Sermon transcript

Meeting start 1991-08-10 19:30
Broadcast date 2026-09-16 19:30
Location Krefeld, Germany

Ewald Frank

preached on 10. 08. 1991, 19:30, Krefeld, Germany

Topic: "Fatherly Admonitions to Married and Divorced People!" No. 1.

broadcasted on 16. 9. 2026

Praise the Lord. As the hymns were being sung, particularly the one about the sunshine of grace that shines, I thought to myself, the sun always shines after all. Even when clouds drift by, that does not prevent the sun from shining. You notice this particularly when flying. It may rain, it may be cloudy, but once you have climbed to an altitude of 4, 5 or 6 thousand meters, you have left everything that was cloud behind you for the entire flight. Anyone flying from here to New York sees the cloudy sky for barely 10 minutes, and then for 8 hours and 20 minutes they see nothing but sun, only sun, only sun.

But for some the sun shines more on earth, for others less. Lives are very different. Blessed is the person who can give thanks to God and yet knows that everything passes by him, that nothing can happen to us, that was not willed by him or at least permitted by him.

What moves me today is, in fact, the care of our God. God is a Father. And you know, well, forgive me, but if He isn't a mother, I can't help it. But God is a Father and He feels, He knows who His children are. He also knows what they are like and how to correct them, how He must deal with them. And Paul writes: ***"Though ye have many instructors, but in Christ I have become your father."*** [1Cor 4:15] And when one reads these fatherly letters, one does not see the whip being wielded, nor are threats uttered. Rather one sees how simply the love of God, which is fatherly in everything that is addressed, comes to the fore.

I thought that as we are celebrating a wedding today, we would do well to read a few more scriptures, including some that might help one or the other in various circumstances, to understand the overall theme a little better. In Psalm 103 we have all read the final verses together. "***The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.***" [Psa 103:19]

But the time will come when He will set up His throne, the throne of His glory, here on earth. And then we too shall reign and rule with Him, and witness His kingship. And then it says here: "***Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.***" [Ps 103:20-21]

What a mighty Word! The angels are to praise Him, the mighty heroes who carry out His Word, and then also the ministers, as executors of His will. May it come to pass, that through our service in the church, the will of God is not only revealed, but also carried out, that is, put into practice.

As for the subject at hand, I would like to read a few scriptures today with great joy, scriptures with which some of you may not be so familiar. It may well be, I heard a comment earlier, that many have acquired certain things on the black market, on the spiritual black market, and brought them into the church, and we have no use for that. In this place, we have only one obligation. It consists in proclaiming the Word of the Lord as it is written, illuminating it from every angle, and helping as many people as possible, so that no one is left behind. If anyone proclaims the Word in order to hurt others, rather than to help them, then they must ask themselves whether they have a ministry from God at all.

Every ministry that God bestows is always for the edification of the church, and the church is made up of individuals, so it is not for destruction, but for help, for the edification of the body of Jesus Christ, namely His church.

We are of course familiar with what is thus given to the sisters. For example, in 1 Peter chapter 3 it sometimes sounds very sharp, yet it is still wholesome and good. Once we have grasped that God, even when He speaks seriously and sharply, has only intentions of love and peace towards us, because He means well by us, then we no longer perceive the sharpness, then it is like ointment applied to the wounds, and then healing comes. Now as it is written here in 1 Peter 3:

[1] ***Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.***

So, a wife is to preach, but not with many words, rather through her life. Her life should be a sermon, as it is written here, so that even those who do not yet believe and are disobedient to the Word may come to faith and then be able to obey. Verse 2:

[2] ***While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.***

Then Peter also writes:

[3] ***Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel;***

[4] ***But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.***

A woman who has been given this as a guide has been entrusted with a divine treasure. A woman who does not raise her voice, but who, as it is written here, simply adorns herself with the incorruptible nature of a gentle and quiet spirit,

which is precious in God's sight. Even the roughest man cannot resist this nature. He must surrender. There is no shouting or fuss. Instead, a gentle and quiet nature, as it is esteemed precious in God's sight, is revealed, and all the husband's weapons fall from his hands. He is then conquered, and cradled in love, he feels at ease.

