

Worship Gathering May 18, 2008

Service order and script

Week 1

Title: The Marriage Project

Main point: The greatest enjoyment of my spouse is when I am serving him/her.

SERVICE ORDER:

Video clip – Princes Bride “Mawwage”
(just for comic relief)

Service intro:

Four-year-old Suzie was at Pre-school and she just heard the story of Snow White for the first time. With wide-eyed excitement she re-told the story to her mom. After relating how Prince Charming rode u on his white horse and kissed Snow White back to life, Suzie asked “Do you know what happened next?”

He mom says – “Yeah, they lived happily ever after.”

Suzie replied “No they didn’t, they got married!”

Jay our pastor to students just got engaged a month or so ago. After a few weeks of announcing his engagement, he and I were talking about people’s responses and he was commenting on how when you get engaged everyone looks at you like you just contracted a fatal disease and people go on to tell you how much you don’t know about marriage and how tough it is. And they say, “Oh Yeah and by the way congratulations!”

- And that was just the responses of the church staff . . .
- I think what most people are trying to communicate is that they’ve learned that a marriage license is nothing more than a learners permit.

- Today we begin The Marriage Project, and we’ll take a look at the blueprints God has for our relationships. However, let me put this in perspective. As you and I have been going through the PREP WEEK of TMP, we have had a Cyclone in Myanmar and an earthquake in China where thousands have lost their lives. We get to gather in a place of worship to look at God’s Word to build our marriages, but there are people in a highly Buddhist Country that have lost their homes and loved ones, and they don’t yet know the love of Jesus.

- I encourage you to help through relief organizations such as World Vision. But right now let’s have a moment where we pray for what’s going on in our world and may that bring a sense of perspective to our discussion on marriage.

PRAY – God, the situation in Asia is overwhelming. God intervene. Rescue those who need rescuing. Be with workers who are helping. We are reminded again that life is precious, but fragile. Knowing the way our world works, I pray you would give us an eternal perspective of our relationships. Help us to be grateful for what we have and the people you’ve given us. Jesus, bring healing where hurts have been, replace discouragement with encouragement, and where hopes have faded renew our faith that you are here and you are powerful. We love you Jesus and we need you today. Amen.

SONG – For Your Name

SONG - Mighty To Save

Welcome / Greeting

Baby Dedication

1st – Curt and Elisha Peterson with Brandon

2nd –

Kurtis and Shannon Wilson: Khloe

Jason and Alicia Yoder: Elijah

Jim and Ginny Chapman: Lucas

Psalms 112:1-2 READ . . . It's a promise.

These parents each have a desire to raise their child to know Jesus. And this morning we want to pray for them. We call this a child dedication, but it's really a parent dedication, because this blessing does not save a child or make them Christian. This is a commitment of mom and dad to raise their son or daughter to know Jesus, that one day that child will commit themselves to being a follower of Jesus.

I have asked the parents to share their commitment in their own words, and a scripture that represents their hope for their child.

Parents share.

Stand and pray for families

SONG – Praise to the Lord Almighty

SONG – You alone of God

Offering – Ushers come forward for the offering

Announcements – Spirit of America meeting right after service in the prayer room. Did you know 50% of the people in this church have been here five years or less and 17% are within their first year with us? Which is a reminder why we announce some things that half of you already know about because in the last few years God's brought a lot of new people here.

- If you haven't been around here long, every year we have a little neighborhood party with 10,000 people from

San Jose. It happens on the fourth of July. We want to invite you to help for a part of your fourth of July. It's a lot of fun, but with many hands the work is light.

- Right after service, join Lisa in the Pray room right out these doors and she'll give you a quick rundown on how you can help. Particularly if you are new to the church, check that out, it's a great way to get connected with people as you are serving together.

