

Marriage Conference 3 of 3

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Date: 15 March 2025

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[0 : 00] All right. Something we didn't do off the bat, but I'm curious to know. We're going to kind of do our version of the wedding dance at weddings. How many people here have been married for less than five years? Couples. Okay. How many between 10 and six years? Marriage. Okay.

11 and 15. Okay. 16 to 20. 21 to 25 years. That's me. We're the only ones in that range. Wow. That's amazing. All right. And then 26 through 30 years. Awesome. And do we have 30 plus? Wow. We have a lot. Okay. We need to do that more. 31 to 35. We got to break that up more. 31 to 35. Years. Nobody in that range. Wow. These are all long. Longevity here. 36 to 40 years of marriage. Okay. 41 to 45 years of marriage. Okay. 46 to 50 years. Do we have any 50 plusers? Yes. That's awesome. Awesome.

It's really cool. I love seeing it in a group like this because you see the fellowship God has over the range of the generations.

And it is exactly what it's supposed to look like. People mixing in the young, the old, learning from one another, teaching one another. The young give life energy and remind the olders of what it used to be like.

[1 : 48] And the older can help steer and guide the younger and give them hope that, yep, we can reach that too. Which is awesome. I remember going to my wife's grandparents. They hit 60 years.

And I just remember telling my wife. No, I'm sorry. It was 65 years they hit. And I left. I said, yeah, I could definitely see us if the Lord of Terrors were going to be married that long.

But I just cannot imagine it will ever be 2066. And we will see. And I'm sure anyone, those of you who have been married that long, you probably thought the same kind of things.

But it just shows, again, how the Lord desires to have his fellowship span the generations for the purpose of that encouragement and love he has for us. We're going to be in a couple spots. We're going to also be back in Ruth.

So if you want to open there, we might as well start there. Just a couple more quick questions. And we have to set a very nice, clear distinction here.

[2 : 58] Just to be clear, does everybody here believe this is true? Okay. Everybody here believe we should strive to do what it says.

Okay. And everybody here also recognizes half the time we read it, we don't really realize what it's telling us most of the time. Right? Okay.

This is one of the important, why it's so important to meditate on his word. Important to be discussing his word. There's a reason why in Deuteronomy, he tells them through Moses, guys, when you get up in the morning, talk about his word.

When you get on your way for your day, be talking about his word. When you sit down, when you're working, talk about his word. When you sit down for dinner, talk about his word. The idea, right, is every time you can be talking about his word, be meditating on his word, be thinking on his word, because there's a lot of things that we read in our scriptures and go, oh, that's nice.

Yep. Amen. It's great. And then when it comes time to actually do it, we're like, he couldn't have really asked me to do that. Could he? Well, this is one of the things we're going to find here.

[4 : 10] So where we left off is Boaz has told Ruth, yes, I will go and see if I can redeem you.

But there's somebody else who has the opportunity first. And you have to imagine, I can only imagine what that was like for Ruth waiting for that to happen. Like, hold on a second.

Who is this other person exactly? But he's going to go and do the work. So again, we're going to summarize for a little bit here.

And he's going to show up at the gates. And the elders sit at the gates. And this is part of the legal proceedings that would happen in those days. Any business that had to be legally done was done

right there.

And he waits for this other redeemer, for the actual kinsman redeemer to come. And he calls him aside. Takes 10 elders of the city.

[5 : 08] Says, here, sit down. We have a business matter to do. And he presents it to him. Says, hey, you know, Naomi's back with Limelech's land. Someone needs to redeem the land. I've been asked to do it.

But you're next in line. And we've got to do this the right way. Do you want to redeem the land? And I was like, yeah. Love to do it. I get this land that's valuable.

It's finally up for sale. I can do this. Great. And Boaz, being very wise, he didn't put it all up front. He does this in the right order. Then he says, oh, and by the way, it's not just Naomi you have to redeem it from.

But Ruth, the Moabitess, and you have to raise up children for her. And that's where he goes, hold on a second. So verse 6, the close relative, sorry, chapter 4, the close relative said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance.

You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it. All right. We're going to pause there.

[6 : 17] Sorry, because we're going to start talking about the question of what happens when marriage goes wrong? What happens when things are not what they should be?

I guarantee you, because I know from experience, there's probably, except maybe our brand new marriages, maybe some still in the honeymoon phase.

Every one of you knows your marriage is not perfect. Every one of you knows there are little things in your marriage that could definitely use some work in them. You may have chosen to ignore them. You may have given up on the thought that they can never be better. You may have a slowly building time bomb in you, as we referenced earlier. So how do we handle them when they're there?

