

# Marriage: Ideal or Idol?

Ps. Santosh James

[www.gracetabernaclehyd.org](http://www.gracetabernaclehyd.org)

*Father, this morning we just want to thank You for taking such good care of us in the midst of all that has been happening. We just want to thank You for Your faithfulness! I pray, Father, that You would reach out and touch Your people, each one of Your children at their point of need as You did 2000 years ago when You walked on earth, You met each one at their point of need. Touch Your people, Lord. I commit the little ones as they go for Sunday school and the teachers. We continue to pray and proclaim over all our children that all our children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be their peace. I pray, Father, Your Spirit will truly, truly cover us, for Your Word says where the Spirit is the Lord, there is liberty. I commit this time into Your hand, let the Spirit of liberty be experienced by everyone – young and old, because You said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free,” and Your Word is truth. You said, “Sanctify them by Your truth and Your Word is the truth.” Sanctify us, set us apart for You and You alone. Let no one go back the way they came; they go back little more changed, little more separated unto You, made stronger in You. O Father, we just want to thank You, thank You, Lord, thank You, Father! In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!*

Last Sunday we looked at marriage—I think the title was from Shakespeare, “To marry or not to marry is the question,” and this Sunday we will continue where we stopped and the title would be “*Marriage: Ideal or Idol?*” There were two subjects when Jesus taught His disciples or the crowds – one was about marriage and the other was about money. When He taught about marriage, the disciples threw up their hands and said, “It is then better not to get married,” when He taught about money, then they said, “Then who can be saved?” Two things all the young people are interested in: marriage and money. What was the disciples’ reaction? “Better not to get married” and “Who can be saved?” Don’t look so glum, Jesus is the way to get married and to keep your money. We will look at three verses first, and I will give you a brief recap of what we looked at last Sunday because it’s the continuation. 3 verses you need to keep in your mind - why marriage is such a serious topic for God.

## **Genesis 2:18**

***<sup>18</sup> And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; Who said? God said. I will make him a helper comparable to him.”***

Keep that in your mind, God said that He will make a helper comparable to man. First man was Adam. Second,

## **Genesis 2:24**

***<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.***  
And the most important one – that is what makes marriage important.

## **Ephesians 5:31-32**

***<sup>31</sup> “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***

That’s why I said, marriage is the most attacked institution on earth because it’s more than two people coming and exchanging vows; it is about Christ and His Church.

What is the first verse we read? ***“I will make him a helper comparable to him.”*** So, keep that with this. God is preparing a Church comparable to Christ. So whether you want to remain single or whether you want to get married, it doesn’t matter – He is preparing a bride that is comparable to Christ for all eternity. Christ will rule the nations all eternity, He wants a bride who will help Him in reigning. That’s why the Bible says, “Christ will reign with the saints.” So, it doesn’t matter whether you want to be single or you are married, it’s bigger than you, it’s bigger than the institution as we see on earth, marriage is much-much bigger than what you think. So whether you want to get married, or you are married, or single, God is preparing you for something. Keep those three verses in mind and in context.

We also saw whenever Jesus was asked especially about marriage, He always said, “It was not so in the beginning.” That’s why we need to go to the beginning to understand what was God’s intent behind marriage, because if we go the beginning, that’s the way it will be all of eternity because our marriage on earth will cease unto death and a new marriage begins in heaven which is eternal.

So, let's go to the beginning and we will see those five premises we got from the first statements in *Genesis 2*.

**<sup>18</sup> And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."**

So the first premise we had was, marriage is not man's idea; it is God's, so man cannot change the definition of marriage because it is not your idea, copyright belongs to God, you cannot tamper with it.

Second premise is verse 20 – **"...But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him."**

It talks about what we call compatibility. That is why you should not enter into marriage suddenly, pray over it, let God make the right moves, let God bring the person who is compatible to you. Adam had the whole of creation before him, all the animals and I believe the animals could talk like we see in Narnia because the snake talked and they were not surprised and I believe there could be a restoration in the millennium age where the boy will walk with the lion and the snake and lead them all, maybe there could be the restoration to pre-fall. They may not have our kind of senses and brains but they may become something like that. So, Adam looked at all—you see, there is no woman, there is only one man and all of creation, I mean all of the creatures and probably they all speak and even the snake walked because it's after the curse it is cursed to go on the belly. So, when you don't have a choice which you have never seen, Adam could have picked any animal to be his wife because he has never seen a woman. After you see a woman, you don't want to marry an animal, that's a different thing because you have seen something which is more like you. So you have to see where Adam is coming from. God brought all the animals and Adam saw there was nothing comparable for him. So there is something God puts in marriage, there has to be compatibility. That's why He makes this statement, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers because it's not compatible."

### **Genesis 2:21**

**<sup>21</sup> And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.**

So what does it say? God formed Eve out of Adam for Adam. The premise is, marriage is God's responsibility, not yours. If you are a child of God and you have surrendered your life, you can wait, God will bring that person to you – we are talking about surrender. Don't panic, Isaac didn't panic, he was forty years old, he waited and God brought the right girl to his life.

Verse 22:

**<sup>22</sup> Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.**

Meaning, it is God's initiative. If marriage is God's responsibility, then it is God's initiative. He brought the girl to him. And in verse 24, He establishes the terms of relationship.

**<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

Man shall leave; cleave; and become one. It's Psalm 45 which talks about the girl leaving. So we accept in almost every culture. You see, in every culture it is accepted that the woman will leave and always the problem in marriage is the man not leaving. It is accepted the girl leaves; she goes but the problem is man not leaving. So the command is given to the man to leave, it's not a joint family.

And I told on last Sunday, all these things matter only to those in whose life lordship is established. Beginning of salvation is the beginning of lordship in our lives. You know the issue in Genesis – the fall of man – how the enemy was subtle that he took the term 'Lord God' out and he just mentioned 'God.' Yesterday I was telling the pastors too, most of our problems in life is with the lordship of God. There are two things we need in life: one – established lordship; second – it doesn't matter where you are, whether you are believer in Afghanistan – terrible times – or in US, or in India, the only thing you need in your trouble is to hear from God. Trouble over, you know your solution. And why do people not hear? Because the lordship is not established, God doesn't waste His words. He will not speak to somebody who doesn't accept His lordship, but if lordship is established, He immediately speaks.

Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus had this incredible vision of Jesus: "Who are You, Lord? What do you want me to do, Lord?" "It will be told to you, go to the city." He goes to the city, three days fasting, fourth day he receives his entire life's program. Why did He speak to him so early and so fast? It is because in Saul's life, in three days the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ was established. After that you look at the entire record of apostle Paul, there is never a question about lordship and God is able to speak to him so clearly – things which we know today for 2000 years and things which no man knows today, God spoke both to that man because the lordship was established and you know what, you establish lordship, He speaks; and if He speaks there no problem. And that is the life of God's people! Elijah stands before the most wicked king and looks him in the eye and says, "Until the Word of Lord comes from my mouth, no dew no rain," and immediately he hears, "Turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith," and he hides in Cherith. And the king has sent his army, his soldiers to every town, every city, every village, nobody can find him, God raises the stakes up. And God says, "Now you get up, I will feed you with ravens." He fed him may be six

months or one year, we do not know. “You go to Zarephath, right under the nose of Jezebel’s father who is the king of Sidon, stay right there and I will take care of you. They won’t touch you; they won’t see you; they will see you when I want you to see them.” And after three and half years, He told him, “Go, present yourself to Ahab and tell him, ‘Meet me on Mount Carmel.’” You know why they couldn’t touch him? It is because he heard. You know why he heard? It is because the lordship was established. The pattern has never changed. And we think our struggles are with all the other things; our struggles are not with anything, it’s only two things: one – is lordship established? If lordship is established, you will hear and once you hear, there is peace. So, that is the first question to be settled in life. If the first question is settled, the lordship of Jesus Christ is settled, you can answer the second question: to marry or not to marry, and who to marry.

