

A Grace Filled Marriage



1 Peter 3:7

Let's open to 1 Peter chapter 3:7 as we give our last message on marriage in our 20/20 vision in 2020. Next week, we will continue to talk about family, but in another aspect. The context of 1 Peter is verse 21 of chapter 2 through chapter 3 verse 6, but we will only read verse 7 as our key text. Normally, we preach the books of the Bible verse by verse, but in this series, we are preaching through verses of Scripture, but we're applying different scriptures to different topics because we want to make sure that in 2020 we have 20/20 vision. This morning, this is going to be more of a true topical message. I want to use this passage, but we're going to be bringing in a lot of different passages dealing with the subject matter. We've been talking about how marriage should be a loving friendship, a Spirit filled loving friendship, and this morning (not to get too many adjectives in our description of marriage) we want to talk about a grace filled marriage. I don't know if we can put all that together, but what we

hope to have in our churches are marriages that are grace filled, Spirit filled, loving friendships.

Scripture

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

Some of you realize this, but we are camping as a family at Hillman Ferry Campground. They will actually let you set your camper up for twenty-one consecutive days on a site and you don't have to move during those days. So, on August 19th, to make sure we could get twenty-one days that would run consecutively through Labor Day weekend, Celisa and I decided to take our camper to Hillman Ferry. We got up early that morning, called the campground, and they said they had several sites open. Celisa and I like to get a site on the lake overlooking Pisgah Bay and we have a favorite site, site C-18. When Celisa was on the phone about 6:45 in the morning, she asked if there was any way they had a lakeside site open. The lady said no, but we do have a family that is going to move off one of them about midmorning, and you could get that lot if you were over here in time. Celisa asked which lot it was and the lady said C-18. Yes! Immediately, I left home with the camper, pulled into Hillman Ferry Campground and I am told that I'm the first person there and I can get C-18 if I'm willing to wait. They tell me they think the family is going to move off about midmorning, and it's 8:00 in the morning. That wasn't any problem. I took my Bible and my iPad since it was Wednesday, and I was going to study for my lesson. I just pull off to the side and start waiting and studying. 10:30 gets there and they've still not moved. Then it is 12:00 and they still haven't moved. Then it is 1:00 and they still haven't moved. Then it is 2:00 and they've still not moved. Then I had this thought going through my mind...they don't have to move off. What if they don't move off, and I've literally waited all day to get our favorite site and they don't leave? Praise the Lord, about

2:30, they moved off of the site and I got to pull my camper on site C-18 and we have the best view of Pisgah Bay overlooking the lake, and we have electric and water. The only disadvantage to this campsite, we don't have sewer.

Now, there is a section at Hillman Ferry called T section and it has full hookup. That's where the Kelly's, the Swain's, and the Harlan's and other friends are camping this weekend. They have full hookup, but Memish and Papaw only have water and electricity. We are a little ahead of Kory and Katie because they're on a basic site, which means they've only got a site overlooking the water, no electricity, no water, and no sewer. Don't feel sorry for us; feel sorry for them, amen. Get this picture. On the 4th of July weekend, Celisa and I camped in section T with full hookup, but as Labor Day approached, we had a decision to make. Would we rather have T with full hookup or C-18 with our favorite view without sewer? We chose to have C-18, and here is why. If you know anything about a camper, you know that campers come with storage tanks. One storage tank holds your fresh water, another holds your gray water, and the other holds your black water. Your gray water tank is where the water from the sink and shower runs to. Anything you wash off of yourself goes into the gray storage tank. There's another tank called black water, but I'll not be too detailed here even though I'm from the country and this is perfectly ok to talk about on the farm. This is the tank that holds the stuff that doesn't come off of you it comes out of you, your commode, or toilet. If you're from the country, you say commode, if you're a city person you say toilet. In our camper, we have a storage tank that runs from the commode to this special tank and all of a sudden, it's inside our camper. So I had to bring a little portable tank about three foot by two and seven inches deep. When I was hooking up the camper, I couldn't hook it to full sewage, but I had my sewage hose running from my black and gray water tanks to this little tiny portable tank with two wheels and a little hitch. After you've been at the campground around four or five days, those tanks start getting full and I can actually pull a valve, release part of that water from those two tanks into the portable tank, pull that tank to the top of the hill, and hook it to my truck hitch. Here I am, Bro Ricky, pastor of Hardin Baptist Church, driving through the campground with everybody seeing my sewage in my portable

