. Just kidding. It's interesting. We're not going to be so much in 1 Peter, but we're going to primarily be looking at Paul's teaching in Colossians and Ephesians.

And if you did not know, they were written, those letters, two at the very same time. So there's a little bit of crossover. What's interesting is I've actually preached this sermon before.

[1 : 26] I preached it 15 years ago. And I preached it as a single man. And when I preached it, I got a lot of feedback. Some good, some bad.

But the main one was, man, you're not married. How can you know these things? And it was quite interesting because there was this couple visiting us at the time, a pastor and his wife.

And his wife thought that it had been one of the most honest and straightforward sermons because I wasn't colored by my experience. So I've tried to replicate this in the best way possible.

Sadly, my wife is not here this week. She's at a retreat. So I get a little bit off the hook, but I get to be just as strong. No, just kidding. She'll be listening to this today.

The fact of the matter is when we start thinking about weddings, we start thinking about love, right? Songs are written about love. Movies are built around love. We've got these entire industries, Hallmark Industries, February 14th, where billions of dollars are poured out for people searching for love.

[2 : 37] Fact is, everyone wants love. Everyone talks about love. But sadly, so few people can actually define it. If you were to ask 10 different people what love is, you're likely to get 10 different answers.

Some are going to tell you that love is a feeling. Others are going to tell you that love is a chemistry between a man and a woman. Others are going to say it's this mutual attraction.

And perhaps some practical people might even say it's about compatibility. But the question I want to ask this morning is not what Hollywood has to say what love is.

I'm really not interested in what the culture has to say what love is. And I'm not even interested in what marriage experts say love is. The true question that should preoccupy our minds are what does God say love is?

In Colossians 3.19, Paul writes, Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Now, I want you to pay attention to what he does not say.

[3 : 52] He does not say husbands feel loving towards your wives. He does not say husband love your wives when they make you happy. And he does not say husbands love your wives when the romance is strong.

He simply says husband love your wives. Now, why is he able to give that command? First, we understand that biblical love is not primarily a feeling.

It is a choice. It is a commitment. It is a covenant promise that is lived day in, day out. Because I think we know the truth, right?

Feelings rise and fall. Faces rise and fall. Bellies rise and fall. Emotions come and go. Circumstances change. People change. Bodies change. Health declines. Trials come. And disappointments come. But covenant love remains.

[5 : 03] The world says, I don't love her anymore. God says, love her. The world says, the feelings are gone.

The world says, love her. Or scripture says, love her. The world says, find someone who makes you happy. Scripture says, love your wife.

See, this command, if it were merely a feeling, God would never command it. But because love is an act of the will, empowered by the Spirit of God, God can command it.

And the fact is, he does. Now, before we unpack this command, we need to be understanding something very important to this passage. Paul is not giving random marriage advice here in Colossians.

This command appears in a specific context. If you know Colossians chapter 3, verse 1 begins, If then you have been raised with Christ.

[6 : 14] There's a condition with the if that is placed at the beginning of the verse. The chapter begins with the believer's union with Christ. You have died with Christ.

You have raised with Christ. Your life is hidden with Christ. In the rest of this passage, Paul then tells believers to put sin to death. That sin includes sexual immorality, impurity, evil desire, greed, anger, malice, slander.

Get rid of them. And he actually uses this term. It's like you put off. It's like a clothing that's over you, like a jacket. Pull it off. Take it off. And then you want to put on Christ, which we notice in verse 12, which we're supposed to put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and above all these things, love.

See, it's important for us to understand right here. Before Paul ever gives a command to a husband how to treat his wife, he first tells him what kind of man he must become at first.

See, this is all based on if you are in Christ. That's the first thing that needs to happen. So the sermon I'm teaching you today is not moralism.

[7 : 34] It's not a self-help sermon. It's not a five easy steps to have a better marriage. What I'm preaching and what I hope you understand is that this is the fruit of a transformed life by Jesus Christ.

If you miss that, you will feel overburdened and overweighted by the commands that Paul is going to give us.

Because we're going to think we can do it in the flesh. Right? We can do it with willpower. I can do it if I just set my mind to it. But what Paul is describing is what Christ produces in a man who walks with Jesus.

