

Marriage on the Rock

Title: Part 5 – Tell the Truth

Date: February 18, 2024

Transition: Paul Prays & Seats

Prop: Blackboard

While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi,” as always, we say “Hi” to everyone joining us on our app or social channels. Let us know where you are watching from and if we can pray for you or serve you in some way.

If you are just jumping in with us today we are wrapping up a collection of messages called “Marriage on the Rock” and really we have had just one goal for this. As we have been diving into God’s Word together we have been learning how to take our relationship from “being on the rocks” to being built on the rock! The Bible is the most relevant relationship text ever written! It contains the timeless wisdom of God and the life-giving words of Jesus AND if you build your relationship on these principles you will be able to weather the storms.

We have said this, the Bible is:

The essential guide for anyone who is married.

The cheat sheet for anyone who hopes to be.

...or hopes to be again! As I’ve said every week. This is not just a married person thing. We have been packing stuff into every message that applies to you if you are a student, single or find yourself single again. If you will own the things we have been talking about, by God’s grace you will already BE the right person, when you finally meet the right person, amen? I love that our church is like one big family, and we care about everyone no matter what stage of life you find yourself in.

There are two topics we pretty much talk about every year at some point and they are relationships and money, and it’s interesting how much they both impact each other. Amen? But today as we wrap this up I want to give you one more rock for your relational foundation and that is to tell the truth!

Withholding the truth is an absolute relationship killer BUT that being said I want to make something 100% clear. Men, what I am about to tell you will save your marriage and it will ensure you get married. Men listen to me... when your wife or girlfriend comes up to you, and asks, “Do these jeans make me look fat...?” When you guys are out at dinner and some other woman (let’s say it is Scarlett Johansson) Scarlett Johansson walks by and your woman looks at her and then looks at you and says, “Do you think she is prettier than me...?” When your girl cooks you dinner and it is burnt beyond all recognition and she asks you, “Do you like it...?” Men listen to me. You LIE! You lie with every fiber of your being to the glory of God. “Yes honey it is definitely the jeans because you are not fat at all... Scarlett Johansson ain’t got nothing you babe... and I love blackened foods!” Are we on the same page guys? I know we are talking about telling the truth, but you hold your tongue like a hungry dog does a t-bone, and you lie!

Hey real quick lets hit the highlights from the first 4-parts of this. I am only partially joking about lying. But in week one we started with this idea of *leftovers*, meaning many times in our relationships we don’t persistently pursue the other person because of familiarity or exhaustion. The solution was to make love... a verb. Love is not a feeling, it is a choice, love is an action. We act our way into a feeling instead of feeling our way into an action.

In part two, we talked about *expectations*. We said what happens somewhere along the way in every marriage is we take all these desires, and wishes, and dreams and we hang them around the neck of our spouse as expectations. And the moment you do that it limits the ability to exchange love and intimacy. So, the solution was to keep things in the desire bag by realizing your spouse does not owe you a thing.

That's where we pick this up in 2 Samuel 12: (1-7)

¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. ⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." ⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." ⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

As I look at the life of David, I see the truth about myself. I do all these things I'm not even aware of to avoid the truth about myself, and to withhold it from others. I do all these things to withhold it from Cheryl, I withhold it from my friends, and I withhold it from God.

We talked briefly last week about the definition of intimacy. The word intimacy means to be fully known, it's literally "into me see." God created us for intimacy. He created us to crave intimacy. Intimacy with Him and intimacy with others. To be fully known by people. So, God's vision for your marriage is that we would experience intimacy. God's vision for your marriage is that you both would be fully known and fully loved despite that. BUT listen to me. Withholding truth compromises intimacy.

We see that in David's life. Yes the consequences of his action destroyed intimacy with those around him, but I would argue the withheld truth that he carried around for a year destroyed more of his intimacy with God, it destroyed more of his intimacy with his wife, and it destroyed more of his intimacy with his closest friends than the actual act itself. We see this in our own country. When a politician has an affair we are generally quick to forgive and move on *IF* they are open and confess it. It is when they withhold the truth that we tend to run them out of office.

