

McGregor Baptist Church

3750 Colonial Boulevard

Fort Myers, FL 33912

(941) 936-1754

James O. Holbrook

Pastor

John 2:1-11

SOUL-WINNING WITH THE SAVIOR

“Jesus Wants To Help With Your Marriage”

Jesus used many special occasions, in order to build people’s faith and to draw them closer to Himself. He realized that there are “seasons for the soul,” certain times when people are more aware of their need for divine help and more prone to take God seriously.

Jesus always wants to be involved, at these times. And he teaches us the importance of using these occasions as stepping stones for winning that soul to Himself.

One of these special times, in people’s lives, is a wedding. I have won many people to a new life in Christ, as I have counseled with them before their wedding or during some time when they were having difficulties in their marriage.

It is significant that one of Jesus’ first public appearances, and the setting for His **first miracle**, was at a wedding. He visited a wedding ceremony, in the little town of Cana, and **helped the bride and groom with their first big problem**.

Now, to us, their problem might seem kind of trivial – especially to a Baptist! They ran out of wine at the wedding reception.

In a Baptist church, you wouldn’t even be allowed to have wine at the reception, if it were held in the church building. (Isn’t this a subtle way of announcing a church policy?!)

And if you have your reception elsewhere, so you can drink, don’t expect a Baptist preacher to stay around too long; because he will get very uncomfortable when he sees his professing Christian friends “partying” with any kind of booze. I guess we have just been conditioned to think that God’s kids ought not to drink “the Devil’s brew!”

But obviously our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus, was not quite so concerned about this. After all, it was a different culture, and it was a different kind of wine. People drank wine, not as

a recreational drug, but because it was safer than the city water. They would often mix wine with the water, in order to kill the germs. The alcoholic content was not quite as potent as the “strong wine,” about which even the O.T. Jewish Scriptures warn us.

We would just say that they “ran out of punch” at the reception, before everyone had been served. And it was a very bad scene for the young bride and groom and their parents.

So Jesus did a miracle. He made them some more! Jesus wanted to help them to solve their marriage problems!

Let’s face it: **most all marriages have problems**. More than half of the marriages today are defeated by their problems and end in divorce.

Not only young couples, who are trying to adjust, have problems. Many, who have been married for years and who have outwardly seemed to be happy, suddenly shock everyone, when they cannot any longer handle their problems and they end up in a divorce. Even the “Born-again” evangelical Christian community seems to be following in the same pattern of defeat, to which the world-in-general has long surrendered.

Well, for all such struggling families, this story says: “**Jesus wants to help you to solve the problems of your marriage!**”

And let’s recognize, also, that **many of the problems in marriage are present on the day of the wedding ceremony**. Most people bring their problems into the marriage. They bring with them scars and fears from the past. They have personal “complexes” and have developed bad patterns, or stinking thinking.

These problems are all there at the wedding ceremony. Sometimes they do not become obvious, until after the honeymoon is over. Sometimes they show up on the wedding day itself, and they never let up until the divorce court. Sometimes these problems stay just beneath the surface for years, only to rear their ugly heads during the “mid-life crisis” or “after the children leave the nest”.

But how sad it is: what God designed to be the “Halls of the Highest Human Happiness” can so often end in the halls of the most bitter divorce courts. And nobody really wins, except the lawyers.

Oh, my friends, if you are having a problem in your marriage, I have “good news” for you. JESUS WANTS TO HELP YOU TO SOLVE YOUR MARRIAGE PROBLEMS!

Just remember: **there is no disgrace in having problems**. Everybody does. The only disgrace is to refuse to get the help, which we need in solving those problems.

Let me show you this morning how Jesus can help you. And I Hope that it will not just lead to the saving of your marriage, but I hope that it may lead to the saving of your very souls!

As I work with people, I find that there are about **five basic problem areas in marriage:**

I. The problem of **LOVING.**

People enter marriage, not knowing how to love. Now I know that this sounds crazy. Everyone, who comes to me to be married claims to be “in love.”

But after seeing that thin veneer, which they called “love,” chip away, until there is nothing of beauty left in the relationship, I seriously question if they ever knew what real love means. And usually, by the time folks go to the divorce court, there is no longer any love to be lost.

In this world there are so many **counterfeits for true love:**

There is **“infatuation”** with someone, who seems so wonderful. “oh, I just must have her as my own. She is so beautiful, and sweet, and talented. Oh, oh, oh!” That is.... Until we leave she also has some very un-wonderful traits that drive you up a wall!

There is **“fascination”** with someone who is so different and mysterious. That is, until one day the fascination gives way to frustration at someone who just can’t seem to see anything in the same way that you do!