What do we do about them? You see, one of the big problems that happens when things start going wrong, and we, again, referenced earlier, we start looking at the effect it has on ourselves.

[7 : 20] What's the impact for me? Whenever I have walked with people, whether it's through marriage counseling or friends, who are going through marriages splitting up or near splitting up, and I have had the full range in my life.

I have had friends who went all the way through the divorces. I have had friends who had recovered marriages. And I've had the same thing in the marriage counseling, both ends.

Yeah. Each one of them starts thinking, I can't do this anymore. I just can't put up with that. I can't live this way anymore.

And so I don't want to make it sound as simple as, okay, stop being selfish. It's not about you. We could say that all we want, but every one of us who's been in those situations knows it's not quite that easy for us as sinful human beings to just stop being selfish.

Sometimes these complaints within a marriage are very legitimate. Sometimes a spouse can be, well, just flat out, let's say it for what it is, sinning against another spouse.

[8 : 37] Against their spouse. They can be sinning against them. You know, we invent all sorts of words to say things when we don't really mean that.

We don't want to say what is really there. And so we give them these euphemisms. And they're like code words. I can't tell you how many times, and I'm sure many of you have heard it too well, they're abusive to me.

And whenever I hear that in marriage counsel, I have to ask, okay, what do you mean they're abusive? Are they actually hitting you, striking you? Do you fear your life is actually in date?

Well, no, I don't mean that. Because if they do, we're talking a different conversation here. But when people say, well, no, you should hear the way they talk to me. They're verbally abusive.

Okay. Okay. Don't doubt that they say things they shouldn't say to you. Do we mean, and then I try and clarify, what do you actually mean? Are they someone with a bad temper that when they lose their temper, they say bad things to you?

[9 : 37] Are you talking about 24-7, they're tearing you down? Are you, what are we talking about here? Because we like to throw words around. And it's interesting how God doesn't do that. God is specific.

And in fact, one of the things that is so important, and this is the other half of my life, in one sense, I'm bivocational. I am also a chiropractor.

One very important part of my job there is diagnosing. Every time there's a problem, whether it's in the physical body or whether it's in a marriage, relationships, mental, whatever it is, you cannot possibly begin to fix it unless it has been diagnosed as to what the problem actually is.

And that becomes the major danger of throwing around these euphemisms like, oh, they're abusive. Oh, they don't this or they don't that. No, let's really break down what is going on here.

It's one of the things I actually appreciate about this kinsman redeemer who fails to redeem. He's very specific. I'll take the land. But, uh-uh, I ain't ruining my inheritance marrying a Moabitess.

[10:46] I am not having any Moabite in my line. And we can, if you actually even just, you can understand in a little bit, if you read the Old Testament and you see some of the things in there, why he might be a little gun shy if you just took a cursory reading of it without understanding the heart of what those laws were.

And this is where, again, if you have an issue that you are seeing in your marriage, most likely what you are seeing is the symptom of the real problem.

And the first thing you have to do is sit down and ask the Lord to show what is actually going on.

And it has to be approached with a heart to fix it because diagnosis without treatment is pointless.

It doesn't help anything. In fact, any of you ever know somebody who gets a diagnosis in their health and they just cling to it like it becomes their identity?

Like, oh, this is me. And it's all they talk about. It's all they ever go on. And then you actually ask them, have you tried this? No, no, no, no. Nothing will ever work for me. I'm just this. That happens in marriages.

[12:02] People cling to just that day because they might diagnose something in their own mind, but now they don't want an actual fix. Now, this becomes problematic because it's just going to send the marriage down a road of destruction.

It sends the marriage down a road of blame. It's this person's fault. If they hadn't done this, this would have never happened. I could be happy. I could do this. I could do that. Instead of wanting to actually fix it.

Fixing the problem of a marriage, by the way, is always, the answer is always more submission to Christ in your life. Why? Because every problem that shows up into marriage that's a serious problem is a sin-based issue.

Plain and simple. Call it what it is. One spouse sinning against another or perhaps two spouses sinning against each other. They both happen.

So how do we deal with sin? Let's switch over really quick. Keep your finger, though, there in Ruth to Romans chapter 7. See, this is where we get to what I was saying earlier.

[13:17] Do we believe what we read or understand what we read? We're going to start in verse 15.

Pretty famous verses. Paul says, For what I am doing I do not understand. Jesus agrees, because Jesus said, Forgive them, Father.

