

Sermon for Sunday, August 12, 1979, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor
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"GOD'S GLUE FOR FRACTURED FAMILIES - IV"

Philippians 2:1-11

Text: "God complete my joy by being of the same mind, have the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." Philippians 2:2

For the past several Sundays we have been dealing with the subject of the Christian home and we have been focusing on what holds a family together. Our basic assertion is that God has given a plan, a pattern, for the Christian home and that a home will hold together in direct proportion to the way it follows God's pattern. I believe that the family is the basic unit of human society. Without the family, we see an incredible breakdown in every area of life. If you who are history buffs would go back and trace the decline and fall of every great empire, I think you will find that the disintegration of any great culture, any great nation, any great peoples, and great civilization began with the breakdown in the family.

Because that is true, it is of surpassing importance that we Christians understand in our day and time what God's plan for the family is. Today in America--and all over the world, for that matter--we are seeing a breakdown in the home. In our country today 40% of all marriages end in divorce and the increase of couples living together without benefit of marriage is increasing dramatically. The number of children born illegitimately is almost equal to those born of married parents and in some areas even exceeds that number. So the home is important. If the home fails; everything else fails. If America fails it will be because the homes of America failed first. So this series of sermons on the Christian family is important. It is important for us as individual families, it is important for us as a church, and it is important for us in this nation.

In this series I have laid down three basic subjects relating to the family that we have been and will be talking about. They are, Rule--God's structure for the family. Relationship--God's plan for the relationship of husband and wife, of parent and children; and Role--God's ideal for the part that each member of the family plays. Copies of the first three sermons are available this morning or you may write the church office for copies. The first sermon dealt with the rule that God has used to structure the home. Every human institution must have some form of structure or it cannot operate. No institution, no society, no organization, can function without structure for without it, anarchy results. God's plan is that the man be head of the house. The second sermon began to focus on relationships. There we talked about the inter-relationships of the family but focused primarily on the husband. In the third sermon we focused more on the wife. Today I want to focus on the relationship of husband and wife. Faced with a growing breakdown in families, an increased divorce rate, the mushrooming breakup of families, what are the elements that God lays down to serve as glue to hold families together, which cement relationships between husband and wife?

I would like to suggest this morning three basic elements of God's glue for a husband and wife. First, there is physical unity. They become one flesh. Perhaps it would be helpful for you to turn to Ephesians 5:28-33. There we are told that a man is joined to his wife and the two become one flesh. In effect, the Bible says that when a man and a woman come together in sexual union, in a profound way that is past adequate description, a biological covenant is brought into being. Now, listen to me carefully! The Bible uses this relationship--a bold and startling symbol--to describe the covenant relationship between God and his people.

Please understand me clearly. When a man and a woman enter into sexual union, the Bible says that something transpires between them that is far deeper and far more significant than the merely physical aspects. That's why the Bible comes down so hard on fornication and adultery. According to the Bible two people in sexual

union become bone of bone and flesh of flesh.(Genesis 2:23) When sex becomes lawless; that is, when sexual union is practiced without restraint outside the bonds of marriage--it has become the most demonic and destructive force in the social history of mankind. But when sex has been expressed within the plan that God has laid down, it has become the most beautiful, the most uniting force in the lives of couples and in the development of nations.

So God takes the physical union of a man and a woman and uses it as a bold and strong symbol of his covenant relationship to his people. As a sort of parenthesis to you young people, let me say this: do not be deceived by what you read in many modern novels and books, do not be deceived by what you see on television and in the movies. There is nothing new and modern about what you are seeing. It is as old as mankind. And what you are seeing and hearing is disruptive, it is damaging, it is destructive to who and what you are as a human being. Don't be trapped into thinking a casual sexual union has no serious consequences. If the Bible can be believed at all, it does. A man or woman who is married and commits adultery steals something of his or her very being from the mate and gives it to someone else. The person who is not married but commits fornication loses a little of his or her personhood which can never be restored. That's why in the first verses of Ephesians 5, St. Paul says that no fornicator or impure man has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. Then he adds, "let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 5:6)