So, we are talking about Kingdom-marriage here. Like I said, I do not have the right to lower the bar because I didn’t set it, I didn’t set the bar; the bar of marriage was set by God, no man has the authority to lower it. Supreme courts can rule and legalize same-sex marriage; in the eyes of God, it is still an abomination and always will be an abomination! Nobody can change because it did not originate with man. Therefore, man cannot change it. Keep that in mind!

When we are talking about Kingdom-marriage, this is what we saw in Isaiah 8 and verse 18, last week. This is what God said:

### **Isaiah 8:18**

***<sup>18</sup>“Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the Lord of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.”***

In that ‘I’ is the prophet and his wife – they are one. “... Shall leave, shall cleave, they shall become one...” So they don’t see themselves as two, they see themselves as one. See, God will speak only as He sees. You go through the Bible, almost every place He speaks with a man, one of the rare cases is when He speaks to Manoah’s wife. He spoke to Adam; He spoke to Noah; He spoke to Abraham; He spoke to Isaac; He spoke to Jacob; that’s how He speaks because He says, “This is how I see, you two are one, not two.” “I am not going to obey until I also hear!” God says it’s not going to happen. After He spoke to Mary about the immaculate conception, He never spoke to her again, after that He only spoke to Joseph. Because in this case Joseph is not involved, it is a supernatural act of God with Mary alone according to the promise – ‘*the virgin shall give birth,*’ He spoke to her but after she has received it, He speaks to her husband what to do. So, sisters, don’t try to change God’s order, you will have trouble but if your husband is an unbelieving man—it has happened—he wants to stay, stay, but God will speak to you and how you speak to your husband, be very careful how you put it across. Learn from Scripture because there is power.

So, Isaiah says, ***“Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel...”*** That’s what God expects a marriage to be – A sign and a wonder!”

So, now we have established the premise, and I believe at least some of you are surrendered. We can go from there. Ask God for a clear guidance.

This is David’s prayer, can be anybody’s prayer.

### **Psalms 25:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup>Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. <sup>5</sup>Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.***

Specific topic today on marriage – all those who are unmarried, waiting, make this your prayer, “Lord, show me Your ways, teach me the path I should take. Lord, lead me in Your truth about the spouse You are going to bring, so that when I see, I will know. I don’t have eyes to see correctly, only You can show me who it is. Teach me, Lord, for You are the God of my salvation.” What does the Bible say? ***“The husband is the savior of his wife.”*** You are the God of my salvation; how can I save somebody which You haven’t picked for me? How can I save somebody whom we do know whom to marry? You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.

If you can wait one day, you can wait one week; if you can wait one week, you can wait one month; if you learn to wait, you can wait for years, like Isaac, you can wait. Isaac’s entire life is about waiting forty years for marriage; twenty years for a child. He is a man who learned to wait on the Lord, never stepped God’s boundaries, he learned to wait. So, if you look at that man, he never fought a battle, his enemies came and made peace with him, never left the Promise Land—his father went out to Egypt, stayed in Haran, went out to Egypt, came back; his son would go and live in Haran and then go die in Egypt, but Isaac was born in the Promise Land, lived in the Promise Land, died and buried in the Promise Land, never steps out. And what do you know about his life? He always waited for God to move, never took a decision on his own, he waited on God. And God says, “I wait all the day long.”

**Psalm 139:16-17**

**<sup>16</sup> *Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.***

To all those who are pro-choice women here, and who believed the fetus in your womb – you call it fetus, God says, “My child,” you can call whatever you want, truth doesn’t change; it is not a fetus, it is a baby. **“Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.”** It was not formed: limbs were not formed, eyes were not formed, organs were not formed, maybe no heartbeat also could be detected because that’s the whole fight in US – six weeks, just a day old, and when the womb of Mary has just been touched and He is called the Holy One of Israel. Just touched!

***And in Your book they all were written,***

What does it say? Even before My mother knew I was conceived, My entire days were already written in Your book.

In that volume of Your book where every page of my life is written, isn’t there it is written who you will marry? It is written. God says, “I have already written it, and when you go outside of My will and marry somebody else, I tear that page and I have to insert another page because you didn’t hear My voice.”

***The days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.***

There were no days, but already all the days were fashioned.

**<sup>17</sup> *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!***

He says that it’s mindboggling! I am not able to think that every day of my life has already been fashioned. You already have decided about everything about me. So, what is our job, what is our life? Life is discovering. Your life should be a discovery channel, every day you are discovering the will of God, what was written, you are living it out. That is Jesus’ life. That’s why confidence of Jesus on earth – “Father, I know You always hear Me, but for their sake I am saying this.” He knew His days, it was already written and when He came, His statement was that, “In the volume of the book, it is written about Me, behold I have come to do Your will; not My will.” Therefore, every day was played out, and it’s true for every child of God. And that’s what I said, if you are surrendered, you don’t have to waste your time worrying about almost everything in life, it’s already been decided by God, just discover it, and things parents, girls and boys worry most about is marriage; it has been already decided by God. Would you only just discover it? I am not saying you don’t have to fight the fight of faith for it, that’s a different battle because there is an enemy who opposes all the plans of God for you and the first thing he uses is the man called Terah – the spirit of delay, spirit of procrastination.

Remember yesterday’s message, Terah means delay and if you delay, you end up living in Haran and Haran is a dry and a parched place spiritually. You never hear from God but you prosper. In Haran he acquired slaves, maid servants and male servants, flocks and herds and everything, but one thing it is not there in Haran – he never heard from God. So, don’t look at your prosperity, don’t look at your wealth, don’t look at how well you are doing career wise, it is irrelevant. The question is, are you hearing or not? If you are not hearing, your soul is dry, you are living in Haran, a parched place and Haran can never be Canaan and God will not speak to you in Haran because the spirit of delay has to die and where Terah dies, he moves, God appears. It’s not that Abraham cried out to God and God spoke to him. No, God appeared to him before he opened his mouth and spoke to him and gave him His promises. He builds his first altar and he worships God. There are no altars in Haran; there are only money bags. And the Bible says that he moved into the Promise Land with all the wealth he acquired in Haran and then famine struck.

When famine struck, he ran to Egypt. Why did he run to Egypt? Because his soul was dry; because he had wasted his time in Haran, he was so late to enter Canaan, when the problem came, he did not know how to handle it, and so many people when they actually come in, start walking by faith, hit by calamity, they don’t know what to do because they have wasted their time in Haran preparing themselves to fight this battle. So they run into Egypt and goof-up over there because that’s all they know. Why did they run into Egypt? Because Egypt is like Haran. Another dry place – they sell their integrity, wife is taken, living in the Pharaoh’s place, you are acquiring more goods now. Understand what delays do to us. Lot of people are still delaying—not that you are not saved, but making those commitments after salvation, still delaying and the Bible says “When the day of evil comes – stand,” and they are not able to stand. Abraham was not able to stand, he ran and he sold out his wife, basically it means he sold his integrity, took the easy way out. That’s the way of the flesh. You know why? Because his soul was dry. So learn all these lessons.