Verse 7 reads:

[7] ***Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.***

The husband is no tyrant, who thinks he must rule as the head. No, just as it is written here, "***dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.***"

See, as I said earlier, God has also dealt with this subject in a fatherly way. It goes much further still.

I have simply resolved to read a few scriptures briefly today. Paul even wrote to people, for whom things did not go quite so smoothly. Such cases do exist. They need not be here, but perhaps we know them or find ourselves drawn into the situation. It is written, for example, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, from verse 8:

[8] ***I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.***

[9] ***But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.***

Every adult knows of course what such phrases imply. Paul, an apostle who travelled from town to town, from country to country, preferred to remain alone and says: ***"If you wish, you may do the same."*** [1Kor 7:8] And yet he is no dogmatist, but simply writes quite openly and quite freely: ***"But if they cannot contain, let them marry."*** [1Kor 7:9] So this is not a rule. He did not say: "You must do as I have done." Rather everyone is free to choose.

From verse 10 in the same chapter we read:

[10] ***And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:***

[11] ***But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.***

Here too, as with all scriptures, it is essential to read carefully who is being addressed, who is meant, and what is being said to whom. For example, I shall read it again: ***"And unto the married I command..."*** and then comes the divine correction. Then Paul realizes that he is not speaking here himself, but refers to the Word under

"thus saith the Lord," and then writes: ***"yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband"***

But what happens to a woman from whom a man takes a divorce? How is she classified? How is she to be regarded?

Where does she find her place?

And now we shall soon see who has been on the black market and brought back old traditions, or who is prepared to uphold and believe in the Word of God as the sole valid and legally binding authority that a wife ought not to separate from her husband. But if she has already separated, see, here it is not the husband who is addressed, but the wife. And a woman who goes to a lawyer to get a divorce would have been better off first hanging a millstone around her neck and drowning herself in the sea, where it is the deepest, before she took this course of action. If she has taken that path, she is condemned to remain as she is, namely not to remarry. But what happens to a woman from whom her husband has divorced her without a biblical reason?

Pardon? Have you all read that correctly? Have you all heard that correctly? This is very important. This issue is actually more controversial than any other on earth, because it goes right back to the beginning, to the Garden of Eden and what happened there, then to the giving of the law and right through to the New Testament.

"***But if she has already separated, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.***" This requirement is not imposed on the husband. The only requirement placed on the husband is: ***"Let not the husband put away his wife."*** [1Kor 7:11]

But if the wife has put her husband away, that is, if she has drawn the line of separation, what then is the husband's status? If the husband has separated from his wife, what then is the wife's status? We must examine these matters from every angle and truly shed light on them.

We continue reading from 1 Corinthians 7, specifically regarding believers and unbelievers. And then in verse 15 it says, 1 Corinthians 7, verse 15:

[15] ***But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.***

If what we have just read is true, that one partner does not believe and the other does, and the unbeliever, whether brother or sister, chooses to separate, in that case, whether brother or sister, neither of them is bound by the marriage. Neither of them. Have we read it correctly? Most certainly.

It is indeed the case that a great many traditions are swirling around in our heads, and we think they are in the Bible, yet they are not there in the form they exist in our minds. And I think it is high time that what is in our heads, in our thoughts,

should actually be what is written in the Bible and not what we have made up for ourselves or what others have said.

So, in the event that one party is an unbeliever and proceeds with separation or divorce, neither the believing wife nor the believing husband is bound by such a marriage, which the unbeliever has dissolved. In such a case, the union was not of God to begin with, and the whole matter can be filed away, and both may make a new decision, provided it is done in the Lord and before the Lord.

