Sermon transcript

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Topic: 1 Corinthians 7:1–4: "The true bond between a man and a woman in marriage!"

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There is an express request that we pray for a few more people by the laying on of hands. There are likely to be difficult cases, and we shall do so. We believe that God keeps His Word. It cannot be otherwise.

There are many scriptures that could be read on this subject. At the moment, I shall read just two. One from Mark 16, the last two verses. Mark 16, the last two verses.

And I ask you to see the context by the grace of God. From verse 14, we read the Great Commission up to verse 18. Mark 16, from verse 14 to 18, is the Great Commission and all that goes with it. And then we are told in verses 19 and 20:

[19] ***So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.***

[20] ***And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.***

As mentioned earlier, from verse 14 we read what the Great Commission entails, right up to the statement: ***"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."*** [Mk 16:14, 18] And then we are told: ***"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them..."*** And that is what matters. And we believe that this happened this very morning, and will happen again this afternoon, that the Lord is at work, so that the preaching is not merely in words, but the power of God is made manifest.

[20] ***And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.***

The Lord wishes to make His presence known. He wishes to do our souls good. He wishes to confirm that He is still the same today.

In Hebrews, chapter 2, we also read something that refers back to the beginning. Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4. Hebrews 2, verses 3 and 4:

[3] ***How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;***

[4] ***God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?***

As we have always said and are happy to emphasize once more, the Lord is bound by His Word. We cannot say that He must, but He has given the promise and He is faithful. We can truly rely on Him to do what He has promised. Brother Russ has advocated this so strongly, so it is his turn today.

Before he comes to the front, and we have a blessing ceremony today as well, a young couple would like to be consecrated here for their life together. And when I think of how difficult it has become to live together, it almost breaks my heart. I do not wish to discourage these young people, quite the opposite. I do want to encourage them, but be certain in your hearts that there is no doubt left.

I already said this here on Wednesday, and I am saying it now for a bit of a laugh, so that you don't think things are just all very dry around here. But last Wednesday, I actually had quite a fright. A young brother said to me—I'll just say he's young so that nobody knows who he is—and he said: "Imagine, in our bedroom it's a right mess, there's something dreadful going on." And I started to get scared; I thought: "Here we go again with more bad news." And when he realized my heart was nearly giving out, he said: "Listen, it's just a bit of damp in the room."

And you can well imagine what a weight was lifted from my shoulders when he said it was just a damp in the bedroom, and that can be sorted out. There are various remedies available these days, both internal and external; it can be fixed quickly. But other problems cannot be solved so easily. And so today we will truly implore the blessing of Almighty God upon both of you, that He may bless you and be with you.

We are most deeply united with all who love the Lord. And we believe that the longer it goes on, the more all true children of God will return to the Word alone. And as was said earlier, the Word within us and we within the Word, so that no interpretations, nothing of our own thinking is introduced into it, but that it remains as God has given it.

I would now like to underline what Brother Russ said with a Bible passage, namely from Acts 15. Acts 15, verses 6 to 9. Acts 15, verses 6 to 9:

[6] ***And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.***

[7] ***And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made***

choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

Now come the two key verses.

[8] ***And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;***

So He made no exception, did not treat them differently, ***"giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us."*** Verse 9:

[9] ***And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.***

Whether Jews or Gentiles, whoever came to faith believed in the same Lord and had the same experiences with God. The same must be said of us today, that we have had a conversion, an experience with God, just like our brothers and sisters in the beginning.

Now a word to the two groups that remain today. Firstly, those who are yet to join us in prayer, and then our dear young couple. They are truly both very young, and so today we shall implore God's blessing upon this young couple. I'll be quite honest, I find it very difficult to read the scriptures that are given to a couple as they set out on their married life. They are misunderstood from the very first day, and I do not know why that is. If one emphasizes a scripture just a little more, people immediately feel one has done them an injustice. One cannot always present everything in such a balanced way that everyone is completely satisfied. But we shall give you both the Word of the Lord to take with you on your journey, and it will be up to you what you do with it.

Most of the time we are accused of treating our dear sisters unfairly and putting them at a serious disadvantage, and of giving the brothers such a free pass that they can then do whatever they please. That is not true. Here in this place, we have read the scriptures just as they have been delivered unto us. And what is said to the man is what God still says to the man today through His Word. And what is said to the woman is what God still says to the woman today through the same Word.

One cannot give in to the zeitgeist and perhaps take it into account simply because equality is generally emphasized, and it goes far beyond that. We are no longer even dealing with a matter of equality; that has long since prevailed. In fact, we are already dealing with a somewhat outdated situation. And let me tell you this plainly: a man who does not love his wife deeply and do everything for her, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up entirely for her, is not worthy of having her at all. [Eph 5:25] A woman is not a doormat, nor is she just anyone. She was taken from the man himself and brought back to him. [Gen 2:22] Is that what the Bible says? That is what it says in Holy Scripture, and that is what we believe with all our hearts.

May I nevertheless read two or three scriptures? Is that all right with you? I am asking politely, but I do not want anyone to say: "Now he's done it again." How did he do it then?