Here we have fantastic lesson, every day has been planned out by God: “All my days were written...” How many days did I miss in Your calendar, Lord? I told my pastors, yesterday, 1988 was the year when God called me; 1994 was the year when I obeyed. Seven years of waste! All the other years I don’t look like that, but these seven years I believe was the worst period in my life because I wasted those years after I heard the call of God. I had my dreams like any

one of you: career, money, marriage, prosperity, and I really made my money. When you are 23 years old, you get a job which gives you in those days 5000 plus salary with accommodation and quarters, you made your money and I came to Hyderabad to study with the bank balance full of money. We always talk—I tell Pastor Vijay, at that time when I went to OM to buy books, that was a wasteland, I should have bought an acre of land and could have sold it for 25 crores now, and I had the money to buy – young man, bachelor, coming to do his PhD, with lots of money because I was the same way then, never spent money, saved money. I had my dreams, I had my plans, but you know what, God had to break me, humble me. Second time He called me, I said, “Here I am,” and here I am! It is because the callings and the gifts of God are irrevocable. Thank God, it’s irrevocable, otherwise I wouldn’t be here.

Third thing you need to remember is—we saw the last Sunday—wait, don’t move either way. In Corinthians 7, Paul says, “Stay in the state you were called,” if you are single, stay; if you are married, stay, don’t move either way. Hear from God before you move. Don’t move until God has given you instructions because He said that He will go before us, He will show us the way, He will make our crooked paths straight. See, when it comes to waiting, we are all like children. Have you taken children on a long trip, especially by train? After some time, they sound like the wheels of the train: “When will we reach? When will we reach?” and we are like: “When will I marry? When will I marry?” “Shut up!” God says. “Lord, why is it so delayed?” “Because she is still unformed. I am getting her ready. You don’t want her the way she is now. Wait!” or the other way, “Because he is still unformed.” All the problem many of you are facing is because you married before your time, unformed spouses.

Fourth thing to understand in a marriage, whether you are single or whether you are married, these fundamental principles matter.

### **Genesis 2:18**

**<sup>18</sup> And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”**

What does it mean? Fundamental premise of marriage: it is for fellowship. Whether you are single or whether you are married, fellowship is primary. So, Elijah cut and ran when Jezebel threatened him, he once was suicidal, God woke him up, fed him, walks forty days to Mount Horeb, and God’s solution? “Go down, there is a man called Shaphat, he has got a young son called Elisha; anoint him, he will be with you.” What is your answer for depression? Elijah-Elisha: company, fellowship! You need somebody to mentor, fellowship with. And after that you don’t see him suicidal. Whether you are single or whether you are married, the purpose of creation is fellowship. So Paul will say, “My beloved son Timothy..., my beloved son Titus...” he couldn’t fellowship with Barnabas after some time because Barnabas, though he started much early, he was a slow runner; while Paul in his spiritual walk doesn’t walk, he spiritually runs. After some time, he realizes that he can’t go with this man, he is too slow, I need somebody of my caliber to fellowship with. And old man Paul will look at Timothy and say, “Timothy, you are too slow, fan! Fan!” but he had a Timothy, he had Titus, he had people and he was single. Elijah had Elisha. When Jesus sent His disciples, He sent them two by two.

So understand, whether you are single or whether you are married, God’s purpose of man and creation is fellowship. Fellowship is important; in marriage it is very important. That’s why God says, “Do not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever.” How will you really fellowship with them? While you are planning to get baptized, your unbelieving spouse is immersing his idol: you are also going into water; I am also going into water. How do you fellowship? How do you reconcile these two things? And when the children are born, how do you reconcile? The child goes to the church, the child goes to the temple – how do you reconcile these things? Cause it’s a question of fellowship. God says over there, “What fellowship... what communion?” He doesn’t say you cannot have children, of course you can have children; He doesn’t say that you cannot have job if you marry an unbeliever, of course you can; you cannot buy a house, of course you can; you cannot have a prosperous life, of course you can; that’s not the question, you cannot have fellowship, you cannot have communion and that’s the primary purpose of marriage. You cannot fellowship, you will have to compromise. All the things that excite you or your relation with God – deaf ear, not interested. Not only that, after some time becomes hostile: I don’t want that in my house. Understand that! For young people also who are unmarried, you will come to that later when you choose your friends with whom you walk— “*Birds of the same feather flock together*”— that’s why all your hair look the same. Show me your friends, I will tell you who you are—it’s got to do with fellowship—not in church, take me to your office or your school and show me your best friend, I will tell you exactly who you are. Here, everybody is sanctified. If you accept a lower standard other than of God, you will miss out on God’s best. See, God always has something called the best for you, you can choose something lower, it’s up to you.

### **Isaiah 1:19**

**<sup>19</sup>“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land”**

NIV says, **“The best of the land...”**

If you are willing and obedient in your marriage; waiting and willing and obedient, you will have the best of the land. Honestly, if Isaac had not goofed-up being a carnivorous animal towards his old age, he wouldn't have messed up his marriage. He would have had very peaceful, lovely marriage. Abraham had trouble in his marriage; Jacob had only trouble in his marriage; Isaac had a very peaceful marriage, he goofed-up because his belly started taking over the brains, otherwise it would have been a very peaceful, happy marriage. You know why? It is because he waited. And when it comes to marriage, if you look into his marriage life till the goof up happened, he ate the best of the land – peaceful, very peaceful, and he was like his name: ‘Laughter.’

Then we saw the general guidance and the specific guidance, and what was that I told you last Sunday? If you are not willing to listen to the general guidance, God is not going to speak to you the specific. What is the general guidance? “Do not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever.” That’s a simple, general guidance. If you are not willing to listen to that, don’t go and ask, “Lord, which one?” “Anyone,” God says.

So now we go into specifics today.

### **Romans 1:17**

**<sup>17</sup> For in it (the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”**

Mark that word: **“The just shall live by faith.”** If you live by faith and you are living by faith, you are a young person living by faith, somewhere along that living, you will get married, can you get married not by faith? No, your marriage has to be by faith because it’s a part of your life. You are called to live by faith, so your marriage has to be by faith and faith comes from hearing, hearing from the Word of God. God will speak to you. So, if you are going to put marriage which is there, one of those biggest priorities in a person’s life to marry or not to marry, and if it is ‘yes’ to marry, then whom to marry—go to the next verse and you will understand.

### **Romans 14:23**

**<sup>23</sup> But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.**

God takes the most common, normal thing about life – eating – you don’t even think twice about it. How many of you have prayed about eating? To eat or not? I had breakfast in the morning, Lord told me “No lunch for you,” straight away He told me “No lunch for you.” Did you ask God about it? Because God says, “When you eat, if you do not eat by faith, you are condemned.” It’s a simple, most normal activity of life where you bring faith into it because God says, “Whatever is not of faith is sin.” That is for a believer, not the law. So, if you have to bring faith to eating, can you get married without faith? It is the second most important decision you will ever take in your life. We are getting into specifics if you are surrendered marriage has to be a marriage of faith. So, faith has to touch your stomach everyday – what to eat and what not eat, when to eat and when not to eat. Why? Because we have given our body as living sacrifice unto God, you have to hear from God, because sometimes God will say, “I need your stomach, I need you to fast today because I am planning something else for you to pray through today.” “Lord, it’s my stomach. And it smells good.” He says, “No.” Just like the money that you put into the offering bag is no longer yours, the body that you put in the altar is no longer yours. He tells us what to eat and what not to eat.