tank. I get to the dump station and I have another sewage hose I hook from the tank to a drain in the ground, so all of our sewage runs into that drain. Hillman Ferry has this massive sewage treatment center. After camping a lot for the last twenty-one days, can I just say this to you guys without embarrassing myself or anyone in here? I have the responsibility of emptying the storage tank. That never falls to Celisa; it always falls to me. Every time I pull that valve and put part of our gray and black water into that tiny portable storage tank, parade it through the campground to the dump station, let me just say this...our sewage stinks.

I can't tell you how many times as a husband (in our marriage) I went to look and as I get a big whiff, I want to say, man, she stinks. I know if she were there, she would say oh no, that's not me; you're the one that stinks. But here is what I know to be true; we stink. I'm ok to admit it. From time to time, there are times in our relationship when Celisa and I do not deal correctly with what is coming off of us or what is coming out of us in the marriage relationship, and it stinks. See, if I were over there in section T, I could just flush the toilet and Hillman Ferry would deal with everything, but I don't have full sewer, so I have to deal with it. Because I have to deal with it, I know that when you don't deal with it immediately and it goes into a storage tank, no matter how many chemicals you put on it, no matter how much soap and shampoo you used, when that just sits there in that storage tank and you empty into the little storage tank, it stinks on the inside and on the outside. I'm afraid many of us who do not have grace filled marriages have marriages that smell. Do you know what that smell causes us to do? It causes us to separate. I'm not saying you're ever going to divorce. I'm just saying you're going to move apart. The intimacy in the marriage physically, spiritually, and psychologically gets hindered, broken because we won't deal with what's wrong in our lives.

This morning, I challenge you and me to make sure that in this loving friendship that we have based on the Song of Solomon, in this Spirit filled relationship we have based on Ephesians chapter 5 that we also understand as Christians, we ought to have a marriage that's based on the grace of God. Because our marriages can be based on the grace of God,

our marriages can be filled at all times with God's enabling grace. That's what we're going to talk about this morning.

Did you hear what Peter said? He said, 'likewise.' Now men, he's going to address us husbands. He just addressed wives in 1 Peter 3:1-6, he began that section with 'likewise.' These two instances of 'likewise' tell us that what Peter is telling us concerning our marriages is based on something he has already said. To get the core of how to have a grace filled marriage, he says we men ought to be dwelling with our wives in an understanding way. In other words, we ought to know our spouses. We should give honor to them. Why should we honor them? It is because we recognize that together we are heirs of the grace of life. God has graced us to be in this relationship with her and we are co-heirs of life. Why does he want us to do what he wants us to do? It is because he said if we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing, it hinders our prayers; it hinders our fellowship with our heavenly Father. Can I just say this right off the bat? If it's not going right with her, it's not going right with Him. I hope you men sense that. Many times, that's what causes me to deal with the gray water and the black water of my marriage. It is because I fully recognize that I'm not right with her, I'm not right with Him. I'm hindered spiritually.