Pray –

Video:

Message: The Blueprint to a Happy Marriage

ME

I would really like to think that my decisions to get married were very spiritual. I would like to think they were logical. In fact I would be content if I could say my decisions were almost cool and calculated because who wants to make a foolish decision to only regret later. I am considering the cost and determining whether I have what it takes to finish the task. Jesus tells a story about that. But in reality my decisions weren't cool and calculated but rather my decision to get married stemmed also from being hot and bothered.

What I mean is that when I met Kelli we were on the fast track to getting married.

- We had a lot of mutual friends who were trying to set us up. And eventually it was my younger sister who set us up on what they called a "team-mate date". I wasn't convinced that going out on a date with a girl and her entire volleyball team was a good idea. So I called her up and took her to dinner. The date was good and we stayed until the restaurant closed. The next day my sister asked Kelli how the date went and she replied with, "I'm going to marry your brother!"

- Three months after that date I'm driving to San Diego to surprise her dad and ask for her hand in marriage. Kelli's dad is a basketball coach and when I got there I could see the guys

scatter with a look like. "The boyfriend of coaches daughter just dropped by . . ." With a tear in his eye Kelli's dad says to me, "Are you sure you know what you are getting into?!"

- We got engaged in January. I flew her to Portland because she said it was the most romantic place she had ever been. We got the best table at this restaurant that looked over the waterway. Of course that night the fog had rolled in and we couldn't see more than 5 feet out the window. So I got down on one knee and proposed so I could enjoy this nice dinner we were about to eat.

- **The problem was this . . .** We couldn't figure out when we were going to get married because my family was all over the globe that summer. My dad was in South America, my sister was going to Africa, but my dad suggested we one day that was still available and everyone was still in town. May 5, Cinco de Mayo. I thought that was good because I could remember that anniversary date.

However, the only issue was that Kelli was graduating on Saturday, May 4, from College, and my other sister was graduating from a different college that same Saturday. So my family had two graduations and a wedding within 36 hours.

At this point I was not making cool calculated decisions, but rather decisions because I was hot and bothered. Once I knew I wanted this woman, I just knew I wanted this woman and the sooner the better.

- I did a wedding a few weeks ago and they waited five year to get married because someone they respected told them it takes five years to really get to know someone. If you would have told me to wait five years to get married, I would have told you I'm a fast learner, I can do in five months what it takes most people five years to figure out.

- I remember telling my pastor that I was getting married and I told him these exact words, "I know it will be tougher getting married this quick because I still have things to learn about Kelli, and it would be easier to learn those before we were

married. But I'm willing to take that tougher road." I had no idea what I was talking about or what that road would be like.

- BTW – Don't miss understand me, I'm not saying my wife was a tough person to love, I'm saying I didn't know how to love my wife in a way that she felt loved.

- My learning curve the first year of marriage was huge!!!

My marriage license was simply a learner's permit.

My crowning moment came on my wife's first birthday as a married couple. I was working as the student ministries pastor at a church, and I planned a High School Night Hike where we all students and I would hike in the hills in the dark and have a worship time, But oh yeah, I forgot I'm married and it's my wife's birthday. But once I realized my mistake I was quick to fix by inviting her to come along with the high school group!

I thought **my gift** that I had well planned out would make up for that mistake. I got her a pretty nice mountain bike. She wasn't a mountain biker, but I liked the sport and thought it might be a good way to spend time together. Wait, it gets worse. Because I am her champion and defender, and I didn't have a bike at this point either, I bought myself a bike so I could ride with her. I didn't want her to be alone, and it was a way to spend time together. Of course because I had a little more experience at mountain biking I spent a little more money on my bike than hers.

I say all this to let you know my learning curve was steep when I got married. But today I am the highly qualified pastor who is ready to lead the way in the marriage project!!! In reality, we are all learning and growing in our marriages and I wanted to share what God taught me at a critical point in my marriage. I know you have your own stories about how you are still learning because I have read your survey questions from last week.

WE

Survey Questions

Ladies, do you want to know what the number one question men were wanting answered?