That’s what I said about lordship, and He is not a mean Master; He is a loving Father, and everything He demands from us I will tell you as Jesus said, “Whatever you gave up for Me, you will receive hundred times over in the age to come.” Nobody will stand in eternity and say, “I gave up and I lost.” You will say, “Wow, if only I had known, I would have given up more.” And this was only for 80 years, 90 years... that is forever and ever. Understand!

### **Psalms 37:5**

**<sup>5</sup>Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.**

Two words are there: commit is an act; trust is an attitude. And what happens? God will bring it to pass. Commit your future, marriage—we are talking specifically about marriage, you can commit anything and everything into God’s hand, absolutely safe. Let me give you an example Derek Prince uses: this is what he says, “What does it mean to commit? You go to the bank; you open an account and you put ten thousand rupees. You committed your money

into their hands. When you leave the bank, you are not worried whether they will steal your money, you trust the bank.”

That’s what you commit your way to the Lord! You have committed it, trust Him. And most people trust their banks more than their God. They trust what the government says more than what Christ has said.

***“Commit your way to the Lord,***

***Trust also in Him,***

***And He shall bring it to pass.”***

He will! He will bring it to pass! He will do it, trust Him!

Whatever state you are in, by the mercies of God, our Church is special – we have single people, we have married people, divorced people, orphans, widows and widowers. We have all kinds of people. So it doesn’t matter what you are, God says,

**Romans 12:1**

***<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.***

We know this verse very well, now let us go to

**1 Thessalonians 5:23**

***<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

God is very smart, okay, please understand this. We always think that God doesn’t have brains. The way we pray shows that we think God needs to hear us over and over again about a matter, we think He might have a hearing problem, sometimes we think that He is so simple that he doesn’t understand our complex language. Sometimes we listen to peoples’ prayer and we wonder what they think God is! God is very smart, just like my wife. My wife never asks me for money in public, she says, “Give me the wallet,” because in the wallet is the money, the debit card, the credit card, everything. And God says, “Give Me your body,” in the body is your soul and your spirit. He gets your body; He gets your all. If you don’t give your body, it doesn’t mean, “Lord, I surrender my soul.” God says, “Wait a second, don’t try all those high-flown language with Me. I don’t want your soul first; I want your body first.” What’s the use with your soul? He is going to pull your soul out of the body and leave you like that? No! “Lord, I surrender my soul, I will follow You with my spirit.” He says, “Will your body move? I have been trying to wake you up for the past half an hour, and you are surrendering your soul and the spirit? Will you put your legs on the floor first?”

You don’t fool God with all these things. So, what does He say? ***“Give Me your body.”*** Have you given your body? Today, how many of you came on time or before time to Church this morning? Don’t blame your babies, any baby can be trained, we have problems training the parents. Put your hands up. See, the problem is with the body. Are you getting it? Why are you late? If God cannot get you to come to church on a regular basis on a Sunday morning, how can He get you to marry the one He chooses? ***“Give Me your body.”*** That’s why the *Romans 12:1* says, ***“...a living sacrifice...”***

Why does He do that? He knows us, we are not dead, we are living. Have you ever tried to put a goat you want to sacrifice alive and well on the altar? It will just jump away. And He says, “I know you, I created you, I formed you, I know you very well. You surrender today, next day you are gone. So, come back again, I am good with you.” Like I told the pastors, “It is not the offering that is holy; it is the altar that is holy.” So, the altar makes the sacrifice holy. What do you need to do? Keep on offering yourself every day, one day the altar will hit you and you’ll know you are not the same, you are changed. That is what happened to Saul – jealous for the law, going around, going around and after one encounter he is on the ground, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” After that, that man never changed, he never went back. It is the altar that made him holy. You have to do it, you never know when it will happen, never give up.

It’s like Hannah going to Shiloh, crying; going to Shiloh, crying; nothing is happening. One day she cried from her soul; nothing is changed, place is the same, altar is the same, what has changed is, that day she cried and said to the Lord, “Lord, You touch my womb, the son You give me, razor shall not touch his head.” God said, “Heard you.” The child is holy; the mother is holy. How do you know? Listen to her song: the song of Hannah – it’s a warrior song, penned by the Holy Spirit. Look to the son she birthed; it’s a sanctified boy, sanctified young man, a sanctified holy man, set apart by God. You know why? Because that day the altar did its work. So, never give up this, you do it every

day by faith: “As a living sacrifice, I offer, Lord, because I believe what Your Word says in *Matthew 23:19*, ***‘It is the altar that sanctifies the gift.’***”

**Romans 12:2**

***<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.***

There is something called the ‘Perfect Will of God’. Let me tell you, perfect will of God has to be discovered by a renewed mind. As long as your body is not surrendered, God will not renew your mind. That’s the problem with so many people! They have been sitting in the church until they have become the part of the decoration, but mind is nothing still the same, mind hasn’t changed, because when they go out of the sanctified doorway, they are just like the world – they talk like the world, they behave like the world, they act like the world. You know why? It is because their mind is not being renewed. You know why their mind is not being renewed? It is because the body is not being offered. See, like I told you, God is also a mathematician; *Romans 12:1* comes first, verse 2 comes after 12:1. He didn’t put, “Be renewed in your mind,” He said, “Offer your body first.” As long as there is no surrender of the body, there is no renewal of the mind. Honestly, you try it, just surrender your body, suddenly you will realize the Bible is a different Book.

You know how to surrender, because you are very faithfully surrendering your body before YouTube and your mind is being renewed by YouTube, prime videos, Netflix. You are offering, surrendering your body to it, it’s not that you are not surrendering it, if you are alive, you are surrendering your body for something. It’s not possible not to have your body surrendered, but if you have not surrendered your body as an act of faith every day to God, He cannot renew your mind, because your body is your purse. In the purse is the money; and in the purse is your credit card; and in the purse is your debit card. If you hold on to your wallet, nobody can use your money. God says, “Give Me your body, I will use your soul, I will renew your spirit; I will speak to your spirit, I will change your soul. Give Me your body. I can take it forcibly if I want, but I won’t, I gave the free will to choose. It’s mine by creation, it’s mine by redemption, the earth and the fullness and everything in it belongs to Me.” ***“As many as received Him, they were the children of God.”*** By redemption we belong to Him, we were not redeemed by the blood of goats or bulls, we were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, He owns us twice over – by creation, by redemption. He says, “I can take you if I want but I will not, you have to give it to Me and if you give it to Me, you will see suddenly I will speak to you and I will change your soul, your spirit will hear My voice.”