Here are our principles. See, when we back up, Peter's admonition to us men and women is based on these. Let's go back to chapter 2:21. Peter is talking about the relationship between servants and masters and how sometimes servants are in relationships where the masters are not going to treat them justly, not treat them right. Right before this, Peter has just talked about how as Christians we live under governmental authority, so we're supposed to follow the authority of our government. He goes from government, master relationship, and now he goes into the husband/wife relationship. But the husband/wife relationship is based on something that he talked about in that relationship between servants and masters. Verse 21 says, "For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you." The context is there will be times in relationships when we suffer unjustly, when someone does something to us that is not right, not fair. It hurts us. It harms us. We all know in the marriage relationship, especially starting out, we hurt each other. You just can't live in this world without

picking some of this world up on you. Many of us bring that into our marriages, whether it's environmental, hereditary, and genetic, and we hurt each other. There are spouses in here right now who have been hurt unjustly. You didn't deserve at all what your husband said or did, or what your wife said or did. Our example is Christ. He's the example that we should follow, Peter says. Verse 22 says, "He committed not sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued in trusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;" listen to this next phrase, "by His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep and have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Apply the Blood of Christ

I would like to present two principles about a grace filled marriage. In a grace filled marriage, spouses learn to apply the blood of Christ and the life of Christ to their relationship. Now, in a grace filled marriage, as a spouse I learn to apply the blood of Christ to my spouse when my spouse sins against me. I know you can't imagine this, but on that rare, occasional, once in a five year span, when Celisa actually does something unjust toward me, at that moment in a grace filled marriage, I have to apply the blood of Christ to her sin. She has to do likewise on a much more frequent basis. If I'm a grace filled person, based on Christ suffering unjustly on a cross, nothing He deserved, nothing He had done, strictly because of my sin, He bore my sin on a tree, He is my example. He's Celisa's example. When we sin against each other, we have to apply blood.

Apply the Life of Christ

Now, what if I'm the one who did the sinning, not the one who got sinned against? What I must learn to do is to learn to apply the life of Christ. See, if I apply the blood of Christ to my marriage, when Celisa and I sin against each other, we forgive each other. But, for there to be a sin to be forgiven, it means one of us sinned against the other. What do I do when I sin against her? I apply the life of Christ. What the life of Christ allows me to

do is to do the right thing. What is the right thing for me to do once I've sinned against her in the marriage? I confess my sin to her and I repent of my sin to her. So in a grace filled marriage, there will continually be forgiveness and continually be confession and repentance. Now, I am so thankful at home that my house is connected to a septic tank and it just disappears and I never have to deal with it. But at the camper, I have to deal with it. Let me tell you what I try to do at the campground, and you'll probably think I'm silly. I try to restrict how much water we use that will go into the gray and black tanks because I'm the one who has to deal with it. One of the reasons we love C-18 is because it is right across from the bathhouse. Trying to sacrificially love Celisa the way I should, knowing how Christ loves His bride, all the time we are camping I tell Celisa for her to use the camper bathroom. It's teeny tiny; she can barely get in it. It is so small, only one of us can get in it at a time. While she's in the camper bathroom using full facilities, I sacrifice and go to the bathhouse. She loads my shaving kit up with soap, shampoo, and everything I will need. I take it and my towel, go out of the camper, up to the bathhouse, take my shower, and then I come back because our bathroom isn't big enough and I don't want to put my waste in that tank I have to deal with later. Let me tell you what I never do. When I'm at the campground on Saturday night, I never stay all night on Saturday night because Celisa and I have this thing about going to bed clean. We don't like to get in the bed and one of us be dirty. So on Saturday night at the campground, I just can't get clean enough knowing I'm going to preach the next morning. I know that sounds crazy. When I go to sleep, I'm not that guy who wakes up the next morning after my nighttime bath and be ok; I've got to have a bath in the morning too. I know I'm giving you too much information about me! I just can't imagine going to the bathhouse right before I go to bed, and then having to get up really early and having to take another bath before I drive to church. So I go home by myself, usually, on Saturday night. Last night, I walked into my bathroom after several days, and it seemed so big! I showered in my shower, standing before my sink this morning, and I look over at her sink, but she's not there. It reminded me that I am so thankful I don't live in a camper. See, if I lived in a camper, Celisa and I would always be in the room of cleansing by ourselves. She would be in the camper and I would