Then there is **“desire”** or just plain “lust,” when you are physically attracted to someone, who “turns you on” and “lights your fire.” That is until the day comes when they no longer have the same effect on you, or when you find someone else who “turns you on” even more!

Or there is that **“pride of possession”** where you just feel so great to be seen with her and to let everyone else know that she is “yours” and yours alone. That is, until she gets tired of being treated like a new toy to be shown-off; or until he embarrasses you in front of your friends once too often!

Now these are all things which this world calls “love,” in its music and in its movies and in its magazines. But each is a cheap counterfeit for the real thing. And you cannot build a lasting relationship on a counterfeit.

No, there is only one kind of love, which can build a great and a successful marriage. It is the kind of love, which is described in I Corinthians 13:4-7 (Living Bible): a love which is “very patient and kind, never jealous nor envious, never boastful nor proud, never haughty nor selfish nor rude.” This kind of love “does not demand in its own way, is not irritable or touchy, does not hold grudges, doesn’t even notice little wrongs.” It is “loyal... no matter what the cost.” It “always believes, always expects the best, always defends.”

Friends, it is the violation of one or more of these characteristics, which can injure that love, which is so essential for a successful marriage.

And let's face it, this kind of love isn't "normal" nor even "natural." Few, if any of us, can bring that kind of love into a marriage. Most of us come into a marriage as selfish and self-centered individuals. It is very difficult for us to "give and take" in this manner.

No wonder our marriage statistics are so dismal. We don't even know how to really love!

But, dear friend, Jesus can help us to learn how to love. God's Word promises that, if we both invite Jesus to have control of our lives, that "the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts, one toward another" (Romans 5:5). And God's Word Assures us that, when we are willing to be under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of this relationship will be genuine love (Galatians 5:22).

Jesus can supply the love, which is lacking. That is no problem for Him. If both of you will accept Jesus as your Savior and allow Him to become the Lord of your lives, that kind of love will develop.

The man, who married us, compared it to a **love triangle**, with Jesus at the top, and Jim over here, and Gean over here. He assured us: if Jim gets closer to Jesus and Gean gets closer to Jesus then they will be brought closer together in the genuine love.

Friend, that is the only reason that we have had such a great marriage. And the love just keeps growing, and it is more wonderful today than when we first fell for each other!

Jesus can give you the genuine love. I've seen couples, who seemed hopeless. They began to center their marriages in Jesus. And they have made it wonderfully. So can you!

II. A second problem in marriage is **LEAVING** – leaving former ties, in order to establish your own private home.

In Matthew 19:5, God tells a man to "leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one..." it is impossible to build a family unit, unless we leave our parents and any former ties.

And how difficult it is for some people to leave "mama." If I had my way, I'd send everyone, whom I marry, so far away from home that they would have to cling together, just to make it... and so far away that they could not run home to mama!

God says to "leave mother and father." Leave past relationships and learn to rely on one another. Leave past securities and learn to depend on one another. Build your own private home, with no outside interference except for the guidance of God.

No wonder “Dallas” is a soap opera, when four families are trying to live in the same big old house and grandpa is running the show! That’s not God’s plan, in Texas or in any other state!

Jesus can help you with this. Let Him be “the invited guest” in your home. Both of you listen for His “still small voice,” within you. And build your lives around his principles, which are explained in His word, the Bible.

And you don’t have to be afraid of his taking sides. He loves you both equally. Let him be the head of your house, and then everyone else will have their rightful place.

Ephesians 5:4 tells us to “honor Christ,” as the head of your house, “by submitting to one another. You wives... submit to your husband’s leadership... and you husbands, show the same kind of self-sacrificing love for your wives as Christ showed to the church, when he died for her... children, obey your parents” (when you are young) and “honor your father and mother,” when you become adults.

This is Christ’s ideal design for a home. It will help you to build a great one!

III. A third problem in Marriages is in **LOOKING At Things In the Same Way**, or COMMUNICATING.

After people are married for a while, they start sending out messages to one another, which are never received. Or they read-in things, which were never meant.

Or they read each other’s minds: “I know what you’re thinking!” Well, just how do you know what I’m thinking? “Well, I’ve been married to you long enough to know!”

Mind Games develop and are played, with such regularity, that nobody is getting a clear message anymore. Nobody is able to look at things from the same perspective. **All true communication has ceased.**

Amos 3:3 asks: “How can two people get anywhere together, unless they be agreed?” The answer is: they can’t!

And they start to drift farther and farther apart, until they are eventually at cross purposes with one another! And they end up saying things, which they really do not mean. They make threats, which are not easily forgotten.