You see, a husband cannot love his wife biblically while living selfishly. A husband cannot love his wife biblically while walking in the flesh.

A husband cannot love his wife biblically apart from the transforming work of Jesus Christ. The command of verse 19 is rooted in everything that comes before it.

[8 : 55] Which leads us to another question. What does biblical love actually look like? And praise the Lord, God has not left us guessing. So please just turn your Bibles now to Ephesians chapter 5.

Because here we discover the greatest definition of a husband's love in all of Scripture. Verse 25 simply states, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Boom. Boom. Boom. The model for a husband's love is not his father. The model for a husband's love is not his grandfather.

It's not his favorite author. It is not social media. It is not the latest marriage conference. The model that all husbands are to have is Jesus Christ.

Men, if you want to know what a husband should look like, we are to look to Jesus. If we want to know what love looks like, we need to look to Jesus.

[10 : 05] If you want to know how a husband is to treat his wife, we are to look to Jesus. Because everything that Paul says about marriage flows from Christ's relationship with his church.

Christ took responsibility for his bride. Christ sacrificed himself for his bride. Christ sanctifies his bride.

Christ nourishes and cherishes his bride. And Christ always remains faithful to his bride. Amen? That's the model.

And that brings me to our message for this morning. As we look at Christ's love for his church, we're going to look at five choices every husband must make if he's going to love his wife the way Christ loves the church.

So this morning, I'm going to give you five choices husbands are to make if they're going to love your wife the way Christ loved the church.

[11 : 15] You with me on that? All right, let me pray. Dear most holy heavenly father, we just thank you for this book. Lord, we just thank you for who you are. Jesus Christ, we thank you for the obedient son that you are, that you offered yourself freely for our sins.

And by becoming Christians and entering into that relationship with you, you become our life. You are our model. You give us strength through the power of the Holy Spirit to do what we cannot do in the flesh.

Father, there is nobody here that we know of that is not impacted by these choices. They don't even need to be married to know and understand these choices.

They've had fathers. They've had fathers love their mothers. Or perhaps they've had fathers not love their mothers. We know there's women here whose husbands have given up their role and have left their wives to pursue the world.

Father, I pray a powerful and special prayer upon them that you would continue to sanctify them and to grow them, to not lead them into discouragement.

[12 : 36] We know we've got people who are here on more than their first marriage, oh Father. And I pray that within that marriage, may they find the wonderful, beautiful grace of God that their now present husband would love them in a way that they've never been loved before except by you.

Father, there is a weight on this. We know everyone here knows someone who's been affected by this. But Father, I pray that the men of SBC and the men who are visiting here would make the right choices here.

Father, I pray for conviction. I pray for the weight of your truth to break our selfish wills. And it is me who is one of them I pray for as well.

So Lord, we thank you. We love you. We pray for the power to understand this text and all that it means. In your most holy and precious name, God's people said, amen.

So the first choice that a husband needs to make is that a husband needs to choose responsibility over passivity. We talked about the besetting sin last week of women.

[13 : 56] It's to force change in their husbands. And they tend to do that by telling them, right? This needs to change. This needs to change. This needs to change.

Oh, you didn't hear me. This needs to change. This needs to change. We call it nagging. That's the besetting sin. Men's besetting sin is passivity.

To let it go, I'll do it later, honey. Tomorrow. Maybe next week. Let's put it on the calendar for next year. You men know exactly what I'm talking about.

You see, one of the first ways Christ-like love expresses itself is through responsibility. A husband who loves his wives does not abdicate.

He does not withdraw. He does not sit on the sidelines. A man of God accepts the responsibility God has given him. The perfect example for this is found in Genesis chapter 3.

[14 : 57] Most of us are familiar with this story. God created Adam and Eve. And he gives us this command. Do not eat of the fruit.

Then the serpent arrives. temptation comes. Temptation comes. And the fruit is eaten. And we know that sin enters the world.

But something fascinating happens after this. In Genesis 3.9 it says, But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

Now think about this for a moment. For those of you who are familiar with this sermon. Who ate the fruit first? Eve. Who was deceived?