They don't know what they're doing. For what I will to do, that I do not practice. But what I hate, that I do.

If then I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells. For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good, I do not find.

[14:16] For the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I don't want to do, that I practice. Now, if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin who dwells in me.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, sin. And it goes on, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

All right. We're going to talk about two different groups here for a second. Now, I'm going to ask you, and this is going to be a serious moment, all right?

[15:25] This is where we're going to ask for honesty. How many of you believe your spouse is actively trying to follow the Lord?

Put your hand up if you do. Okay. All right. So, I think that was everybody. Which means we are not dealing now with someone married to an unbeliever or someone who is not following after the Lord. Because that's a different story in the Scripture. Since we're dealing with this group, Romans 7 completely applies. How many of you think Paul was telling the truth when he said, listen, I know what I want to do.

I've got my plan and I fail. Do we all think Paul's telling the truth? Any of you think you're better or your spouse is better than Paul? Okay. Good, good answer.

Very good answer. See, that's years of marriage right there. Do you understand the implications of this then?

[16:29] You know how many times I have heard, and perhaps you yourselves have heard people say, yeah, they talk like they want to change. They tell me they'll do things differently and then they fail again. I don't believe them anymore.

But didn't Paul just say, every time I plan to do right, I want to do right, I will to do right, and then I fail to do right and I do what's wrong instead? So, in other words, this is standard Christian behavior.

So, I want you all to do something for a second. I want you to look at your spouse right now. Go ahead. It's awkward. I know. You don't have to say it, but I want you to understand your spouse is that same boat.

Okay? You can stop now if you want. Your spouse is in the exact same boat. That if your spouse is truly following after the Lord, we are going to give the benefit of the doubt that they are not some sort of vindictive person who stood at the altar, said, how many years am I going to give them before I try and make their life miserable?

And we laugh, but I can't tell you how many people I've talked to that think that exact thing about their spouse, that they know it drives me nuts and they're trying to make my life miserable.

[17:47] See, if we're going to believe the scriptures, we have to understand what it says. The expectation you should go into in marriage, and all of you have already been married and are married, so the expectation you should have enter into your marriage is, I'm not expecting my spouse to be perfect.

I'm expecting that they are going to fall and fail just as miserably as I do. So what do I do about it? Well, where was the answer to this?

The answer is still right here. O miserable, wretched man that I am. What do I do with this body of death? There's no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

That the same forgiveness we have been shown, we show. By the way, that doesn't mean we don't deal with it. It doesn't mean we bury it in some dishonest way, because that's not actually loving, to let the marriage continue to be damaged by it.

You may have to address it. You may have to deal with it. But I'm going to tell you something I have learned in my marriage. My wife and I have been married for 23 years.

[19:05] And I came out of a family that, well, we have a phrase with my mom's family. That's Kervorst, because that was our maiden name.

And to be Kervorst is the kind of people who speak their mind very bluntly, very clearly. And if you take offense at it, well, that's your problem. Why are you so thin-skinned? That's Kervorst.

My wife did not come from a background like that. Now, I don't mean to sound that my parents treated us like that. I just was in my mom's family all around. I was very used to that kind of thing. It didn't bother me as much. And it was within, I think, the first year of our marriage. I can't even remember what it is anymore.

I just know it happened. I thought I should correct something. And I used a probably very Kervorst tone. And I sent her into tears for a whole day. And I, like, broke her.

[20:09] And I felt awful. And the Lord basically said, you know you can't do that with her, right? And my wife and I, through our 23 years of marriage, like many of you who have been married long enough, we have had many difficulties.

We have walked through it together. We have always said, and I praise God for this, that we have never felt we had any problems internally between us.

But we have certainly been assailed by many problems. And it has had their impact. And it has had, many times, profound impacts on our marriage.

And one of the things the Lord has shown me through the years is, no, you can't diagnose this problem and just go up to her and say, see, here's the problem. We need to fix it. Certainly can't do you need to fix it.

I can't even half the time do we need to fix it. What the Lord has shown me is the Lord has said, you come to me first. We'll talk. You pray for your wife. And I will tell you, the one thing I love about my wife so much, and why I have learned to trust her so much through the years, is she always responds to the voice of the Lord.

[21 : 27] She doesn't always respond to my voice. And there are times that I wish she would. There are times I'm like, why can't you just respond to me like I'm Christ to you? And then when I remember my track record of being right and wrong, I'm like, it's probably good she doesn't.