Oh, friend, you need a third party to get you together and to help you to learn how to communicate again. And I am not talking about a “counselor.” Oh, they are a temporary help. But you can’t spend your lives, talking to other people about your problems.

I’m talking about praying to Jesus—and do it together! Establish a regular time, every day, to pray—out loud—each of you baring his soul to Jesus. It is amazing how it can break down barriers and help you to throw away your silly games and teach you to listen for the other’s heart—rather than just dissecting their words!

Oh, “the family that prays together stays together,” because they learn to look at things in the same way, with the help of Jesus Christ.

I challenge you to establish the habit of a regular prayer time, in your home. Unless you decide and schedule it, you won't. So start tomorrow!

IV. People also have a problem with **LIVING As One**, or SHARING. **No two people operate with money, in the same manner.** Some are “easy come, easy go,” while their partner will try to “squeeze it ‘til it hollers.”

Some are compulsive spenders, while their partners try to be methodical savers. And when they can't “share and share alike” with the family funds, they can drive each other bananas.

Feelings are hurt. Suspicions arise. Anger develops. All because people do not know how to share.

Statistics say that financial problems are behind 75% of the divorces in America. If we don't learn to manage our money, it can manage to destroy our families!

My friend, Jesus can help you to manage your money. He promises that we won't have to worry about what we will eat and drink or how we will be clothed. If we will only “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these ‘things’ will be added to us” (Matthew 6:33). Jesus is saying: “Let me help you to manage your money.”

Jesus will help us to budget for what we need to eat, and what we must have to wear, and where we shall live. He will help us to discipline ourselves and to manage. But most of all, he will help us with setting our priorities.

If we will put his work first, by giving to Him our first ten percent, we will be forced to manage more carefully. But he will miraculously bless us, until our income stretches to cover all our needs.

As a family, we can work at this together, as an adventure in faith. And we will be praising God for His marvelous provision.

We have tried Him in our family. And we have learned that “my God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches... in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). And we have been drawn closer together, as we have become “co-managers” of what He has entrusted to us.

V. The fifth marriage problem is **LIKING Each Other**—or letting each other know how much we are liked, by **AFFIRMING** each other constantly.

Many couples **do not know how to** affirm one another, or to **build each other up**. Instead, they constantly tear each other down, by the words which they say and the looks which they give and the things which they do. Many couples “cut each other down” more than they “build each other up.”

A major reason, why God gave us sex, is so that we might affirm and assure each other. Whether it be the “sweet nothings,” which we say, or the reassuring touch, or the hug which makes us feel wanted, or the tender caress, or the most intimate of all assurances...where the two become physically one...these are all ways which God gave us, so that we could affirm one another. They are ways to remind each other that we are “liked.” They help us to build-up one another’s sense of worth, which the daily grind(in this dog-eat-dog world) seems to erode right out from under us. And it is so important!

Listen friend, sex is neither for “scoring” nor for “fulfilling you own biological needs” (how animalistic!). In its highest sense, sex is the way that God gave us to show each other how really important we are to one another.

That’s why the ultimate and irreparable insult to our partner is when we go out and have sex with someone else. We call that “unfaithfulness.” And it is the cruelest blow, with which we can cut-down and abuse the loving trust of our life’s partner. It is a horrible sin!

Friend, I don’t know how much you build each other up or how badly you have cut each other down. But I do know that Jesus can help you to forgive each other. And **He can help you to rebuild your sagging egos**.

He has set for us a wonderful example, by forgiving us of all the sins, rebellions, and unfaithfulness, which we have shown toward himself, as our creator God. He has promised: “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.” Oh, if He can forgive us like that, can’t we forgive one another for the hurts of the past?

Not only that, but He has invited us to become His beloved “bride.” The church is “the bride of Christ” (Revelation 21:9). And as his bride, he loves us and reassures us and encourages us and cares for us and has gone to prepare a mansion for us. He has promised folks, who are as unworthy as you and I, that He will “never leave nor forsake” us.

Wow! What an example for us to follow with one another. If we would only try to treat each other like Jesus treated us.

So affirm one another. Lay off the nagging criticism. Overlook the few short-comings. Bite your tongue, before you take a “cheap shot” at one another. Practice encouraging, like Jesus constantly encourages us with His Word, the Bible. Yes, write some love letters, like Jesus wrote to us, in the Bible.

This can make your home an oasis of hope, in the midst of a troubled world!

Jesus can help us so much, when we have entered into a personal relationship with Him! Tell me, have you ever opened the door to Jesus and allowed Him to become the center of your life? That is the key to everything. Especially is this so in a marriage. It is **the key to turning your problems into triumphs!**