In 1 Timothy, chapter 5, everyone is addressed, young and old, men and women. God has indeed provided for everything and thought of everything. I would first like to read 1 Timothy chapter 5, 1 Timothy 5, verse 14:

[14] ***I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.***

How beautifully put! Excuse me, some are older, others are younger. It does not say the older widows here, but literally and word for word:

[14] ***I will therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.***

Why did I use the term fatherly earlier? Although Paul was single, he had understanding for everything, for every situation, and I tell you why: because he was guided by the Spirit of God to write in this way, for such situations would indeed arise, so that the Church of the living God might be able to offer counsel at all times, not to condemn, but to give the correct biblical advice based on the Word of God in any situation that arises.

How often have I said it? We are not interested in human opinions. At one point I had to put it rather bluntly. I then included myself in the discussion and simply said: "You are not interested in my opinion, and I am not interested in yours, but together we are here to hear the Word of God." And this must be the conviction of us all, that we truly respect the Word of God in every respect and do not pass judgment or condemn without even knowing or wishing to acknowledge what Holy Scripture says on a particular subject.

I would like to read from Titus, which applies to us all. And I simply like this very much. Titus chapter 2, Titus chapter 2, from verse 1:

[1] ***But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:***

[2] ***That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.***

Now it is the turn of the older men; the younger ones will follow, but for now it is the older ones' turn. This is the guidance that Paul gave through the Holy Spirit. Now it's the turn of the older sisters, from verse 3:

[3] ***The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;***

Not teaching from the lectern up here at the front, no. There is a Scripture stating that older women should instruct the younger ones on how to love their husbands. That is the correct teaching. Let's read on. Now it's the turn of the younger women. Ah, here it is already! Here it is already. I thought it would come at some point; it's here already. All right, then I'll read verse 3 and then on to verse 4:

[3] ***The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;***

[4] ***That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,***

[5] ***To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.***

Now a question for the younger sisters: If an older sister were to come and offer some good advice, who would take it on board? Wisdom lies with the elderly, because life's experiences have sometimes taught them such hard lessons that these lessons really got under their skin.

What good advice can mothers give to the young sisters to set them on their way, and much will be spared them! For we, too, have learned from our own mistakes, and we can certainly give others good advice as a result.

Now it is the young men's turn, here from verse 6:

[6] ***Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.***

[7] ***In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,***

[8] ***Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.***

Then it is the servants' turn. They, too, are instructed on what they must do, namely to be obedient to their masters, so that the doctrine of God may not be blasphemed. [Tit 2:9-10]

If we summarize all this, we see how fatherly God is. He addresses the elderly and the younger ones, the brothers and the sisters. He assigns areas of responsibility and tells us what is to be done. Blessed are we if we read God's Word once more with prayer. Blessed are we if we read God's Word in the light of the revelation given in our own day, so that we may set aside all the traditions, all the old leaven which keeps on leavening anew. [1Cor 5:7-8]

And I say this to you, I do not wish to point the finger at anyone, but where it is still leavening, there is still leaven. Where it is not leavening, there is no leaven. And

you know, the people of Israel celebrated the feast of unleavened bread. [Exo 12:15, 17] And Brother Branham says so beautifully at one point: a reference to the seven church ages. We are familiar of course with Revelation 2 and 3, the seven church age messages which were left for the whole church throughout its seven epochs.

Not old leaven, not traditions introduced by men, but the Word purely revealed by God. And I am happy to repeat myself here: where all the old leaven has truly been removed, but then we must be turned upside down if that is to happen. [1Cor 5:7] And I remember this from the past; I know how the leaven is preserved from one batch to the next and how that the same leaven then finds its way into the next batch and then the dough rises. There is still a great deal of old leaven. It doesn't actually need to be much.