May God truly grant us all his grace. It is high time that in the house of God there was respect for every word contained in Holy Scripture. Whether it concerns me, you, marriage, the family, the church, or whatever it may be, may we receive it without inner resistance, face up to the Word, and have but one request: "Lord, help me to live out this Word, so that the blessing you have attached to it may be revealed in my life."

Let us read this passage from 1 Corinthians 7. Here in 1 Corinthians 7, from verse 1, people are generally told how they should act.

[1] ***Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.***

[2] ***Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.***

[3] ***A husband should give to his wife her sexual rights, and likewise a wife to her husband.***

[4] ***The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.***

This is the most important verse for a blessed marriage, and you will be amazed at how practical God is, how thoughtfully he has planned things and how he wanted the very best for marriage too. The very best. We must assume that God wants only the very best for us. And he wanted the very best for marriage too.

Which is why he said: "Man, you have no control over yourself at all. From now on your wife has control over your body." [1Cor 7:4] And to the wife he says: "You no longer have control over yourself, over your body. From now on your husband has authority over you." And you will see that this creates a sense of togetherness. It unites. It brings together in the deepest way.

Not when the wife thinks: "Ha, I am going to make him feel it now." Right? "Let him see how he gets on." And then she turns her back on him. And at that moment she is in control over her own body, and that is not right. She must not do that. That is what God's Word says here.

Most women and most men, this verse is addressed to both of them, really ought to be given this verse to take with them on their journey through life. It ought to be engraved somewhere in golden letters. And it ought actually to be hung up in the bedroom. And beyond that, it should be in your hearts and manifest itself in practice. For we have heard after all that a wall can become damp and so on.

And that is not what we want. Rather, we want the blessing of Almighty God to

be in your home. And if that is to be the case, then let your life together begin as God's Word instructs you. And then we shall never ever hear of any problems in your home. On the contrary, we shall hear that everything is wonderful and full of joy.

Let it be emphasized once again, God always wants only the best. There are of course pious people who do not want to talk about marriage at all because they think it is a bit unholy. Right? There really are such pious people. Amongst believers there are people who are more pious than God himself.

God has spoken on every subject, including marriage. He has even specified when it is permissible and when it is not. He has laid everything out in great detail. You need only read about it in the book of Moses. Everything is written in the Bible. It simply needs to be obeyed. One must act in accordance with it.

Marriage is God's oldest institution on this earth. He himself instituted marriage and brought people together. And he said that "***what he, God, has joined together, let not man put asunder.***" [Mat 19:6; Mar 10:9] One might add, no man can nor indeed should put that asunder.

One more wonderful scripture from Ephesians:

[21] ***Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.***

[22] ***Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.***

[23] ***For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.***

[24] ***Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.***

Huh, that Amen was very faint. I heard nothing, nothing at all. Perhaps the wind is blowing in the other direction. Beloved, let us confidently say Amen to every Word of God. This still applies today.

And dear sister, you are still young enough. You can still learn this. And start today. Start today. And ask God to give you a heart to truly be submissive to your husband in every respect, as Scripture says, and to do what pleases him, and of course vice versa.

Husbands are told: ***"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."*** [Eph 5:25] A man who does not do this cannot expect to be met with love. He must first give it, so that he may receive it in return. And most of them think: "Huh, she could, but…" Yes, she could, if you had managed it. She could, if you had managed it, couldn't she?

Shall I read it again? You all understand plain German? I hope at least. "***Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.***" [Eph 5:25]

So, dear brother, this is what the Lord has told you. You, love your wife as Christ loved the church. Sacrifice yourself, give yourself completely, just as he gave himself. And then, you too need not worry. Then all will be well, just as the Lord God would have it.

Finally, in your case, one can certainly assume. Lately, I have sometimes found myself in a moral dilemma. I didn't want anything more to do with wedding ceremonies at all, because every now and then one had doubts as to whether the whole thing was always quite right. And the Bible does say, whatever is not done in faith is sin. [Rom 14:23] In your case, I'll assume that we can believe that the Lord has brought you together.

And so I'll read with confidence the passage from Matthew 19, verses 4 to 6. Matthew 19, verses 4 to 6:

[4] ***And he said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?***

[5] ***And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh;***

[6] ***Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.***

In the case of Adam and Eve, we knew with absolute certainty, God had brought them together. [Gen 2:22-24] That was a marvelous thing. If we knew this every time, just as we did with the first couple, then we would all have remained free from worries and hardships throughout our entire lives. Please take this Word with you, as a word from the Lord.

On my last visit, where was it, wasn't it in Romania, where I caused some distress when I read the passage: ***"A man shall leave his father and mother."*** [Gen 2:24; Mat 19:5] And I said to the young man: "Listen, if things were done according to the Bible, you would move to where your wife lives." And he is still in inner distress today, but I've only read that from the Bible and I leave it up to people to decide what to make of it.

In any case, Holy Scripture highlights the seriousness of the matter, that the man is set apart from everything else. Old and young don't go together anyway, and so it's best if father and mother stay where they are whilst you make a home of your own. That's the very best way, isn't it? The older people among us can agree with that and confirm it. May it be so with you, that in every respect the Lord may bestow his blessing upon you and be with you.