

WEEK 5 - OCTOBER 16, 2016

Sermon Title: SOS

Sermon Passages: *Ephesians 4:20-32; Matthew 5:21-26; Matthew 7:1-6; Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*

Life Group Passage: *1 Peter 3:1-7*

Big Idea: *We all have patterns of our old lives that we need to allow God to change in us, or they will destroy us and those we love.*

Themes:

- We are to communicate to one another in truth and love.
- Conflict in relationships is normal and a great opportunity to glorify God, grow yourself and grow the person you love. Handling conflict biblically is a great path to oneness.
- There is a biblical way to handle conflicts - we have been called to live at peace with all and seek reconciliation.
- We have to learn to become less and elevate the other in relationships. This is what Jesus has done with each of us and it is the way of Christ in relationships.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did your family of origin resolve conflict? What aspects would you like to incorporate into your marriage? What aspects would you like to avoid in your marriage? *[leader - people who are unmarried should still be able to answer this question]*
- How do you view conflict: as something to be avoided at all cost or as an opportunity to build your relationship? Why?
- What are some subjects, topics, circumstances or settings that often lead to conflict in your relationships? If you are married, please answer about your marriage; if unmarried, answer about a person who is close to you.
- Read Matthew 7:5. What are some "logs" you need to take out of your eye?

MARRIAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

"What if God intended marriage to make us holy more than happy?" - Gary Thomas

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

You've probably been to a restaurant where the waiter brought out a dessert tray at the end of the meal and tried to tempt you into ordering one. The desserts usually look real, but if you look closer, you will see that these appealing "desserts" are often fake and made of plastic.

In many ways, you are constantly bombarded with lies about marriage that are like the fake desserts. They appear good and true at first glance, but if you look more closely, they are actually counterfeit. Below are some of the lies that you can be tempted to believe if you are not careful.

Lie: I should "feel" in love at all times.

Truth: Love is more of a conscious decision than a feeling. If you remember Lesson 1 and the discussion of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, love is described by actions rather than emotions. Otherwise, it is

actually the loving actions that will bring about loving feelings, not the other way around. You should enjoy when you “feel” in love, and whether you feel like it or not, always act in loving ways.

Lie: My marital issues and problems are different or unique.

Truth: There are no new or unique problems in marriage. First Corinthians 10:13 says, *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.”* You will be tempted to think that you are “terminally unique,” that your problems are different and can’t be overcome. Whatever your issues are, they are not new or unique. Others have worked through them and you can as well. Understanding that your problems are not unique and that God will help you, allows you to move through seasons of difficulty confidently and courageously.

Lie: I married the wrong person and my “soul mate” is still out there.

Truth: You made a commitment to your spouse and God has joined you together. Jesus said in Matthew 19:6, *“So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let no man separate.”* Just about everyone at some point in their marriage will wonder if they married the wrong person. You have not missed God’s will. If you are married, it is God’s will that you stay married to your spouse. Rather than spend your time wondering what it would be like to be married to someone else, remember your commitment and that God has joined you together. Then look for ways to invest in your marriage. The more you actively invest in your marriage, the less you will find yourself wondering what it would be like to be married to someone else.

Lie: My marriage shouldn’t be this hard.

Truth: When two sinners marry, there will always be difficulties. In fact, 1 Corinthians 7:28 says, *“Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.”* If you have issues, it doesn’t mean you made a mistake or should give up. All marriages, no matter how perfect they seem from the outside, have their issues, but because many don’t talk about them, we assume their marriages aren’t difficult. Every marriage takes work, and no one passively arrives at a great marriage. If you see someone with a truly great marriage, you can be assured that they have worked incredibly hard to get there.

Lie: My marriage and spouse are supposed to make me happy.

Truth: Real joy only comes from God. Psalms 16:11 says, *“You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* Your spouse and your marriage can be real blessings to enjoy. However, if you look to your spouse to meet needs that were intended for God alone to meet, it will be exhausting for your spouse, and disappointing and frustrating for you.

Lie: I can never have a great marriage because there has been so much damage.

Truth: When you sin, God doesn’t look for ways to punish you or withhold His best from you. Psalms 103:10 says, *“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.”* When you sin, you may believe that God will withhold His plan A for your future and give you His plan B instead. While there still may be consequences for your past actions, the good news

is that God is for you, not against you, and wants you to experience the ideal of marriage He created.

- Which lie(s) in the above list do you tend to believe? Why? What can you do to remind yourself of what is true?
- What lie(s) that are not on this list do you tend to believe (divorce would be easier, my spouse is the problem, etc.)? Why? What can you do to remind yourself of what is true?
- Read Matthew 4:11. How did Jesus respond each time He was tempted? What hinders you from responding likewise when you are confronted with a lie?

SINGLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read Matthew 4:11. How did Jesus respond each time He was tempted? What hinders you from responding likewise when you are confronted with a lie?

ACTION ITEM

- Ask your spouse or family member how you could become better at resolving conflict and write their answer below. You can ask clarifying questions, but don't rebut what they share.
 - Ask the same question of a co-worker as well as a good friend.
 - Compare the answers. To what do you attribute any differences between how your conflict resolution is perceived?
 - What changes would you like to make to how you handle conflict based upon what you've learned?