be in the bathhouse. That's not what God ordained. In marriage, we've got to deal with what gets on us and what comes out of us together. Do you hear me? Men, quit trying to hide! Quit trying to deny! Quit trying to excuse! Please, quit flaunting what you're doing that's hurting her. Please, as a wife, quit hiding. I know there's hurt. I know there's pain, but you're in a relationship now where hopefully it is safe and secure. As a female, you can deal with your past. So don't hide, don't make excuses, don't deny, please! This causes such a smell in most marriages when the husband or wife decides that's just the way I am, and you're just going to have to live with it. Why would we not want to deal with what causes an odor in our marriage that's ultimately going to cause our spouse to pull away from us. Done correctly, your spouse will pull to you. As we deal with our yuck, God will draw us closer together in true intimacy, physically, spiritually, and psychologically.

So in a grace filled marriage, there will be three primary characteristics. I'm talking about in this particular area of dealing with our gray water and black water.

1. A spirit of forgiveness
2. A spirit of confession
3. A spirit of repentance

When we get sinned against, we must forgive immediately. Let me explain what forgiveness is. Forgiveness is God giving us the ability to let go of what our spouse just did to us. If we don't let go of it immediately and you put it in the storage tank, you can't put enough chemical in there to keep the smell down. You're just delaying dealing with what you must deal with. Do you hear me? If you don't forgive and you put it in the storage tank, you know it's there. I think somehow we think that if we don't forgive our spouse, our spouse is going to notice how hurt we are, and that's going to cause them to do the right thing. How can us doing the wrong thing ever cause somebody else to do the right thing? When our spouse sins against us, immediately we must forgive. If we don't, it goes into the storage tank and we will devise ways that they must pay us back for what they've done. We will try to make them pay. The moment we do that, the relationship changes from a husband/wife relationship to a banker/creditor relationship.

Please don't get into that kind of relationship. Physically, financially, a banker/creditor relationship may be a good relationship, but in marriage, it stinks. So please forgive immediately.

There are two reasons why you forgive immediately. One is because God has forgiven you. If you've been forgiven, you forgive. You say you can't. If you can't, then you need to examine whether or not you're a believer because believers must forgive. In Matthew chapter 18, there is this parable that answers what you want to know: how long should I forgive? Peter asked that question once and thought he had the right answer. He said hey Lord, how many times should I forgive, seven times? Jesus said just multiply seven times seventy and see what number you get. Then Jesus told this story about a guy who had this enormous debt, a ten thousand talent debt. That's about the debt of the United States of America right now. Pretty big, right, and a guy gets forgiven of that kind of debt. But once he got forgiven of that debt, he went out and found a guy who owed him three month's salary and he wouldn't forgive the guy. Can you imagine someone being owed three month's salary and they've just been forgiven a debt about the size of the debt of our country, and they won't forgive? That's how God views you as a wife not forgiving your husband. That's how God views you as a husband not forgiving your wife. If you don't forgive, guess what happens...God doesn't let you enjoy forgiveness, and He delivers you to the tormentors. When you don't forgive, the unforgiveness does nothing to them, but it does everything to you. It literally eats you alive if you're a Christian. This doesn't just apply to the marriage relationship; it applies to all relationships that we're in as Christians. We forgive because God has forgiven us. We forgive because if we don't forgive, we will be delivered to the torment of unforgiveness. Now, this is about marriage.

I'm going to say something that I didn't use to say. I have forty years of marriage behind this statement. I had thirty-seven years as your pastor two years before I said this. Scripture clearly teaches that if you sin against your spouse, sexually, then yes, they must forgive you, but they don't have to reconcile with you. Don't you dare think a grace filled marriage means you can break your marital vow and it be ok. Do you hear me? In all of my

counseling, you have no idea how long it takes to rebuild the trust when that takes place.