Eve. And who does God call? Adam. Why? Because God had entrusted Adam with responsibility.

[16 : 01] Adam was the covenant head of his home. Adam was responsible before God for what happened under his care. God did not say, Eve, where are you?

He asked, Adam, where are you? From the very beginning, God established a principle that runs throughout Scripture.

The fact is, men are called to lead. Men are called to take responsibility. Men are called to answer before God for the stewardship that God has entrusted them with.

And the tragedy of Adam was not merely that he sinned. The tragedy is that he sat there and he watched. He was present. He was present, but he was silent.

He was passive. Instead of choosing responsibility, he chose passivity. And the truth of the matter is, and every man in here knows it, we've been repeating Adam's mistake ever since then.

[17:08] Right? Some men advocate spiritual leadership. Some men advocate responsibility for their home. Some men leave all spiritual matters to their wives.

Some men leave their prayer lives to their wives, their Bible readings to their wives, discipleship to their wives, and church involvement to their wives.

If it wasn't for their wife, ask them to come to church. They're not coming. And then men start to wonder, why is my family struggling?

Why are my kids struggling in the faith that I so boldly proclaim? Because the truth is, passivity is not love.

A husband who refuses responsibility is not loving his wife. He is abandoning part of what God has called him to do. Notice what Ephesians 5.23 says.

[18:08] It says, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Now, I'm going to be honest with you. Headship is often misunderstood.

There's a whole school in Christianity that is attacking this word head. It doesn't mean what it means. And it's true in some ways.

It's not mean what the scripture says, but what the world has made it say. Headship is not being a dictator. Headship is not domination. Headship is not demanding your own way.

And headship is not acting like a king while everyone else becomes your servant. God has not called you to that. Often it's hidden under the word patriarchalism.

And that sadly is a word that is abused. Remember, who is our model? Jesus Christ, right? What did Christ do?

[19:12] He served. He sacrificed. He protected. He provided. He laid down his own life.

Because the fact is, my friends, biblical leadership is not about power. Biblical leadership is about responsibility. The husband is not called to rule over his wife.

The husband is called to answer before God for how he loved his wife. You with me on that? On that great day of judgment, it's not how did you rule over her, but how did you lead her in a love for me?

One author simply states, the burden of leadership is not privilege. It is accountability. As I said, one day we will stand before God.

And God will not ask us how much money we made for our homes. He will not ask how many promotions did you get at work. He's not going to ask you how many new toys you accumulated.

[20:24] He will ask what you did with the people he entrusted to your care. Did you love your wife? Did you lead her toward Christ?

Did you pray for her? Did you care for her soul? Did you take responsibility? Or did you hide behind your work?

Hide behind your hobbies? Hide behind your busyness or excuses or the great outdoors? You see, the first choice a husband's make is this.

I refuse to be passive. I refuse to be passive. I choose responsibility. I choose to be present. I choose to engage.

I choose to lead. Not because I'm better than my wife. Not because I am more valuable than my wife. But because God has entrusted me with a responsibility that I cannot give away.

[21:31] I cannot delegate it to my wife. You don't have that choice. And then, when you embrace responsibility, you begin to reflect the love of Christ for his church.

That's your first choice. Second choice a husband makes to love his wife is he chooses sacrifice over selfishness. He chooses sacrifice over selfishness.

Ephesians 5.25, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Here we read the defining characteristic of the love of Jesus Christ.

He gave himself. He sacrificed himself. He put our needs ahead of his own comfort and he willingly laid down his life for his church, which he calls his bride.

And Paul simply says that is the pattern for every Christian husband. The world tells men to ask, what can I get out of this relationship?

[22 : 46] Christ asks, what can I give to this relationship? And it's hard. I've got a lot of unbelieving friends that call me.

Hey, BK's the pastor. He's going to help me with some of my marital issues. He knows. You know, he can give me a spiritual imprint. But most of the time, they say, listen, we had an agreement. When we got married, we had this agreement. She said she would do this. I would do this. And if I change my mind, she's gone. And if she changes her mind, I'm gone. And I simply said, that's not a marriage.