But here is what is so interesting about me and about you. Even though we know that God has designed us for intimacy, the goal for most of our marriages and most of our most significant relationships drifts from intimacy to pain avoidance doesn't it? Even though we know that God has designed us to be fully known, our goal somewhere along the line becomes pain avoidance even though it costs us intimacy. No one leaves a marriage because it is too easy. People leave because it's painful. We don't like pain. We want to avoid pain.

Write this down, this isn't anything new, but we have to own this principle:

Intimacy is a byproduct of truth telling.

It is impossible to have intimacy in a marriage, or any relationship, if we withhold the truth. BUT if we will embrace this principle of truth telling in our marriages the pain we experience (and there will be pain) but the pain we experience will be worth fighting through for the intimacy that it produces on the other side.

{ON BOARD: Iceberg & Waterline}

on the cross, what God longs for is for us to live our life with no secrets. WHY? Because that is when we can be fully known *and* fully loved despite of it.

So, how do you get there? Write these down. We have to tell the truth to three people:

1. Tell the truth to yourself.

The greatest of all deception is self-deception. Repeat that after me, the greatest of all deception... is self-deception... that's why you have to tell the truth to yourself.

So, since we are telling the truth and all, I battle my weight, like it is an ongoing battle since I was 19-years old. I have lost like 50 pounds once, then 40 pounds another time, and over the past year (thanks to my doctor) it's time to lose some again. You can only call it baby weight for so long, amen? She's 7 now... BUT one of the best ways to control your weight is to weigh yourself at the same time every day. For me that is first thing in the morning before I ever eat anything. But I hate to do it! Because if the number is creeping up and up it means I can't just enjoy whatever I want to eat that day, which sucks for me because I truly get pleasure out of a good meal. So, what I will do is just not weigh myself for a week! I will just go off what I see in the mirror as if somehow I can see an extra 5 pounds. Somehow, I convince myself that if I don't see my weight then it will change the number I see on the scale next time. But it never does, it just makes things worse. Be honest, do any of you do this too? Come on... you convince yourself that if you can't see it then it makes it all better?

Our capacity for self-deception has no known limits! The prophet Obadiah in the Old Testament says it like this: (Ob 1:3)

The pride of your heart has deceived you.

We deceive ourselves! Maybe you are deceiving yourself about your temper. Maybe you are deceiving yourself about your schedule. Maybe you are deceiving yourself about a relationship with a co-worker or an addiction or insecurity. David went for a year living in the vague self-deception of sin about Bathsheba.

God longs for us to experience intimacy with Him and intimacy in our marriages, maybe the first step for some of us is to tell *ourselves* the truth. To stop hiding from ourselves. Because when we believe the lies we tell ourselves it puts us in a really dangerous place.

2. Tell the truth to your spouse.

If you are single then tell the truth to a trusted friend. If you are seriously dating someone and you see this turning into more then you both need to come clean before you slide a ring on that finger.

God has created us to know and to be known. When I talk to people going through some kind of relationship issue and they reveal something to me, I ask them, have you told your spouse that? Their response is usually the same... are you crazy? I could never tell my husband that. My wife could never know that about me. But withholding truth breaks intimacy.

So, my question to you today is: **Is there something that you hope your spouse never knows about you?** If so, that is breaking the intimacy you are designed for. If you are in a serious dating relationship, I would say the same thing to you; do you want to build this on half-truths or the whole truth? How intimate do you want to be?