A little leaven spoils the whole batch of dough. [1Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9] You can have a large batch of dough and just a little leaven. And what was it? Jesus once said: ***"Beware of the leaven of the scribes and the Sadducees."*** And the disciples thought: ***"Well, what does he have to do with bread?"*** [Mt 16:6-7] And then he explains it and says: ***"Beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."*** [Mt 16:12]

Today we would simply say: "Old leaven refers to old teachings that do not agree with the Word revealed by God and set down in Scripture." I'll say it for the third time. Where there is still fermentation, there is still leaven. And it is high time that it was cast out so that we, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, that we may become through and through a leaven of sincerity and truth. [1Cor 5:7-8]

Now 1 Corinthians 5, specifically the passage I have just alluded to. 1 Corinthians 5, verse 6:

[6] ***Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?***

[7] ***Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.***

[7] ***For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.***

[8] ***Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.***

May God grant this to us all, as we leave this wedding celebration, that we may truly judge every issue and everything that requires judgment, always from a biblical perspective and not based on a single scripture, but all the scriptures that shed light on that particular issue and present it in a balanced way. This must be done in every doctrine, whether it be the Godhead or baptism.

I am thinking of last weekend when we spoke here about how there are people who simply claim that sins can only be forgiven through baptism in the name of Jesus

Christ. So my question is, what then happened to the people in the book of Acts who were first baptized in the Spirit and then baptized in water? [Act 10:44-48] Were sinners, people separated from God, baptized in the Spirit? Who would believe such a thing? No one in their right mind.

So we approach everything from a biblical perspective. Peter came to a house, the house of Cornelius, and they had no idea whatsoever. [Act 10:24-25] They know nothing, just one thing: ***"We are gathered here in the presence of God to hear from you what he will speak through you."*** [Act 10:33] And whilst he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon all these uncircumcised people, upon the Gentiles, upon the sinners. [Act 10:44] They were justified by faith that came from that brief sermon. In that space of a few minutes they received forgiveness, justification, renewal, the new birth, the baptism of the Spirit, all from God by grace.

Do you see? This is how the Holy Spirit works. Do you think God needs my pattern? No, nor yours, nor yours. God works as he wills, as it is written: "***The Spirit blows where he wills. You hear the sound, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going.***" [Joh 3:8]

It has always been different. In Jerusalem it was like this, in Samaria it was like that, in Ephesus it was different again, different everywhere. God has done this deliberately so that no one can copy it, but so that God can work anew time and again through his Spirit. In this place only one thing is important, that God's Word is illuminated in its entirety and that it is also believed from the heart.

We are not dogmatic, but we do wish that people believe according to the Bible. Just as our Lord said in the Gospel of John, chapter 7, verses 36 to 38: ***"He that believeth on me, as the Scripture says, from his belly..."*** — not as some person teaches, such as an evangelist, but as the Scripture says — ***"...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."***

O may the Lord God bless the remainder of this beautiful wedding day and crown us all with mercy and lovingkindness, granting us forgiveness for ourselves and for others and grace, so that justice and mercy may kiss, as it is written in the Psalm, and the earth may bring forth its fruit. [Psa 85:10] Blessed and praised be the Lord, our God, who speaks fatherly to old and young, to brothers and sisters, to us all, who does not destroy anyone, but rather extends his hand to everyone to help, to heal and to do good. Today, too, God is gracious to us. He has accepted us and shown us mercy. He has already blessed us, and he will continue to do so. Blessed and praised be his marvelous and glorious name.

Amen.

Let us stand and give thanks to the Lord together. Brother Russ will lead us in this.

Heavenly Father, we thank you most sincerely for your precious and holy Word. Lord, how true is your Word, how corrective, O God. You mean only good for us,

O Lord. You want us to leave all our own thoughts, all our own plans behind and align ourselves completely with your Word.

Lord, grant this to us all, grant it to the young people and grant us grateful hearts for your precious and holy Word, which we have been allowed to hear, albeit briefly, even now. Bless everyone, Lord. Bless your entire people. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.