That's a business arrangement. You see, it is a different, completely different way of thinking. Because biblical love is not self-centered.

Biblical love is self-sacrificing. But the natural tendency of every husband is selfishness. Listen, we think about our schedules, our hobbies, our careers, our interests, our preferences, our comfort.

[23 : 49] Yet Christ calls us to something radically different. He calls us to die to self. Luke 9, 23, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Marriage gives a husband countless opportunities to do exactly this. Sometimes sacrifice means giving up what you want so your wife can flourish.

Sometimes it means listening when you're tired. Sometimes it means serving when nobody notices. Sometimes it means admitting you're wrong. Sometimes it means asking for forgiveness.

And sometimes it means laying aside your pride for the sake of peace. See, the fact is, the world sees sacrifice as weakness.

But God's scripture here teaches us that sacrifice is Christ-likeness. Men often think leadership means getting their own way.

[24 : 58] I'm the final word. I get to pick the car, the color, whatever it is. Biblical leadership often means surrendering your own way for the one you love.

See, Jesus was never more powerful than when he willingly laid down his life. And a husband is never more like Christ than when he willingly sacrifices himself for the good of his wife.

And he does so not to remind her later, right? A lot of guys, hey man, I'm going to sacrifice. You know what? My wife wants Chinese food. I hate Chinese food. But I'm going to go with Chinese food. Because I know I'm getting that big rosy steak next time she wants to go out for dinner.

Which is far times the price, right? There's always this little negotiation going on in guys' head.

Sorry guys, I let out the secret. You see, brother, marriages struggle not because there is a lack of love.

But because there is a lack of dying to self. Two selfish people cannot build a Christ-centered marriage.

[26 : 10] At some point, someone must die to self. And God calls the husband to lead the way.

Every healthy marriage has two words written over it. Not mine. Not my way. Not my rights.

Not my preferences. Not my comfort. Instead, a husband asks, how can I serve? How can I help?

How can I encourage? How can I love? Even when it totally makes no logical sense. Right?

It's still there. It's a matter of submitting. You're just going to do it because you know your wife is going to be loved, helped, and encouragement. See, that is what Christ did for his church.

[27 : 08] That is what a godly husband chooses to do for his wife. Every day he wakes up and he makes that choice. That's what's going on in Colossians 3. You're taking off the world and you're putting on Jesus.

Amen? And sometimes that's what it is. Some of you know there are hard times in marriages where you have to say, I've got to love my wife.

I've got to put up with this because there is something else going on. Will I serve myself or will I sacrifice myself?

Our model, Jesus Christ, chose the cross. A godly husband chooses sacrifice over selfishness.

Now a third choice a husband makes is he chooses her holiness over his happiness.

Your choice is to choose your wife's holiness over your happiness. Let's take a look at Ephesians 5, 26 and 27. It says, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such things.

[28 : 28] Now why did Jesus die for the church? He didn't do it just to simply make us happy, to make us comfortable, or to make her successful. In a simple, Christ died to make his bride holy, separate, apart.

His goal in dying for the church is our sanctification, our spiritual maturity. And his goal is that one day the church would stand before him spotless and blameless.

What a beautiful picture. And Paul says that Christ's love becomes the pattern for a husband's love. One of the greatest responsibilities a husband has is helping his wife grow closer to Christ. Godly husband does not merely ask, is my wife happy? Right? Happy wife, happy life. It's not what he asks. He asks, is my wife maturing in Christ?

Hey, it's hard. There's moments where we have to say no to something. And you know your wife's going to want to do that, but you know just even going that way is going to affect her holiness.

[29 : 47] Even she may not understand it, and we're going to take a beating for it. Sometimes it's important to do. Because our greatest responsibility a husband has is helping his wife grow closer to Christ.

Is my wife becoming more like Christ? Am I helping her spiritually? For many men, this is where the leadership begins. It doesn't begin with authority. It doesn't begin with decision making. It doesn't begin with spiritual influence. A husband should be one of the greatest encouragements to his wife's walk with God. Not her best friend. Not her mom. Not her dad. Not her sister. You. Listen, we're tempted to pass it off, right? She can have that talk with her sister. She's been there, done there. I trust her. No, no, no, no. It starts with you. What does that look like? He prays for her. He prays with her. He encourages her in the word.