3. Tell the truth to God.

And maybe this seems elementary or basic to you, but one author put it like this. This paints a picture of how we even self-deceive ourselves about this. He writes:

“Sometimes I go hours, days, weeks at a time never really thinking about Him; never really turning my heart and will over to Him; never seriously attend to Him; never bring Him sustained focus in my mind. The thought that I am entangled more and more in the sin that brought Jesus to the cross, that thought becomes bearable and then routine. Eventually I find God doesn’t seem very real. I find myself not praying all that much. The less I pray, the less real God seems. I forget God. I forget sin.” - Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

How did David forget that he slept with Bathsheba and killed her husband? How do we forget to tell God about the struggles we have? We think by not being honest with God we are actually saving ourselves from pain and hurt. We think we are avoiding pain. But what we forfeit by not being honest with God is a sense of His presence and power in our lives.

Which would seem natural if we didn’t have verses like this from 1 John 1:9. John writes about God’s promise to us:

But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

Some of you feel this distance in your marriage but maybe it has nothing to do with your marriage, it has to do with this distance you feel with God. Most couples wear themselves out here; they experience so much conflict and so much pain, that they never get to the things that are hidden. They stay partially honest with themselves. Partially honest with their spouse. And maybe most important, partially honest with God.

And look the church / Christian leaders and authors have failed in this area. We can talk about the Five Love Languages, conflict resolution, how to fight fair... not that those things are bad. But it doesn’t matter if I know my wife’s love language is physical touch... it isn’t by the way... but it doesn’t matter if I am withholding truth from her.

We look for behavior modification to improve our marriages all the time. But what we have tragically overlooked is our need for heart transformation. Telling the truth doesn’t require a change of behavior it requires a change of heart.

So, I want to leave you guys with three quick thoughts on how you can apply this message, and then we will be done. Write these down. The first one is:

Value truth-telling more than image-building.

I want to tell you it is okay to not have it all together. It is okay to not have the answers. It is okay to ask for help. For most of us, we never had a great marriage modeled for us. We have no idea what it looks like to be a Godly husband. We have no idea what it means to be a Godly wife. So, value truth telling more than looking like you have it all together.

This is why Cheryl and I have been to counseling a few times over our 21 years and why I openly talk about that. Some of you need to drop your pride and get some counseling. It's OK to be there today. In fact, I know there are things that you need to share with your spouse that you need a counselor to help you walk through it. If you need a referral to some Christian counselors you can do that on the Next Steps page of our website or app; someone who will help you tell the truth and walk through the pain.

But you have to care more about the truth than your image. Here's another thought:

Value transparency more than accountability.

I have a personal belief that accountability is a Christian crutch. I think accountability is useless. We use it to make ourselves look more spiritual than we really are. Accountability is only as valuable as the transparency we offer in the context of that accountability.

Do I think you have to be transparent with everyone, no, but you need to be transparent with someone! We have this mindset in the church world that if I have hidden parts of my heart that what we need is accountability. Look, I can meet with an accountability partner 7 days a week and unless I'm transparent, it does no good.

So, value transparency. I want to have a transparent relationship with my wife; I want to have a transparent relationship with God. I want to have a transparent relationship with a friend. Not everyone... but with a few people. Otherwise, I start to hide.

Last one:

Value intimacy more than the absence of conflict.

For many of us we equate the absence of conflict with the presence of intimacy. Because our goal is pain avoidance, right? Being fully known is risky; it comes with a price... but it is so worth it! What God has designed you for is intimacy. To be fully known and to be fully loved despite that.

BUT listen to me, you will not drift into intimacy, you will have to choose it! Here is the truth about truth: **the truth will set you free, but it will probably make you miserable first.** Amen? The truth will set you free, but it will probably make you miserable first! But it's worth it in the end.

The thing I love the most about the story of David is that after this encounter with Nathan David experiences a deeper level of intimacy with God than he ever had before... in fact, he was called a man after God's own heart after this encounter. Honesty is risky. Honesty will cost you. But it is worth it.

God wants this for you. Do you believe that? God longs to know you; He longs to be known by you.

AND His desire for your marriage is intimacy. Intimacy with no secrets... no hiddenness. What will you choose?

Let me pray for you.

[PRAYER TIME]