Because then I'd be on the line for a lot of very poor decisions that would have been made through the years. And so what the Lord does whenever I'm at a point where I'm like, I don't know what to do, God, right now.

I don't even know how to handle this. He says, well, come talk to me. And it's funny because if I have frustration towards her in it, you know what he always does? It's so not fair sometimes, but it's such a blessing.

He then says, let's talk about you. Let's talk about what you've done. How did you handle that? What did you do? I'm like, great, Lord, you're right. And by the time I'm 10 minutes in the prayer, I'm just repenting left and right.

Like, oh my gosh, I'm just lucky she hasn't left me yet, Lord. Like, seriously, I'm not kidding. Like, that's the kind of conviction he'll put on me for it. And then you know what happens every time when I get home?

[22 : 33] The Lord's spoken to her. He just, it works. That the Lord says, do you trust your spouse to me?

Because she's trusted herself to me. That same sanctification I am working in you that all of you know so well personally from the inside out.

You know how patient the Lord is. You know the times he's taken six months, a year, two years to work something in you to bring it to fruition. And we fail to realize he does the same thing with our spouses.

And to patiently wait, putting our hope and expectation not on our spouse, but on him. On him. That's actually one thing. Jared has always stuck with me from conversations we had maybe 10 years ago, whatever, about expectation. What do we put our expectation on? And so the only expectation we can have is Christ in whom we look to our salvation for.

[23 : 40] He is the one who sanctifies. He is the one who turns us into what he wants. He's the one whom we'll stand before. As Jared pointed out at the end last time, and yes, you completely stole my thunder on it.

But that's okay. We share all things alike. So when we see that bride or that husband of ours standing glorified, the presence of God, I think about how many people in the church are going to know in that moment the sorrow of saying, I gave up on that.

I walked away from that. I said, I can't do this anymore. Why? So I could be happy. I think those are just a small part of the tears that need to be wiped away, I think.

Because as we know, as we're known, we are going to realize a whole lot of things. And God is going to wipe them away, at least.

I mean, that's his glory. That's his wonderful nature of love. He's going to say, yep, but that's okay. That's past now. All old things have passed away, and behold, I make all things new.

[25 : 01] And that, first and foremost, is what we have to realize when a marriage has trouble. God's heart and God's work throughout the history of humanity, and each one of you can testify it in your life, is a work of redemption.

It is a work of making all things new. Passing away the old things, the old man, the old woman, the flesh, and year by year, slowly sanctifying us.

See, this kinsman redeemer couldn't see that. He couldn't see the value in Ruth. It didn't matter about her reputation. All he could think about was his.

If I take on this Moabitess, what are they going to say of me? We can do the same things in our marriages. If I put up with this, what are my friends going to think?

If I don't deal with this, what's everybody going to say? Men, sometimes we might think they're going to think my house isn't in order. These things could cost me if they're not right, and so everything stays hidden, and everything stays deep, and it's easier to just push it off and not deal with it.

[26 : 13] But that's not what Boaz sees, right? Boaz sees Ruth, for the wonderful, godly woman she is, and he purchases her.

And here's one of the things that, this is where I really want to go with it, because it's such a beautiful thing. So let's skip over to verse 13 of chapter 4 in Ruth.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went into her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom and became a nurse to him.

Also, the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

So, now I know the original kinsman redeemer would have been long dead and gone, But could you imagine him standing there, realizing if he knew who David was going to be?

[27 : 50] Wonder, casting away Ruth because it would ruin his inheritance and his lineage? Nope, not at all.

See, this is part of God's redeeming work. God takes things that are broken and makes them beautiful. The book of Ruth is a picture of God's love and how it works, and then how God works through those who allow his love to come through them.

You have a woman, a family that has not followed the Lord, that has not prioritized the Lord in any way, shape, or form, leaving and losing everything.

The woman literally changes her name to Mara, because the Lord has taken everything from me and dealt bitterly with me.

But because of one godly Moabitess, the Lord leaves Naomi a blessing. And then because of Ruth's faithfulness, Boaz is moved in love to bless Ruth.

[29 : 06] And because Boaz blesses Ruth, and he goes and he marries her, God then blesses them through conception. And that conception and son Obed then blesses Naomi.

And it's a great big circle of blessing, which could have been a massive circle of destruction. What would have happened if Ruth had said, all right, Naomi, fine, I'll go home.

Think about that. And God would just two generations removed give Israel a king after his own heart.

When we think about this, okay, so could you imagine your Bible without the Psalms? Could you imagine all of we know without David?