[30 : 51] He supports her spiritual growth. He helps create a home where Christ is honored. He points her toward God rather than away from God.

That means a husband never becomes an obstacle to his wife's spiritual growth. He does not lead her into sin. He does not encourage compromise. He does not fill the home with influences that weaken her walk with Christ. Instead, a husband seeks to create an environment where his wife can flourish. Amen? Woof. Amen? Amen.

what Christ has done for us. Through his word, he washes us. Through his spirit, he transforms us. Through his grace, he matures us. And a godly husband seeks to be used by God in that very same process. Brothers, let me say something that may surprise you. One day, your career will end. Your accomplishments will fade. Your possessions will belong to someone else. But one of the greatest legacies you can leave is this, that your wife loves Jesus more after decades of marriage than she did on the first day you met her. Can you imagine standing before the Lord and being able to say, by your grace, I help to follow you, Jesus. That is not just a responsibility, it's a privilege, and it is a calling. A husband who loves his wife like Christ loves the church does not simply pursue her happiness, he pursues her holiness, because he understands that true joy is always found in becoming more like Jesus. So there's three choices. Let me give you the fourth choice.

[32 : 51] The fourth choice a husband makes is he chooses care over neglect. He chooses care over neglect. Let's take a look at verses 28 and 29. It says, in the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church. Two words I want you to pay attention to there. One, nourishes. Second is cherishes. These are not accidental words. These are not just word salad that Paul's kind of spitting out. These in fact describe the tender care that Christ has for his people. Think about what Jesus is with us, the church. He's patient with us. He provides for us.

He strengthens us. He comforts us. He protects us. And he never abandons us. And Paul says, this is how a husband is to love his wife. Notice that Paul compares the care to the way a man naturally cares for his body. What do we do when we're hungry? We eat. When we thirst, we drink. When we are injured, we seek help. And when we're exhausted, we rest. But when we're lost, we never ask for directions, right?

The fact of the matter is, we naturally care for ourselves. And Paul's point is very simple here. A husband should care for his wife with that same attentiveness.

One of the great dangers in marriage is neglect. Not hatred, not abuse. Neglect. The fact is, many marriages don't explode over one thing. They slowly drift. Life gets busy. Work gets demanding. Children require attention. And schedules fill up. And before long, a husband can begin treating his wife as a roommate rather than a treasured companion. I cannot tell you how many counseling situations I've been in. I've been in. I've been in. I've been in. I've been in. I've been in. I've been in.

been in.

[35 : 19] When the husband retires from work. And now he's at home full time. And how much he struggles with that. Right?

And before long, a husband can begin, like I said, a roommate rather than a treasured companion. And you know what? He still provides financially. He still comes home every night. But he stops paying attention. Stops listening. He stops pursuing her. And he stops learning her heart. In fact, Peter writes in 1 Peter 3, the text from yesterday, or last week, it says, Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way.

This means knowing her. Understanding her fears, her struggles, her joys, her burdens. And it's not easy. My wife was born and bred in BC. I'm from Ontario, man. There's just ways natural BC people do things that I don't understand. And you guys know my wife had a previous marriage.

Just the damage that was done in there and trying to understand what she means. Because sometimes I don't understand those words. And I've got to ask more questions, more questions. And why is she moving this way? Or why is she acting this way? Why does she feel that way? I don't mean it that way.

We've been there, right? We don't understand the emotional response. You see, a husband who loves his wife pays attention to her.

[36 : 58] He knows when she is discouraged. He knows when she is overwhelmed. He knows when she needs encouragement. And he knows when she needs support. Simply because he cares.

Brothers, one of the most painful things a wife can feel is not that her husband disagrees with her, is that her husband does not notice her. Here's the fact. Christ never treats his church that way. He knows us completely and he cares for us perfectly. And while no husband can do that flawlessly, every husband should strive to reflect that same kind of loving attention.