1	I know she says she enjoys sex, so why doesn't she ever initiate it? If sex is free and fun, why not have a lot of free fun?	14%
The interesting part was this wasn't the only number one question. The top five questions were all within a few percentage points of each other. What this tells me is that guys, we just have a lot of questions that are all really important. When I looked at the Ladies questions, I think I found a correlation that could prove to be insightful.		
2	If men love their wives so much, why do they spend so much time at work, (or watching TV, or with your friends, or on the computer)? When I love someone, I want to be with them. ... It's the same concept of if it's free and fun, why not have a lot of free fun? . . . Just from the woman's perspective on what's really fun Major Projects or Bonus Projects. If you haven't read TMP book yet that won't make much sense to you. Read it and you'll figure out pretty quick what Major Project and Bonus Projects are.	14%

Men, do you want to know what the women's top question was?

1	Why do men get so defensive when you remind them of something they promised to do weeks ago? How should it be brought up?	17%
BTW – I did ask you if you have any of your own questions to please write them down. One man wrote this, and I thought it paralleled the other question well. "Why is it that when the husband doesn't do what he says he will do "he is a liar," But when the wife doesn't do what she says she will do, she "changed her mind."?		

Next week we'll have a panel of men on stage to answer the ladies questions from a Biblical perspective. And then the

following week will be a panel of women giving biblical answers to these questions the men have given us.

Why did I go over some of these questions now? I simply wanted to remind all of us that we are all on a learning curve here. This means we all need wisdom and input on the next steps for our marriage.

GOD

• My crisis in marriage.

Three months into being married, Kelli and I had been caught in a cycle of fighting, doubting our relationship, and just flat out confusion about whether we were right for each other. I'll never forget sitting in the car one night with her and one of us finally asked the question, **"I wonder if we didn't make a mistake in getting married."**

• I was completely overwhelmed with being a failure at my own marriage. I was headed to seminary the following month to get a Master's Degree and become a pastor and I couldn't even take care of my wife. I was faced with a real crisis and I needed answers fast. So I went to God and sat in the scriptures and he brought me to a verse that changed my perspective on Marriage forever. I'd like us to look at that scripture.

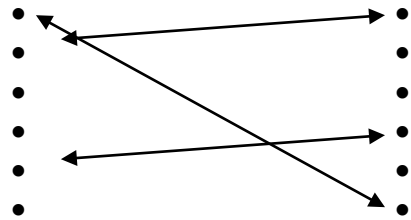
Turn to Luke 17 (page 741)

Clarify God's Blue Print

- As you are turning there, let me clarify something.
 - One person commented that they didn't need the survey questions answered but they wanted Biblical principles versus a marriage seminar.
 - Let me clarify that the answer to these questions are biblical principles that we need to scour the scriptures to

find. I get the fact that Sundays should be much more than good marriage advice or pop psychology.

God's Blueprint Your Marriage



- The problem I'm seeing in marriages is that most people aren't connecting the Biblical principles to the situations they face in marriage. Or they aren't able to connect the questions they have in marriage to the answers the Bible gives us. In the next several weeks we are connecting the questions and issues in most marriages to Biblical principles that God designed us to live by.

• **What matters to God in the scriptures, matters!**

Those scriptures were not given for God's sake but ours. God will use these principles to breathe life into our marriages.

• The beauty of looking at the Bible is this, you don't have to be married to have this morning be rich for you. If you are single you'll find these principles vary applicable for you, as well.

Have you found Luke 17?

Read v. 7 "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep..."

Jesus is telling the story to his apostles, probably just the 12 of them. As this story begins, who are the listeners supposed to identify with in the story? It's the masters.

Put yourself in that position. Suppose you as the master had a servant plowing in the field . . .

Read v. 7- "Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat.'?"

• Notice this isn't a wealthy master. He only has one servant to work the fields and do the cooking.