If you're an unbeliever and you leave your believing spouse, Paul says that believer is free from that marriage. Besides those two, in a marriage, God wants there to be forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation starts with you and I exemplifying grace that's been given to us in Christ. We forgive our spouse.

What about when I'm the one doing the sinning? What about when I'm the one doing the hurting? I must confess my sin to my wife and I must repent of it, and Celisa must do likewise. The Bible is clear that if I'm walking with God, He shines His light on me and I become aware of my sin. Being aware of my sin, being under the conviction of God's Holy Spirit, it leads me to a place to where I confess my sin because I know He's faithful and just to forgive me and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. When I sin against Celisa, I want her to apply the blood of Christ to me, but at the same time she's doing that, I must apply the life of Christ to me. Christ didn't just die to forgive me of sin; Christ died for me so that I could live to righteousness. So once I have committed an act of sin against my wife, it now should bring me to a place to confess that to her. The word, confess, in 1 John 1:9 literally means to agree with God about. So when I confess sin to God, I'm not just mouthing words; I'm agreeing with God that what I did is as He sees it. It is sinful. It put Jesus on a cross. Jesus had to die. Jesus had to be separated from God for what I did. How many of you men truly confess to your wives when you hurt her. I'm talking about you saying, honey, I sinned against you, and then state what you did. You guys who have been with me through the evolution of my pastoring here, you knew several years ago I asked us men to quit saying I'm sorry. I think many of us men are living with wives who are tired of us saying I'm sorry because we're always sorry. Then we're sorry the next week, and then sorry the next week. Pretty soon, they're going to get the idea we're a sorry spouse. Some of us are. We want them to apply the blood, but we won't apply the life of Christ. See, here's what I think. When I say I'm sorry, I'm saying I'm sorry because I'm dealing with Celisa. I have just hurt her and I'm now sorry for how she feels. I'm sorry for what my sin did to

her and I'm dealing with her. When I'm sorry enough, she's going to say it's ok. I've asked her not to ever say it's ok to me. I don't ever want to think what I did wrong to her is ok. We men will have this tendency to walk away thinking it's really ok and they just said that. The reason they just said that is because when we say I'm sorry, we're really not dealing with us; we're dealing with them. Do you see that? I'm dealing with how she feels, but when I come along and say, I sinned against you by...I'm now dealing with me. Do you see that difference? When I deal with me, it brings hope to our marriage. What will I do now? I'm now in a place to where I can apply the life of Christ, the Jesus who died on the cross for my sin also got up from the grave so that I could be dead to sin, so that activity, that action that is unjustly hurting her, I don't have to keep doing it! When I confess, that confession leads to repentance.

Repentance means to turn, to change. I can truly have a change of behavior. I can have a change of life. That's what being in a grace filled marriage does. Last week, we tried as best we could to get us to understand that if we're in a marriage relationship your wife is your body and your husband is your head, and you are one. So when I hurt her, I hurt me because she is me and I am her. I've learned that I think God designed Celisa for me, and sometimes in my life, she is a window that I look through, and I understand the value of other people. There are just some things I would not see if I didn't have her. She's like a window. There are also times she is a mirror. She's light to me, reflection to me, not of her, but of me. I see me when I see her. I see how my life is affecting her. So I want to close with a quote from me to you. "If I am a grace filled husband, I should see what my sin is doing to me because I should see what it's doing to her." Did you hear that? When my sin is affecting her, it's affecting me, but I don't always see what it's doing to me if I didn't have her as my body. When it's not right with her, it's not right with Him. I want to be right with Him; therefore, I want to be right with her. Why am I right with Him? It's because of the blood of Christ and the life of Christ. Why can I be right with her? It's because of the blood of Christ and the life of Christ. Please don't ever go to bed dirty. Let what gets on you go into your gray water tank, and let what comes out of you go into your black water tank,

but let's be clean with our spouse so they won't pull away from us, but will be drawn to us in true biblical intimacy.