So the question is not simply, do I provide for my wife? Which is important. The question is, do I care for her? Does she know she's cherished?

Does she know she's valued? Does she know that I love her? A husband who reflects Christ chooses care over neglect and he refuses to take his wife for granted.

[38 : 11] What does he do? As Paul says, he nourishes her and he cherishes her. And through that care, he displays something beautiful about the love of Christ for his church.

And now it brings me to our final point. The final choice a husband is to make is that a husband chooses faithfulness over compromise. He chooses faithfulness over compromise.

Verse 31. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one.

Think about that word, hold fast. Other translations say, be joined to, be united to, cling to. And the idea that Paul is giving here is a permanent attachment.

A husband is to bind himself to his wife in covenant faithfulness. Why? Because that is what Christ did for us. One of the most comforting truths in all of Scripture is that Christ never abandons the church.

[39 : 25] The fact is, we fail him. We disappoint him. We wander at times. Yet he always remains faithful. Amen? Paul reminds us in 2 Timothy 2.13, if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

You're bound to your wife. To not be faithful to her is not to be faithful to you. This is the model for Christian marriage.

Faithfulness. Not convenience, not comfort. Faithfulness. As I said earlier, the world views marriage as a contract. As long as both parties are happy, the relationship continues.

But marriage is not the contract. Marriage is a covenant. Covenant says, I'm here to stay. I am committed. I am not leaving.

Faithfulness means far more than simply avoiding adultery, which certainly includes that. But a husband must guard his eyes, his heart, his thoughts, his relationships.

[40 : 42] It's why we put up barriers. It's why we don't talk about personal feelings about our wives or problems with other women. In a world where temptation is only one click away, faithfulness requires vigilance.

Amen? And it happens quick. I remember this one time before I married, I got a girlfriend, and I don't have a problem saying she was a bear. She was just, I just could not, I was perfect in the

relationship, don't you worry.

But we were struggling in that relationship, and I remember going into work and there was just a cute woman at work who simply said, that is a great tie you have on.

Man, it made me feel like a million dollars. Would you date me? You know, just that little thing because I was just, we weren't getting anywhere and this stranger, and it's that easy sometimes. Coworker at work just says something kind. Next thing you know, you're having coffee, you're having lunch. Maybe there's a text. Maybe there's two texts.

[41 : 46] There's three texts. You're not cheating on your wife, but you're getting this emotional thrill of communicating with another woman. You've heard me say before, if you're more excited to see another woman more than your wife, that is a red flag.

That is a danger signal. That is the siren going off. Come talk to us. No shame. It happens.

We need to guard against emotional compromise. Like I said, many affairs begin long before they become physical. Emotional connections that rightly belong within the marriage relationship should never be shared.

And brothers, if I might say, your wife should never have to compete for first place in your heart. After Christ, she is your closest earthly companion.

She is your covenant partner, your best friend. She is your bride. Faithfulness also means remaining committed when marriage becomes difficult.

[43 : 02] And it does. Every marriage experiences seasons of challenges, seasons of misunderstandings, disappointments, conflict, hurt.

Let me give you, let me destroy the illusion that a Christian marriage doesn't experience those things. It does, because I know some people get in there, then they feel shame.

Maybe we're not Christians because there's conflict. No, that happens. You're two sinners that come together. As you grow and mature in Christ, it becomes less.

But I know some people, the first sign of conflict, man, God must have not meant for me to marry this woman, right? We're not getting along. We worked so well together when we were dating.

And we all know dating is putting the best foot forward, and marriage is letting it all hang out. I got a funny story. My cousin, he, I think he holds the record for the shortage, for shortest marriage.

[44 : 09] I think it was six hours. He, there was a, she had a health condition that she kept hidden, and her family kept hidden from him.

And when they got married, the husband, the father simply said to him, good, now you get to deal with her. And he just did not know when he found out there was some, some just, mental health issues that were far beyond his capacity to even understand.

And he just panicked and run. Right? See, the strength of a marriage is not revealed when everything is easy. The strength of a marriage is revealed when faithfulness remains despite the difficulty.