Jesus answers his own question with a rhetorical question:

Read v. 8 "Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'?"

The 12 disciples would all understand the servant's needs were taken care of after the master's needs.

• **Why? Because that is what the servant signed up for.**

That's their role. The disciples knew there was never any doubt that the master was more important than the servant. The role, the job, the position of the servant was to serve. Remember as Jesus tells the story who are the masters, it is the disciples. And no one would even argue this point with Jesus. Jesus is stating the obvious: servants serve and eat second because that's what they signed up for.

• We aren't talking about a chained slave, but a hired servant. The servant is compensated for their work, and the servant's job is clear.

Jesus asks one final question:

Read v. 9 "Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?" The answer is "NO!"

Example: I've felt this way when I go to a coffee place, and the guy behind the counter says that will be \$4.75 for a coffee, I hand him a \$10 dollar bill and he asks me, **"Do you want your change?"** Are you serious? Yes I want my

change. You are already being paid for your work, not only that you are just writing some initials on a cup and handing it to someone else to actually make the drink. I'm not taking my \$5.25 and putting it in your tip jar, not to mention that you asked for it. This parallels the concept that Jesus is talking about, "Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?" Now don't get me wrong, I think I'm a fairly generous person. I don't tip under 20% at restaurants, but when there is a sense of entitlement to a tip, or entitlement to appreciation because they simply did their job. Jesus is saying that the servant should not feel a sense of entitlement to be thanked or appreciated.

At this point the disciples, who are the masters of the slave in the story, agree with Jesus that servants shouldn't act that way. They agree with Jesus that servants should simply do what they signed up to do without feeling entitled to gratitude or additional compensation.

But then Jesus says this.

Read v. 10 So you also, . . . Here it is, he is speaking to the disciples, and they are about to get the main point.

When you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servant; we have only done our duty.'"

Jesus just turned the story upside-down. The disciples are no longer the masters with servants, but they are the servants. You see Jesus was warming them up to the concept he would speak later in

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ **Jesus called them together and said, "You know that**

the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

²⁶ **Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,**

²⁷ **and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--**

²⁸ **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

In our 800 square foot, two story condo, I read these words that changed my marriage because it changed me.

- I was looking for praise, appreciation, respect, and affection. I felt a sense of entitlement to have my needs met. Don't get me wrong Kelli was communicating love to me in her way, and I was trying to communicate love to her in my way. The problem was that neither of us were speaking or acting the right language to one another. We'll talk more about that in the coming weeks.

We got caught in a cycle where we were each dissatisfied with how our own needs were being met, and each of us were being critical at how the other person was serving us.

Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? As I read this passage, tears ran down my face because God's grace open up my eyes to this truth about me.

Main Point: The greatest enjoyment in my marriage comes through serving my spouse.

Question: What does your spouse owe you for serving him or her?

Respect, Appreciation, Compliments, sex?
The answer should be "nothing". They owe you nothing, but each spouse is designed to serve the other without an expectation of something in return.

Serving your spouse is what you signed up for. I typically use the same marriage vows for all my weddings. Here is what you signed up for. (Some of you I have done your weddings.)

Marriage vows: This is what you signed up for.

Men from simplicity sake I'll direct this to you. . .

To Groom: Do you (_____) in the presence of God and these witnesses promise to love and to honor, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, this woman whose hands you now hold? Do you take her to be your lawfully wedded wife as long as you both shall live? Do you commit yourself to her happiness and her self-fulfillment as a Christian and to her usefulness in the kingdom of God? Do you promise to be to her a true and faithful husband, to cleave unto her for all the days of your life? If so say "I do".

Then I ask them to exchange rings and say these words:

I, _____ / give you this ring / as a testament / of my endless / and faithful love. / With this ring / **I vow** to you / **in humility / before the Lord**, / that you will be my wife / and I will love you always.

• The character quality that is required to serve our spouse is humility. This week the Community Group guide is all about Humility.