He speaks to our spirit, our spirit will hear His voice, and our soul will get transformed, our emotions will get transformed, our will will be set in the direction of God, our intellect will change, we will see things differently. The three parts of your soul: your intellect, your reasoning ability and your will and your emotions—emotions are at the end, not in the beginning. Jesus had all three. He was walking in the world in the flesh just like us but He was hearing very clearly. He says, “I do not say anything other than what I have heard the Father say. I don’t do anything other than what I have seen the Father do.” Can you see? Everybody is opposing the will of God in His life and the Bible says, “He set His emotions, He set His face like a flint towards Jerusalem.” He brought His intellect, He brought His emotions, He brought His will in one line to serve God. You know why? It is because He was a surrendered person. His body was always surrendered. That’s why the first statement He makes to His mother, recorded in the Bible when she says, “Son, how could you do this to us?” 12 years old, He said, “Mother, didn’t you know I was at My Father’s business?” 12 years old; parents were lost for three days. That’s how we have to read it. They thought the Son was lost—imagine the Son of God lost, how can He be lost? The whole universe is held together by the power of His Word and they thought He was lost! And she says, “Son, how could You do this to us?” and what does He say? “I was at My Father’s business.”

This is the truth; we are talking specific but this is general. Specifically, about marriage, you want to know who you have to marry? Surrender your body to the Lord. “Lord, I am not going to take one step in the direction of marriage until You tell me who it is. I am not going to look around, I am not going to do anything with my body about it. I have surrendered my body to You, You speak to me. First You speak to me, to marry or not to marry is the question.” And Paul says in Corinthians, “Because of the times I would ask everyone not to get married and even if you are married, live like as if you are unmarried because the day of the Lord is so close.” That’s how Enoch lived – married; with children, grandchildren, father, grandfather, lived as if he was unmarried because he looked up the line, nobody interested; looked down the line, nobody interested; looked to the side, nobody interested. He lived like one who was unmarried, walked with God alone and God took him alone. His father was alive, his grandfather was alive, if I am right by numbers, his great grandfather was alive, his son was alive, his wife was alive, nobody was interested, because marriage is a mystery, it is about the union of the Church with Christ: “Two will be in a bed, one will be



taken." Who will you go with? Christ, or your wife or your husband? It's more than about you and your life on earth because the day of the Lord is near, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision and they even have surrender their bodies to the Lord. It's so near!

Like I told yesterday, and I have told last week to the pastors too: if you take your dreams in your mind, let us put a projector; pick a good normal Hindu brother or sister, put their dreams on; pick a Buddhist or a Muslim, their dreams; will it be different or is it the same? Their prayers to their god, their prayers to their god, your prayer to your God is exactly the same. What difference is between you and them? How did you become separate? Outwardly, we don't have to be so separate, but inwardly in the New Covenant, we are completely separated. Outwardly for Israel, everything was different: what you eat; what you drink; how you walk; what you wear; how you observe; even your working—when they work seven days, you will not work on seventh day; even if the harvest is ripe and you have to harvest tomorrow, Saturday all your tools down, why? You shall show them you are different. So, outwardly you looked at Israel, Israel was different from the rest of humanity. And when God looks down on the Church, the whole Church is holy, a peculiar people. Why? Because when He looks into our hearts and into our minds, our aspirations, our dreams are completely different, not the same, absolutely different – it's about the King and the Kingdom and the Kingdom is so close.

I keep telling you, unless God puts a button on the reset, it's over and there are prophesies on both sides: one side, God is going to put a reset; other side, it's over! Like Derek Prince said ten years ago, "Two minutes to midnight is how I put on the calendar." If he said ten years ago, now it is one minute to midnight because at the midnight hour, the bridegroom came. Ten of them woke up; five were wise, five were foolish. There was only one difference between the five foolish and five wise – it was a flask of oil. Only one difference! A flask of oil - you know, it is the anointing which you gather over a period of time. I always tell people, the problem is not with the Word, the problem is with the Holy Spirit. And at that hour when the midnight came, five realized: you know what, we have no oil. Let us go buy. Please give! They said, "No, we are not giving you the Spirit of God that we have gathered over time." When you see, their flask was full. Do you know why their flask was full? It is because they knew **John 3:34 – "He gives the Spirit without measure."**

When it comes to giving His Son, He gave His only Son totally for mankind, every drop of His blood, when He gives His Spirit to redeem us, He gives His Spirit without measure. The problem is, will He take him? That's what surrender is for! Be surrendered, you will never run out of Spirit. Ask Elisha, the widow whose husband had died and the creditors have come, he said, "Get empty vessels, shut the door," and he says, "Pour, pour, pour..." every vessel was full. "Anymore?" he asked, she said, "no more" and the oil stopped. The oil didn't stop because the supply stopped; the oil stopped because there were no more containers left. That's the problem! And there are people sitting here, little children sitting over here, nobody is too young to be filled with the Holy Spirit because John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. But the problem is, my soul is a container, it cannot take two substances at the same time, I cannot fill it with the world and fill it with the Spirit. The Spirit will brook no competition – it's either Me or nothing! It will not, because the world is in direct opposition to the Kingdom of God.

That's why Jesus says, "You are in the world, you are not of it," He told the disciples. We are in the world, we are not getting out of the world until God takes us but we do not belong to this world; we don't think like the world, we don't talk like the world, we don't act like the world, we don't dress like the world, there is a difference about us. Then the Spirit will fill us. All this is got to do with the body – if your body is not surrendered to God, God cannot renew your mind. If you think like the world, how does the Holy Spirit change your mind? Because there is something called the perfect will of God, to understand the perfect will of God, do you know how many years it took Abraham—the father of faith—"whose steps of faith we work" says *Romans 4:12*—delay, called Terah; veil called Lot, Hagar and Ishmael, then throw Ishmael out, finally, God says, "Will you take your only son, Isaac, that is birthed of God?" That's what I always telling pastors, there are certain things birthed of God in our lives and after that, that becomes our idol because we think we are safe with it, God birthed it that is why, God says, "Give it to Me." And what will I have left? Nothing. "That I will decide." That's lordship!

You know what James says in *James 2*? "His faith was complete; his righteousness was completed." And God says, "Take your son back. Now I know you fear Me, Abraham." Lordship of God is established in Abraham's life. "So, you will be always known forever and ever as the father of faith." So for four thousand years or thousands of years after that when every righteous Jew who believed by faith in the Passover lamb's blood, died and they went to Abraham's bosom. It was Abraham who comforted them, you know why? It is because he had become perfect in his faith. Understand how it works. That's why Bible says, "Think on things that are above, not on things that are below." That

should excite you, the day and the hour that is coming, the world that is coming forever and ever. What is this compared to that! Paul says, "... momentary affliction compared to the weight of glory." Did you know glory had weight?

**John 12:24**, next step.

***<sup>24</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.***

We are looking at it specifically in terms of marriage, generally also. It's the universal principle. Unless you die, you cannot have new life. Be prepared to die. Marriage is the death of an old life and the beginning of a new. You know why there are so many conflicts in the marriages, even in this church? Because you are not willing to die, you want to live. Live to your dreams, your aspirations, your life. Every Saturday we will have a question from some wife somewhere, or some husband somewhere, but the problem is we have answers from the Scripture and only the dead people can hear it in this case. See, the problem is, when it comes to marriage, most of the people sitting over here have picked up their ideas from movies – Hollywood – that's why nobody wants to marry ordinary girls, everybody wants a hero or a heroine and they dress and act like heroes, act like heroines. Teenager is a teenager, right? Not in the Kingdom of God! Oh, she is only 18. So was Daniel. He purposed in his heart that he will not defile himself from the king's table. He was a teenager, don't lower the bar, don't make the excuses, "Young people will be young people and teenagers will be teenagers, children will be children." Who told you?