That is what Christ has done for us, the church. That is what a godly husband chooses to do for his wife. He chooses faithfulness when emotions fluctuate.

He chooses faithfulness when circumstances become difficult. He chooses faithfulness when sacrifice is required. And he chooses faithfulness because covenant love is not built upon convenience.

[45 : 25] It is built upon commitment. I'm going to tell you right now, we need to praise God that he saved us. That he's introduced us to his will and to his way of thinking.

I've got friends, family members that don't have that and there's struggles, there's uncertainty. One situation, one of my friend's wives, her health is deteriorating fast, the doctors can't figure it out and he's not happy.

He doesn't know what to do. He's a smart dude and it's actually easier for him to start flirting with women at the office. Well, I need someone to talk to. You're never there.

What are you talking about, dude? See, marriages are built upon commitment. Brothers, every day you have the opportunity to remind your wife of something glorious.

through your faithfulness she gets a glimpse of the unwavering faithfulness of Christ and that is such a privilege. To live in such a way that your marriage becomes a visible picture of the gospel itself.

[46 : 36] A husband who loves his wife like Christ loves the church chooses faithfulness over compromise. So in conclusion, let me ask you, man.

When your wife looks at your life, what does she see? Does she see responsibility or passivity? Does she see sacrifice or selfishness?

Does she see a man concerned about her holiness or merely her happiness? Does she see care and neglect? Does she see faithfulness or compromise?

Because those are the choices that will shape your marriage. And here's the thing, it's not just one choice, it's not just two choices, it's a choice we make every single day.

Every morning a husband wakes up and chooses what kind of man he will be. Now if you're anything like me, you've probably listened to this message and you feel the weight of it.

[47 : 44] I feel like a complete failure. Absolutely in every area. But here's the reality is there is not one husband in this room has done things perfectly.

Not one. Some of us have been passive when we should have led. It's easier, right? She gets her way, she's happy, some of us have been selfish when we should have sacrificed.

Some of us have neglected our wives spiritually. It's a struggle for me. I got married at 46, I've had this whole spiritual life beforehand and trying to bring my wife Danielle in, it's hard.

She's got a whole different paradigm. It's hard. Some of us has failed to care for them the way Christ cares for his church.

And the truth is for some of us we've compromised in ways we deeply regret. And if we're honest, you don't need me up here preaching you a sermon to tell you these things.

[48 : 56] you know it. The question that should be on your mind is what do we do now? As a man or a husband do I walk away discouraged?

Do I walk away defeated? Or do I walk away overwhelmed by our failures? And I'm here to tell you no, that is not the way. Because the good news of Christianity has never been that we save ourselves.

Amen? Never has been. The good news is that Jesus Christ saves sinners and that includes husbands. It includes pastors.

It includes the same Christ who died for adulterers, died for selfish husbands and the same Christ who forgave Peter forgives passive husbands.

The same Christ who restores fallen failures, restores husbands, who have fallen short. I'm here to tell you that there is forgiveness at the cross.

[50 : 01] I'm here to tell you there is grace freely offered at the cross and there is hope to be found at the foot of the cross. More than just forgiveness, there is transformation.

We can become new men through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christ who forgives us is also changing us.

He's teaching us, he's growing us, he's sanctifying us, and he's ultimately making us more like him. And that means no husband in this room is trapped by his past.

No husband is trapped by who his father was. That was my greatest fear in my life, that I would be like my dad. No husband is doomed to repeat the mistakes of yesterday.

And no husband is beyond the reach of God's grace. So this morning, the last thing I want you to do is to leave here simply determined to try harder.

[51 : 16] I want you to leave here determined to walk closer with Jesus Christ. To walk closer with Jesus Christ.

If you can grasp that, you're heading in the right direction. Because this sermon is not ultimately about becoming a better husband, it is about becoming a more faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

Amen? So like last week, the issue isn't for women to learn how to submit, the issue is for women to learn to trust God, right? Because he's good. Sarah was the example, even with the many failures that she did, she still held as an example for trusting God.

See, the closer a man walks with Christ, the more he will love his wife. The more he understands the grace of Christ, the more gracious he will become.

