

**Introduction:**

- Tuesday is Valentine's Day. My topic for the next few weeks is Marriage and Family.
  - Last week was fun with the kids. I hope you took notes and are implementing some of the things I suggested that you look at and design a forward course of action
- As in most churches, the topic of marriage and cultivating a marriage will conjure up all kinds of feelings inside people. Some have great marriages, others rocky, still others are divorced, remarried, and of course we have singles who are looking to be married. So how about a little humor from another pastor.
  - For all of you singles, let it be known that there is only one thing harder than living alone, and that is living with another person.
  - I.E. Someone said, "Marriage is when you agree to spend the rest of your life sleeping in a room that's too warm, beside someone who's sleeping in a room that's too cold."
- The Biblical description of marriage is paradise on earth. Let's look at some supporting scriptures.
  - *"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."* (1 Peter 3:7, ESV)
  - *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."* (Prov 18:22, ESV)
  - *"Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table."* (Psalm 128:3, ESV)
  - *"Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love."* (Proverbs 5:18-19, ESV)
- What do you remember about the anvil? The hammer? The pounding? Or that the anvil is where the metal is shaped. Men, each one of the scriptures I read begins with you. I hope you caught that. Think of all the great marriages you are aware of, I believe you will find a strong loving husband at the helm. Not always, but probably 99.9% of the time.

**I. Maintaining My Awareness of Eternity**

- A. I heard Bill Johnson say recently, in a video that Kelly and I watched, *"My holiness and endurance are based on my awareness of eternity."* Your level of holiness and endurance will shape your home, build your family and leave you a legacy. But you have to be willing to pull yourself up onto the anvil. Your holiness and endurance will shape your home.
- B. A man who is aware of eternity or the presence of God in his home will build that home according to the plan of God. How do we do that? Review:...
  1. Dt 6:4: One God. Love Him. Love others.

2. How do I maintain that awareness?
    - a) Daily devotions. Read the word, believe the promises, shape your character.
    - b) Pray. Have a prayer journal. Write your prayers. Create prayer lists. Pray the will of God into wife, children and family. Set reminders in your phone.
    - c) Write down answers to prayer.
    - d) Worship - learn song choruses that you like.
    - e) Journey with another brother.
  3. Surrender to God is a starting point if you have not done that.
- C. Fight for the right thing guys! Your marriage, and your children.

## **II. Life on the Anvil**

- A. Home is the anvil of life where learning to love and serve others is hammered out.
- B. Marriages does not cause problems it reveals problems, in two individual lives, that have not been dealt with.
  1. It pulls out selfishness and other character flaws. We can live with our own flaws just fine but not with others who point them out. We do not need a change of partners but a change in partners.
  2. If you change partners you will still be bringing the same flaws with you. You let God change you and He will change your partner.
  3. We don't realize how selfish we are until we are occupying space with another person.
    - a) Wives don't realize what kind of Godzilla they have married until they see them when the pressure is on.
    - b) IE. Baby wakes up at 2 a.m. They look at each other...aarrgh!
    - c) Or the wife says *"Honey I scratched the front fender today. If you want to see it it is in the trunk."*
- C. Marriages reveal our disillusioned expectations. Expectation on the anvil.
  1. Ie. That beautiful creature that meticulously put on make up and kept herself for you is suddenly in the shadow of the dawn full of curlers, face matted with cream, 10 year old faded pjs...he realizes he married a swamp creature.
  2. Ladies to give you some insight. IE. Your man's description of the ideal wife: Able to paint, fix car, cook, love only you, quiet, cleans the house, and hates charge cards. What he really gets...She speaks 140 words/minute with gusts unto 180. Where there is smoke she is cooking, she lets you know you have only two faults, everything you say, and everything you do. The last time she used a broom was to fly somewhere. She fights the neighbors for practice until you get home.
  3. Do you know what an anvil is? It is a thing on which something metal is hammered out.

- a) The hammer is never to hurt you it is to shape you.
- b) Guys when you feel like you are being hammered on, remember God is shaping you to the loving husband he called you to be.
- c) Loving each other well takes work! Hard work!
- 4. First, you have to heat things up really hot.
  - a) (this is not your temper, it is the intentionality of walking in love when you do not feel like it). You can get burned when things are hot.
  - b) (When it is hot that is perfect condition) Then you start hammering the metal into a specific shape. God calls this the potters wheel in scripture. He shapes us.
  - c) *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,"* (Ephesians 5:25, ESV) Men, this is what God is after in us.
- D. Ladies have disillusioned expectations too.
  - 1. They want their husbands to be providers so they never have any financial pressures. Someone who cooks, does dishes, laundry, cuddles every night. Brings their coffee in the morning.
  - 2. Some women want Jesus for a husband.
    - a) One husband said to me, "What do I do? I can't compete with Jesus.
    - b) A second husband said to me, "My wife says she done with me and is now married to Jesus." He laughed and said, "That is male bovine excrement! I live with her and Jesus would never marry a woman like that."
    - c) Ladies, I invite you to get up on the anvil and be shaped by God. It is worth it.

### **III. As For Me And My House**

- A. My house will be a safe place. A safe place is a place that:
  - 1. Shares dreams without being laughed at.
  - 2. Is honest about struggles
  - 3. Shares feelings and pain when it hurts.
  - 4. Works Through Pain. This means we will not:
    - a) Deny that pain is there.
    - b) Hide pain.
    - c) Ignore pain.
- B. The typical family does not do this well.
  - 1. When you do not process pain well as a family, you are setting your family up to numb their pain.
  - 2. People numb pain with sex, drugs, alcohol, food. Temporary pain killers that will eventually kill.
- C. Christian families must learn to process pain.

1. Acknowledge when pain is there. "My heart is hurting."
  2. Bring the pain into the open. Speak it. "Your words hurt me." "My heart was hurt when you said/did..." There has to be a safe place for this to be done. I can't fear that you will laugh, rebuke or make fun of me. If I do, I will not share.
  3. Pay attention to pain. **Pain is a sign that something is wrong.** It hurts for a reason. If your heart is hurting there is a reason.
- D. Do this together as a family. Minister to one another's hurts and needs. So much unity comes when this happens. I.e. The Lion with a thorn in his paw. The boy takes it out and they are friends forever. Parents what happens when you help those little tigers God has given you and you remove their thorn? Unity, loyalty, family.
- E. If your spirit gets crushed through life's pain and adversities, you will find yourself depressed and weakened. Rejection and loneliness will fill the void or anger and rebellion.
- F. How to walk it out.
1. Go first to God / His word. Be honest with Him. "God my heart hurts."
  2. Ask yourself, "Am I at fault in any way." If necessary seek and extend forgiveness.
  3. Be willing to take responsibility and not move into a victim mentality.
  4. If necessary talk with a mature trusted person. Ask for continued prayer for healing and comfort.
  5. 2 Cor 1:3-4 God comforts us so we can reach out to others who need comfort. Paul is telling the Corinthian you can work this into the whole group.