That's the second question God asked Adam, "Who told you?" "Children will be children." "Who told you? Do you know My children? There was a little boy called Samuel, do you know about that little child?" The words he spoke didn't fall to the ground and the Word of the Lord came to Samuel, and the Word of the Lord went from Samuel to all from Beersheba to Dan. How old was he, the child? Did he have anybody to look up to who would mentor him? Nobody, nobody to mentor him in the temple, but he heard the voice of God through his mother and he says that's all I need, she is far away, she comes once a year, that's enough. Because the Word of God says when God first spoke to him, he did not know for God had not spoken to him yet, yet when it's time to sleep where does he sleep? Does he look for a pillow, does he look for a cushion, does he look for a comfortable place? No, he goes to sleep very close to the ark of the Lord, this is where the most sanctified place in this entire temple is. I am a child, five or six years old, I will sleep as close to God as I can get. And God spoke to him from there, "Samuel, Samuel."

So, don't just say they are children, raise the bar for your children, raise the bar for your teenagers because that's what God is looking for. We lower it, we lower it, God says, "Raise it." We destroy not just our children's future, we destroy our children's eternity by lowering the bar, because in the bible there is something called "The Perfect Will of God." Even if you have wasted like Abraham, years and years in Haran, you can still fulfill it. Please remember you are not dealing with a principal or judge in a criminal court, you are dealing with your Father who wants you to succeed. That's a difference – who wants you to succeed! Don't lower the bar! If you don't die to the world, you will never be alive in the Kingdom; you will be a dead man walking, you don't feel anything. That's the problem in our marriage: the man doesn't die, he lives, "I am the head, it is written!" that's the only Scripture most man know. If you ask them exactly where it is written, they don't know, they have heard it somewhere – 'I am the head.' The wife will say, "if you are the head, I am the neck, you turn around as I say." finished! Gone! Each one is trying to live their own lives, nobody dies.

But this is the principle: A seed unless falls to the ground and dies, God's life cannot come there. Man comes and dies, the woman comes and dies, and the death of the man and woman is proclaimed in the wedding ceremony. "Who gives away this woman?" given away, "I do," says the father, he has given away forever. Girl comes in the arm of her father, goes away in the arm of another man, never to look back, dead, both. Their parents are there, take care of them, but they know life has changed forever. That's how you should go. When you come to Christ, you die so that you can start your new life with Him. A man who says according to the law, blameless – that is Saul of Tarsus. When he meets Christ, he realizes, "I don't know one thing, what should I do?" "I thought you know what to do." "I don't know because it's a new life. I knew what to do according to the law, but that is dead, I am dead to the law; the law is dead to me. What should I do?" Marriage is a new life, it's a completely new life, but it is not possible only one person dies and one person lives. In many marriages only one person is dead, the burden is on the person who is dead and if they are not actively, constantly, connected with God, they will break under that burden. They are discouraged, desperate, trying always to hold the marriage together. It shouldn't be that way, both people should be dead.

After hearing that, nobody wants to get married now, some married people want to divorce also. No, that's not the point. It is about the resurrection life Jesus brings. You need to realize, God doesn't take away to make us miserable, when God takes away good, it's to give us better; when He takes away better, it's to give us best, but we will not understand the best if our mind is not renewed. If you ask both of us, would we ever—if God gave a chance—go back to our old careers? Never! Never! Never! You cannot get a better employer than God! Who doesn't pressurize you, who always gives you the freedom to choose every day, and the rewards are unbelievable, eternal, no salary, no pension, no insurance, nothing. That's what He told the Levites, "Nothing. I am your portion; I am your inheritance." That's true for the New Covenant: "I am your portion; I am your inheritance." If you don't die to the world, the Kingdom won't come alive. And husband and wife, right now decide before you get married: when I get into marriage, I die. And the girls say: when I get into the marriage, I die. I am not going there to live; I am going there to die so that he can live; I am going there to die so that she can live. And God says, "I am comfortable in that house. Both dead, I shall live." The three-strand cord is very difficult to break, Christ is alive in that house. That's what God is talking about.

### **Genesis 24:58**

***<sup>58</sup> Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."***

Hello! Rebekah, have you seen the man? No. Have you seen his house? No. Have you seen his country? No. After you go, can you come for a visit? No. Will you go with this man? Yes.

She is dead, the minute she said, "Yes," she is dead, she died to her old life, she is finished with Haran, no more delay. She is finished, she will never look back, never go back, never ever see her family again. She has not forgotten her family—years later when Jacob wants to get married, Jacob's issue with the family and all, she says, "Go to my brother." She has never forgotten her family, but she is dead to them when it comes to the purposes of God. The brother and the father: the brother is the head there, not the father, because if you look at the order in the Bible, the Bible says, "Laban and Bethuel," not "Bethuel and Laban." You know what he says? "Oh, she is going, let us have seven days of feasting." Eleazer says, "Let me go, my master has been waiting forty years for this girl. Now that the girl has been found, why delay." He waited forty years for this girl. You see, once you have found your God's appointed spouse, even one day's delay is delay. The Spirit of God will say, "Go, get married." "Lord, I waited for forty years," "Go get married. You have found your girl, you have found your boy, go get married." She says, "I will go." Next day gone! She died – that's what marriage is! That's what Christ is talking about. What if you are single and God says don't get married? Do you want to see a single man's marriage?

### **1 Corinthians 15:31**

***<sup>31</sup> I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.***

This is the man married to Christ, dies daily. Wakes up, and sings the song which we learned later, "Bye, bye world... I am alive to Christ, dead to the world." That's how he lived, died daily. World, you have nothing; law, you have nothing on me; I am dead to the world, dead to the law, I am alive unto Christ, I am alive for Christ alone. The life that I live, I live by faith of the Son of God; not I live, but Christ lives in me. "How can Christ live in you, Paul?" Because I am dead, if you are not dead, Christ cannot live; if you are alive, Christ is dead; I die daily. Married to Christ. What a man! Right?

So, when you are getting married, put away your dreams, put away all those ideas, and say, "I am going to get married as a dead man, as a dead woman, God is going to give a new life. It is not my way or your way, it is His way and His way is always good."

Next point.

### **Luke 14:28-30**

***<sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— <sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?***

Before you get married, ask yourself: Do you have it in you to finish it? Did you count the cost? So many young people when they get married, they don't count the cost, it's all romance and emotions and sex and all, after that when children come, they are not interested. Did you count the cost? That's the letters we get. The woman also did not count the cost because all the ideas of marriage and everything came from the world, it did not come from the Kingdom that marriage is a sacrifice; raising up a home is a sacrifice. They did not count the cost. So you look around the world, you have uncompleted homes. Did you count the cost? I put my hands on this plough, I am not looking

back, I am in this all the way, I am willing to pay the price. I will hang in there, whatever happens, I will hang in there, I will not be the one to leave, I will be the one to stay. And when children come, they are always a blessing, not a burden.

You know what the word "inheritance" means? My father left me something, that's my inheritance. He left me land and a house – this is my inheritance which my father left me. Do you know what the Bible says? "Children are an inheritance." What you get from God on earth are your children. Have children become a burden or a blessing? Did you count the cost? Or you just thought it is all outsourcing—we live in the age where everything can be outsourced. God says "Not My children, not My marriage, it cannot be outsourced." Marriage cannot be outsourced, the children cannot be outsourced, the home cannot be outsourced, because the whole thing gets its name from the Father, the home gets its name from God because He is a family Man. No outsourcing, sorry. That is what the Bible is talking about. Did you count the cost? Did you think it through?