We can either live up to these marriage vows or we should start changing the vow to "what I meant when I said "I do" ..."

Do you (Groom) in the presence of God and these witnesses promise to love and honor this woman when she shows you great respect and affection.

• **Ladies, Do you promise to stick by him as long as the money doesn't run out?**

• **Men, Do you commit yourself to her happiness as long as it doesn't interfere with your career or poker night with the guys?**

• **Ladies, Do you commit to cleave only to your husband unless he's not paying enough attention to you, then it's OK to talk to other men about intimate details of your marriage?**

• **Do you promise to love her as long as her body holds together fairly well?**

• **Men, do you commit to always be faithful to your wife, and only look at other women when she's not around.**

• **Women, Do you commit yourself to cleave to your husband, but leave room for your emotions to be given to another person as well.**

THESE VOWS ARE REALLY WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID 'I DO'

**YOU
QUESTIONS**

1. Am I just supposed to just grin and bear it as a servant to my spouse?

- Pastor, that's not a very inspiring message. Look at the question in verse 5 that inspired Jesus' story.

- **Verse 5 and 6**

- What's the Mulberry tree? It's not your spouse, it's the anger, failure, selfishness, destructive habits, lying, dissatisfaction. And it's not just your spouses but your stuff that is the Mulberry Tree.

Even a Little bit of Faith holds great expectation for God to move in your marriage.

- Expect God can heal you, change you, restore your passion, and reconcile you both.

“But Pastor, you don't know my marriage.”

2. What if I don't want to serve my spouse?

Luke 17:3-4

One word answers this: forgiveness

It is the most difficult relationship to forgive because the wounds are the deepest. But what good is forgiveness if it only heals superficial wounds.

Now some of you are strong students of the Bible, and you noticed that we are talking about marriage, but . . .

3. But Jesus wasn't speaking directly about marriage in this passage, is serving really a key to a healthy marriage?

- First, This passage is a **training story** for every follower of Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus, then this is how you treat everyone, especially those under your roof.

- Second, Ephesians 5:21 puts it in clear husband and wife terms. **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. . . . Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord . . . Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.**

4. What if I've already failed at this?

Congratulations and join the club. **Proverbs 24:16** “**for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again,**” - NOW RISE AGAIN.

(Optional)

5. Warning: This is not easy because:

- of the busyness of our world.
- we are all selfish to some degree
- we haven't agreed on a marriage plan.

You and your spouse may not agree on what's realistic to do. You haven't been able to agree about how you can serve each other best.

Why?

- You were raised differently and your expectations are driven by your previous family.
- The plan needs to keep changing and you haven't kept up. The plan always changes with kids, jobs, sickness, and church.

Kelli and I just celebrated 12 years of being married on Cinco de Mayo and we are still growing and learning, but luckily the learning curve has slowed a bit.

- Last night we were out to dinner with my parents and Kelli's parents who are celebrating 39 years of being married.

I say that because Kelli and I have been surrounded by parents who have served their spouses well. But they would each tell you they are still on the learning curve.

- One of my requests for the Marriage Project is that you find an **Encouragement CREW** – that's another couple who you check in with once a week to tell them you're your dates night are going and how the daily projects are going. I encourage you to find that other couple to share this project with and if you are having trouble finding someone else, then **Pastor John** has said that he'll help you connect with someone else, just email him.

Whether the marriage project is adding some touch up paint to dings in your marriage or possibly resurrecting a broken marriage, we must learn to serve with no strings attached. **The greatest enjoyment in marriage comes through serving your spouse.**

PRAY:

Some questions to bring about action:

- Do I need to forgive my spouse? (and really let it go?)
- Does my faith and hope need to increase that God will raise the level of my marriage?
- Can I serve my spouse in a better way?

The greatest enjoyment of my spouse comes by serving my spouse. Amen!

The next 29 days are filled with daily serving projects, May your marriages be blessed as you serve each other.