I'm going to tell a funny story about Gearheart. Yesterday we're golfing and someone took his golf ball. He had a great shot, some guy just come takes his golf ball.

[52 : 30] And he's like, what kind of person does that? That just takes your golf ball off the green. And the question is, I said, you know, Gearheart, golfers need grace too.

Golfers need grace too, right? Because we can be so affected by that offense, right? See, the more we experience the patient of Christ, the more patient we will become.

And the more a husband understands the sacrificial love of Christ, the more sacrificially he will love his husband. And I know the Regeers are feeling the same thing I felt last weekend.

You know what life's going ahead for them. And you're praying, you're sitting there marrying them off, and you're like, man, I hope they cling to Jesus, I hope they cling to Jesus. And it's not a hope, I'm praying, I'm putting everything in.

No amount of wisdom I can say I know is not going to make a difference. Even though they'll say, Dad, help me, I'm just, Lord, let them cling to you. You see, Jesus is not merely our example.

[53 : 32] He's our strength, our hope, and our Savior. Savior. And when a husband loves his way the way Christ loves his church, something beautiful happens. And that beauty is the world gets a glimpse of the gospel.

Because marriage was never merely about a husband and wife. Marriage has always been about Christ and his bride. That's part of the motivation to love your wife.

And every godly husband has the privilege of putting that glorious picture on display. And that means being honest about your marriage.

It's not hot. I'm a Christian. I've got to have a perfect marriage. I've got to let the neighbors show it's a perfect marriage. I can't let them know. No, no, have that discussion. Yeah, you know, I was hurt. And talk to them about what forgiveness looks like.

And let me tell you about how gracious Jesus Christ was with me. My wife, was really gracious with me. Last night, she forgave me. I lost my cool. I got angry. I was frustrated. Came home from work.

[54 : 38] I wanted things done my way. Didn't go well. I hurt my wife. Yet she really forgave me. She actually understood. Jesus Christ does the same thing.

So brothers, I encourage you in following Jesus, choose responsibility over being passive. Choose sacrifice over selfishness. Choose her holiness over mere happiness.

Choose care over neglect and choose faithfulness over compromise. And as you do, my prayer is that your marriage increasingly reflect the love of Christ for his church to the glory of God.

Let me pray for you. Dear, holy, heavenly father, you know our stories. you know the thoughts that are going on in our minds. You know our frustrations.

For some, it's a call to love someone that does not respect us. Sometimes it's because of how we have not loved our wives.

[55 : 49] That's where Christ and Paul instructs us. Why? We're to be responsible. You've got to think of Adam.

He's reminded, we're reminded all through history, even in Romans, the sin of the world that plagues us came in through him. Not his wife's sin, his sin.

The sin of being passive, irresponsible, for not protecting her, for not loving her, for not killing that serpent, that showed up in the garden. But Lord, we thank you for your abounding grace, a love which Scripture says you lavish upon us.

Not because we're great, but because you are great. Your love for us is great because you're God and you're a relational God who has chosen to love us.

Father, for those marriages that have not survived, I pray for them. I know there's struggles with children and relationships with other family members that dynamics change and it hurts.

[57 : 09] Father, I pray for those who confess their sins here. May you give them a closeness to you that perhaps they've never experienced before.

Even if the marriage tanked because of their own sin and their own selfishness, I pray that they would just submit their holy heart to you to give you absolutely everything and to trust you.

Father, I pray for these men. I pray that they want to be the warriors that you've called them to.

Father, too many men are not just passive in what they do, but even in interacting with pastoral staff.

We're here to love these men. We're here to care for them. We want to see these marriages flourish, whether they're new marriages or marriages that have seen multiple seasons.

we want those who trusted you to speak into these marriages that are just beginning, oh, Father. Wisdom that far surpasses my early 11, 12 years of marriage.

[58 : 24] We've got people who here have been married 30, 40 years. They know what covenant faithfulness is, and I know they all trust and walk with you.

So, Father, guard our hearts, guard our marriages, and give us strength as we move forward as families and as a church, as we put you on display for your glory to be seen.

In your most holy and precious name, amen.