Five new babies in the church, sixth one is on the way, and one lucky couple had twins; are they burden or blessing? Are they curse or reward? Bible says, reward! "Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of children." Most people have one and a half now. If two enemies come, they don't have enough arrows in their quiver; one arrow is gone, finished. Now, enemy is at the gate: "Aiyoo, my quiver is empty?" why? My government told me. I am not saying you should not plan your marriage, plan your children, I am talking about your attitude to family – that's what upsets me! God did not send His Son to change the world, He sent His Son to create a family. That's the ultimate purpose of redemption where there will be a family forever and ever, where God is the father, Christ is the Son and the Church is the wife. A family! It's right at the top of God's priority; not your career, not the money you make, not the house you make. Every house is not a home, you can have the biggest house in the world, and it cannot be a home. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in tents; they were homes. They did not have a house because God told them not to build a house. Lot had a house in Sodom, it was not a home. Did you count the cost? Did you think it through?

Young people, start right, start well because the emotions will change. Another Sunday we will look at that. There are three covenants on earth: the Old Covenant, the New Covenant, the marriage covenant. It's a covenant, not a contract. In a contract, people look for gain and where there is no gain, the contract is dissolved; in a covenant, you look to lose. Is your marriage a contract or is your marriage a covenant? A covenant is established only by sacrifice. Is your marriage a contract or covenant? Are you looking for gain or are you looking for loss? Get it right! This is not a Hollywood/Bollywood talk, this is Bible talk. Serious! Because the most attacked institution on planet earth is marriage. When men go wonky and leave and abandon their homes—like you have in US, millions and millions of single mothers bringing up their children. Or women go wonky, and look for a career in the world, abandon their home and their children. Both parties are guilty. Ask any child from a broken home – what do you want? Just one room with both the parents, that's all we ask for, we don't want any of these things; one room with both the parents we would be happy.

See, we did not count the cost, so they pay the price. Take it seriously before you think about getting married, because it is a very serious thing for God. It's not an emotional thing, it's a very serious thing, like I said it's a covenant. When God made covenant with Abraham, Abraham asked, "How will I know this?" God said, we will do it your way, we will have a covenant: bring the heifer, the goat, cut it into two pieces. Put those two pieces on sides. A pool of blood flowing, and He says, "Walk." That's what Jeremiah says, covenants were made; two parties who made a covenant, not a contract, held hands walked through the blood saying that, "If either of us break this covenant, our condition should be like this animal, death." That is marriage!

God said: "A covenant of sacrifice. Anyone who breaks that covenant and breaks the home should be dead in My eyes." Because it's a covenant, it's not a contract. So, do you take it so seriously? For in the Kingdom of God, the King takes it seriously. Isaac waited 40 years; the King has waited 2000 years. The moment the Spirit says, "I have found her," the Father will say, "No more delay." The moment the Spirit of God sends the message from here, "Dad, I have found the Bride for Your Son," the Father says, "Blow the trumpet, let her come, no more delay. Leave the rest to their fate as written. My bride, My girl will come home." And you ask that Church, like Rebecca, "Will you go with this Man?" and she will say, "I will." Why? It is because all these years, what was the cry of her heart? "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus." Not because she had trouble in her life, but because she was waiting for Him. The church in Corinth had no trouble, yet the cry of the church to the Lord was, "Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus! and if anybody doesn't have that cry, let him be cursed." Let that girl be cursed who says, "My husband is ready, he is waiting near the altar but I want to spend seven more days in the world." Let her be cursed. That's exactly what it means! That's what marriage is. That's how seriously God takes it. It's a covenant, it's not a contract.

In the world the marriage becomes a contract, and modern marriages they have a contract written out: *“No Liability clause in marriage,”* in the western Christian world, no liability. They are getting married, but we will have a contract that at some point in life, if you divorce, no liability: you won’t ask anything from me, I will ask nothing from you. No liability contract before a covenant – what covenant is that?

One more thing to all those who are young, or otherwise looking for the right mate, let it not be the checkmate, let it be the right mate.

### **1 John 1:7**

***7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.***

Mark two words there in today’s context: ‘walk,’ and ‘fellowship.’

### **2 Timothy 2:22**

***22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***

Flee-pursue-righteousness-faith-love-peace-with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

***33 Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”***

What’s the message God is saying? Be careful of the fellowship you have, because ultimately you will pick your partner from the company you keep. Be careful when you are young. You know why many of you have got a picture in your mind and often the picture has nothing to do with the Word of God? Because of the company you keep – either your friends and the circle of friends, or what you watch, that has framed your thinking. Be careful about who you walk with, what you walk with and the fellowship you keep, because ultimately, you will pick a partner according to that. Do you know how Eleazer found Rebecca? Evening time he came outside the city by the well with the camels, he knelt down and cried out to the Lord, “My master Abraham, and my master Isaac, Lord, the first woman who comes from the women of the city, I will ask her this: ‘Would you give me some water?’ And she will say, ‘Yes, my lord, and I will water your camels too.’” That was his only prayers, and the Bible says, the first to come is Rebecca alone.

Even in Haran, in a parched place, never have stepped a step into the Promise Land, she kept herself alone because there was no company she could keep in Haran. Therefore, when God picked a girl for Isaac, He picked her. If you have no right company, stay alone. Nobody will fellowship with you; the Spirit of God will fellowship with you. Don’t be desperate, be alone. She was alone, she didn’t come with a company of girls, she came alone. What if she had come with a company of girls? Eleazer also would have got confused—which one is this? Because he is a man anyway. You know the first word written about her in Scripture? “She was beautiful and no man had lain with her.” First thing written about her. She kept herself away from the ways of the world – pure, meek and gentle spirit, which is beautiful in God’s sight, spiritual application. And when he said, “Will you water?” she said, “Yes, my lord.” And do you know what it says? “She hastened.” No delay. You are the granddaughter of Terah, living in a parched place, but there is swiftness in your feet to serve somebody you do not even know, she made haste.

The Spirit of God is always watching for those who redeem the time because the days are evil. “Gird your loins! Get ready to leave Egypt!” is a call to Israel. “Make haste! In haste eat the Passover lamb because you are getting ready to leave.” Is there any haste, speed in your life for the things of God? There was, for Rebecca. We have speed for the things of the world; we will reach for a movie half an hour early so that we don’t miss the ticket, but no speed for the things of the God and still expect to be the bride of Christ! What fellowship do we keep? If you don’t have the right fellowship, choose to stay alone. Two years I was in another country with the underground church, but I had to teach in a college. All the staffs were from India except for a few local ones who taught the local language. Saturday, Sunday was masti time for them, consistently for two years, every week I told them I am not here for you and you will not get me. You need any help with academics, I am here to help you, anyone of you. If you are sick, if you have to take leave, let me know, I will take your class too, but after that, you don’t get me, I did not come for you. You can check with them, not a single day did I spend with them. Every single evening I spent my time with the underground church; simple, illiterate people but they were God’s people. The rest were from my own country, my own language

and they made my own food, I never ate in their houses. You know why? Because you choose your company, for you know your purpose. Most beautiful land on the earth, but not once did I go for site seeing or a picnic, I didn't. You turn to the right, you turn to the left, all you want to do is picnic, because the land is beautiful like Switzerland. I never went because I didn't come as a tourist, I came on purpose, there is no time to waste. As soon as my work is over, I pack up and go. Two years, slept on the floor, cooked for myself, never ate from outside because I could not afford to fall ill because I am on mission. Sent, not went. Yet, there was not a day, morning or evening, when I didn't call and talk to my family, and when the telephone bill those days came into the office, it was like a newspaper and all of them looked at my telephone bill and said, "Sir, this is your telephone bill? Half your salary?" I said, "I didn't come to make money. My God, my home, I have no other interest in life."