The plan of redemption? No, like David's in that line, which means Ruth is in the line of the Savior. You're in Moabitess. You see, and that's why we tell people, never, ever, ever give up on your marriage.

[30 : 25] Because if we walk forward in love, then we see God's redemption happen. And he delights in bringing redemption out of nowhere.

It's his joy. Which is all good. But what happens when someone turns and says, yeah, but I don't, I can't feel love for this person anymore.

I feel like it's just so broken. I can't go back. So that I usually answer, that's good because God's not asking you to go back. God's asking you to go forward.

Do you, so God doesn't want you to go back to what you had because that was broken. You don't have to go back to that. God's asking you to take the steps to move forward to a redeemed marriage.

And how do we do that though? Because it's nice to say, okay, that's great in theory. You laid down a foundation that sounds beautiful. It sounds poetic. Comes out of the Bible, all of that.

[31 : 26] But what am I supposed to do? Like tonight or wherever it is. Well, we take a step of obedience. And you trust God to bring forth the fruit.

See, it's interesting thing about serving God. It's always one step at a time, isn't it? Have any of you ever known God to give you a five-year plan?

He tends not to do that thing. And whenever he actually did give us the five-year plan, we always think it's going to happen in five days instead of five years.

So it's just one of those strange things with the Lord. He just tells us what to do in the moment. And as we find ourselves walking step by step in obedience, we have trouble.

I'm sorry, we don't have trouble. We have, when we walk step by step in obedience, we find faithfulness, peace, and joy. See, because the one other thing that I want to point out to you before we use one of an example, one more example, is how many of you here say, I have entered the service of the Lord?

[32 : 41] Not just saved, but I've given my life to serving him. How many people believe they've done that? Okay. If you have not, I would highly say, highly, highly recommend you do, because there really isn't much of a Christian walk without that.

To be in the Christian walk is to serve him. Now that doesn't mean full-time ministry. That literally just means you wake up in the morning and say, Lord, what would you have me do today? And you see every opportunity that comes your way as an opportunity of service for him.

Again, when we don't do that, we've got this problem. Then who are you living for? If you're not living for him, who are you living for? We're simply living for self then.

Now I know there are people who say, no, I'm not. I'm living for my kids. I'm living for my grandkids. I'm living for this. I'm living for that. No, it's still all self because it's the fulfillment you gain for yourself in this.

It's why women who live for their children, mothers who live for their children, they have such sorrow when their children no longer live for them.

[33 : 48] And why it's so hard to get back. If we were truly living for another, you'd take joy in them going off. You'd take joy in them fulfilling it. But there's always when we're not serving the Lord, then you are ultimately serving a master, if you will, that is flawed.

And is going to lead to flawed issues. And so realize when you serve the Lord, what he actually does then is essentially send you out on assignment each day.

All right. I've got this for you to do this for you to do this for you do. And the first person that he gives you to in service is your spouse. They're your person you wake up next to.

They're the person you're with all day long. And so realize when you serve your spouse, you are not serving your spouse. You are doing it unto Christ.

And it's amazing if you can get that through your head, how much it changes how you see everything. Oh, so it really doesn't matter how they respond to my service to them.

[34 : 52] It's how Christ responds to my service. They may not do exactly what I thought they were going to do. They may not appreciate it as much as I thought they should appreciate it, but that's not why we did it anyway.

We did it for Christ. And we do those step-by-step services and obedience in love for him. And now it doesn't have to do with marriage, though.

It centers a little bit around a couple guys who had major marriage problems. I'm going to give you an example of something that went wrong step-by-step because people failed to be obedient.

And I'm going to use this, though, because I want you to see how God begins a redemption process when one starts becoming obedient. In the book of 2 Samuel, David is king.

And a friend of his, the king of Ammon, dies. And his son takes the throne. And David says to himself, you know, I think I want to send comfort to my friend's son because this king of Ammon helped David when he was in the wilderness.

[36 : 06] And so he wants to repay a kindness with a kindness. And so he sends a group of guys to bring comfort and condolences and all of that. Well, the king of Ammon, the new king of Ammon, this man, his counselors say, oh, look what David's done.

He has sent out his spies to see the weakness of the land because he wants to take over. A lie is told. And the king has to choose.

What am I going to do with these guys and his choices? We're going to shave off their beards and we're going to cut their robes off so their butts are exposed in the back and send them home. We're going to shame them.