And in heaven you have your God and your home, nothing else. If that is so in heaven, so it shall be on earth. And I could go because a godly Assamese girl, who was my maid, came home and she took care of my family and never asked for a salary raise, never asked for clothes, hardly ate anything, and one day I asked her, "Child, why are you like this?" she said, "Dada, many years ago, a missionary came to my little village and he said, 'In heaven, these things have no meaning,' then I realized if I am going to live in heaven, I will live on earth just like as in heaven." And I said, "Wow, child! I have been trying to preach to the church for years, finally, I got a person who knew it without me preaching it to her."

You think God doesn't have His children in places you and I don't even know of? No access to TV, YouTube, no telephone bill, no telephone, no internet; you would be shocked on the day of rapture to see who are taken. That's why God says, "The last shall be the first and the first shall be the last." Be careful because marriage is not about you and your life on earth, it's a mystery; it's a covenant, it's about Christ and the Church. So, even if you are in an unhappy marriage, you can still learn and die to yourself, and become the Bride of Christ even if your husband didn't appreciate you or your wife didn't appreciate you; your Christ will appreciate you.

So, we are talking about the Kingdom here. The bachelor is telling us, the bachelor called Mr. Paul is telling us: "I do not understand this, it's a mystery." But I am not talking about a man and a wife, I am talking about Christ and the church. He says, "I understand that very well." You ask me about wife, I don't know; you ask me about Christ, I know. "Live with understanding with your wife," is the command given to men, by Peter (1 Peter 3:7). If you cannot live with understanding with your wife because she doesn't want you to understand her, at least understand Christ. If you cannot live with understanding with your husband, at least understand Christ.

"Let not this man boast he has this, this..., if he boasts, let him boast I know God." That's the only knowledge that will matter in heaven, your physics, chemistry, economics, management will be worth nothing; the only thing that will matter in heaven will be – do you know God? So even as you study and graduate and acquire degrees in all these other things, know God. Peter's final words: "Grow in grace, grow in the knowledge of God." Choose your company very carefully because if you run with the wrong company, you will end up with the wrong person.

As I close, last two verses.

## **2 Samuel 13:1-3**

**<sup>1</sup>After this Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. <sup>2</sup>Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her.** It would have stopped there, verse 3.

**<sup>3</sup> But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab was a very crafty man.**

Who led you to sin? Your friends you chose. Who made you drink? Your friends you chose. Who got you into drugs? Your friends you chose. The history of David's family would have been different if this guy was not Amnon's friend -- ruined David's home because one man was a crafty man. Your friends matter, children; your friends matter, young people. That's why I said, show me your friends, I will tell you who you are.

Of all the Psalms in the Bible, do you know how the Psalms begin? It begins with this verse: "**Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,**" Is your friend ungodly? Is their counsel you are listening to? "**Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.**" This is how the book of Psalms begins. If you don't keep one, the rest of the Psalms don't mean anything, it's just acquired knowledge, it's not life. Choose your friends. Like I said, if you have nobody, like Joseph, walk alone, it doesn't matter. Let the names they call you be a title in God's Kingdom. Let them call you names – loner – fine.

What did Mrs. Potiphar call Joseph: “That Hebrew you brought.” “Hebrew” – man who crossed the river, who never looks back, that’s what Hebrew means. In prison when the butler finally remembers the dream, what does he say? “...there was a Hebrew.” 21 years later when he is the prime minister of Egypt, when his brothers find him and they don’t know it is his brother – where is he? Sitting alone as prince of Egypt, eating alone as Hebrew: I will never forget who I am, called to walk alone, if there is no right company, I will walk alone and God will walk with me. 13 years as a slave and a prisoner; 21 years as prime minister. How many years? 34 years, still sitting alone. And then, finally his brothers come, he reveals himself, hugs and weeps: “Now I can talk to you—Hebrew to Hebrew.” 35 years he walked alone. Why? Because there was no right company.

I told you the primary purpose of God’s creation of man is fellowship and who you fellowship with matters. If you walk in the light even as He is light, you shall have fellowship with one another. Don’t forget the purpose of the marriage – fellowship. Don’t forget the purpose of redemption – it is fellowship with God.

Around 30 years ago, a sister wrote to me a letter with around 36 characteristics of the man she wants to get married to. I said, “The only man like that is Jesus and He never got married.” And as far as I know and if I am right she is still a spinster, in her 50s. So don’t add things which God Himself did not add. God will have to create a new man to get you married to him. So don’t raise the bar above God’s bar. And do not lower it below God’s standards either. You have heard much. Let me tell you, all it takes is to just hit the floor everyday and one day the Altar will sanctify you and you will rise up like Paul, maybe blind but blind to the world but seeing God. I do not see anything attractive in this world because my eyes have seen the glory of my Lord. What is this world in comparison to my King? Let God open our eyes so that we see what it is really about. *For this is eternal life that you know God and His Son Jesus Christ.* That is life! Knowing God is life.

So don’t think that we, pastors are sad and upset. No we are very, very happy. David, my friend asked me, “BJ, how can you live like this? Day after day, month after month, year after year, alone in the office?” I am absolutely not bored. My friend, this is life!!!

#### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Father, we love You and You love us. We didn’t love You first, but You loved us first and we love You, Lord, we just love You. With what little we know, we are telling these words; one day in eternity we will have no words to describe what we feel about You. That day we will say, we never knew You were so good, so great, so awesome! O Father, as Paul prayed, we pray: open the eyes of our understanding, give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may know Your hope, Your calling of the saints, what we are in Christ and what Christ is in us. Open our eyes, O Lord, that this entire world will pale into insignificance. Truly, Lord, those who have seen You said: “You are the fairest of ten thousand to my soul, the lily of the valley.” Only the soul can see that, the flesh can never appreciate You, but the soul of the man that has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, only can see the beauty of Christ. O Lord, open our eyes. One instant our eyes open as Elisha prayed to You, the world will lose its meaning for us. More than any preaching of any preacher, one minute You open our eyes, and we behold Your glory, and Your goodness, and Your beauty, we won’t need any more servants. ‘Open our eyes,’ that’s our prayer. And I pray, Father, You know the hearts of everyone who is standing and You know who all have surrendered, receive that sacrifice; let the altar sanctify them. May we be Yours, now and forever—no competition in our hearts, no competition in our minds, You alone, cut about, holy set apart in our hearts and our minds. That’s all I pray, Father, the rest You will do. Thank You, Father, thank You. Go with us, go before us. I speak healing into every sick body, peace into every restless soul, and rest into every spirit. Thank You, thank You, Lord! For in Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!*

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each one of us. Amen!*