And David hears what happens, tells them, listen, guys, don't come home. Grow out your beards, fix your clothes. And then you can come home. And then David says, this means war. What started as being meant for a blessing, misinterpreted, becomes war. And as this war rages on through multiple battles, there's a certain battle going on in a city that David stays home from. [37 : 15] And you know where this is going. As David is walking on his roof one night, he sees Bathsheba bathing. And he commits adultery.

And as this battle is going on to cover it up, Uriah happens to be at this battle. And he tells Joab, go have Uriah sent to the front.

And when the fighting is hottest, have everybody retreat, but not him. And so Uriah dies. Bathsheba is taken as his wife.

The adultery is covered up, as far as David knows, but of course it isn't. The effects of this adultery would be the death of the child Bathsheba is pregnant with.

It would then also be the death of his son Amnon through the hand of Absalom. Absalom's exile, Absalom's return, betrayal, and overthrowing David, and Absalom's death.

[38 : 20] All of this comes out of one decision that was made by the king of Ammon. It started a whole bad cycle. And of course, who is the most famous son of David and Bathsheba?

Solomon. So when David has died and Solomon is in charge, guess what happens? The king of Tyre sends emissaries because he was friends with David.

And he wants to comfort Solomon. Solomon has a choice. It's quite ironic, isn't it? To get to the point where Solomon is king, the mess of Amnon not being king and Absalom not being king because they're dead from all this sin that all started with the rejection of an emissary comes back to Solomon.

And Solomon makes the right choice. And he accepts the friendship of Hiram. And out of that friendship, the temple is built and the place of worship.

The heart that David had to so badly build that temple, but he wasn't allowed to because he had blood on his hands. His son gets to build through a very similar thing.

[39 : 34] And how did that right process start? By one right decision. Solomon made a right choice and it brought an end to this decision made decades ago that led to nothing but bloodshed and destruction.

Now, you might sit there and go, okay, I guess I see a connection. I'm not sure. Because this has nothing to do with marriage. But I guarantee you, all of you can probably at least think back to one thing in your marriage.

One decision made by you or your spouse that has had profound impacts negatively in a marriage that maybe has never been dealt with. How do we start to fix it?

How do we start to put it right? By doing the right thing. If it needs to be dealt with, you deal with it. And that's, by the way, I set this all up with Romans 7.

So now, if you happen to be a spouse who has been wronged by one of those decisions, you can understand they're not perfect.

[40 : 42] They don't, they didn't desire to hurt me. Doesn't change the fact that hurt was done. But that's why grace and forgiveness is there. So that God can redeem and make it better.

We are going to be closing tonight with communion. And this communion is not going to be done necessarily as a whole group. We're going to ask you to do it as couples.

And so what we're going to do is when we get these set up and uncovered, we're going to ask you guys to come up and just take your communion and go back to your seats. Pray together.

Take communion together. But just as we're encouraged in 1 Corinthians, examine your marriage first. Where it says examine yourselves.

If you judge yourself, you would not be judged. If there's anything you feel needs to be dealt with, that needs to be repented of, that needs to be forgiven, this is the time to do it.

[41 : 44] And then you partake together in remembrance of the price that was paid so you could be forgiven. You put your marriage before the Lord and ask Him to put it on the right steps.

If you are not in that boat and you're like, no, I can't think of anything like that, then praise the Lord. That's wonderful. Then just partake joyfully together of that sacrifice, the remembrance of that sacrifice that was made that you could be whole.

That your, or even more gratefully, your spouse could be whole. That your spouse could be redeemed. And give thanks to the Lord together. And then we'll have a little bit of time with some

worship music playing.

And we'll just close up then. All right. Let's pray now though. Lord, as we get ready to take this communion, we ask that you would be shining a light in our hearts.

Lord, I would pray that nobody here has anything to deal with. That there has been such grace in their marriage and such love that this would just be a time of celebration for everyone.

[42 : 51] But Lord, if there are things that are hidden and buried, that you bring them to light, that forgiveness may happen and repentance may happen. Lord, and we trust and know that you do work to make all things whole.

That there is no damage ever done that is beyond your hope. And so Lord, even when we think ahead to the damage we will do with the stupid things we say, all the, I didn't want to do that, but I did stuff, Lord.

You have already paid the price for it. We praise you. We thank you. We just, we have joy in our hearts that your heart towards us is love.

That you don't desire to see any of us punished, any of us suffering, any of us in pain. You take no pleasure in any of those things, Lord, but you only take pleasure in our sanctification and in our redemption.

In Jesus' name, Amen.