Now, in the last part of the fifth chapter of Ephesians, St. Paul has been describing how Jesus is the head of the church and the church is his body. In the same sense, the man has the same relationship to the woman and in the same sense as the church is Christ's body, the woman is the man's body. He should love her in the same way that he loves the church. She is a part of his total self--he is a part of her total self. They are no longer external to one another. They can never treat each other as separate human beings. They are now complementary parts of one personality

So, in the husband-wife relationship, the first part of God's glue to hold them together is their physical relationship. Through this union they become--and are meant to be--one personality. As St. Paul says, "This mystery is a profound one..." (Ephesians 5:32). The second part of God's glue for husband and wife is emotional/mental union. As our text for this morning puts it, we are to be of the same mind. What does it mean to have the "same mind"? As nearly as I can understand the Greek used here, it means to have the same disposition. It means to have a harmony of purpose, to have an inner accord. Now, notice in our text for this morning how St. Paul spells out the meaning of being of the same mind. He says, "having the same love, being in full accord, and of one mind." One commentator translates it this way, "There will be a common love, a common ardor, a common purpose." So, to be of one mind means to have a common disposition about life.

There are a lot of different Christian groups today. There are Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians and Catholics and a lot of others. Some say you have to believe certain things, others say you have to do certain things, others say you have to worship a certain way to be a Christian. But is there some common denominator--some basic essential--that is true of all Christians? And the answer is, "Yes". Yes, there is something that will be true of all Christians no matter what denomination they belong to. They will all try to prove they are disciples of Jesus by their obedience to his will. We will have the same attitude towards life, the same desire to serve God, the same desire to know Jesus as our personal saviour.

So, being of the same mind means to have the life-style, the same life objectives, that Jesus wants us to have. It is the desire to be God's people. Now, when a husband and a wife share that same mind, it is going to make a dramatic difference in their lives. They will have a common love, a common ardor, a common purpose.

Now, this doesn't mean that you both have to like classical music or you both have to eat liver! God always leaves us free to be who and what he created us. But it does mean that all of our likes and desires, all of our hopes and dreams, all of our aspirations and wishes, must be held in the context of obedience to the will of Jesus for our lives.

Does that make sense to you? As long as a man and a woman hold a common desire to do God's will, they will share the same life objectives, the same basic purposes. And that is a glue that will bind them together in harmonious unity.

So the first two parts of the husband/wife relationship are to be of one body, and to be of one mind. The third part of this relationship is to be of one Spirit. In the first verse of our Scripture for today, St. Paul says.."(If there is) any participation in the Spirit..." and then he goes on to say what the result will be in our lives. So, the third part of God's glue is to participate in the same Spirit. Over in the 12th chapter of I Corinthians St. Paul is talking about the Church. He is saying that the Church has members who have gifts that differ from one another. One person has one gift, another person has another gift. But the reason the church can have harmony and unity is because all these gifts come from the same Spirit. Later on, when we talk about the different roles that the husband and wife play in the family, it will be important to remember this. But the fact is, if you have the Spirit of God in your heart and your mate has the Spirit of God in his or her life, you both have the same Spirit. Now, God never disagrees with himself. God never contradicts himself. God never fights against himself. So, if my wife has God's Spirit and I have God's Spirit, there is not going to be any contradiction of God in our lives.

If both husband and wife have the Spirit of God, it means they will have the same results in their lives. Do you remember what the fruit of the Spirit is? In Galatians 5:22 we are told, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." So, if a husband and wife both have God's Spirit, that is the kind of glue that is being put on their relationship.

Let me ask you, husband, do you have God's Spirit in your life? I'm not talking about what you say you believe, I'm talking about an act of your will whereby you have surrendered control of your life to Jesus and have been filled with his Spirit. Do you have God's Spirit? And you, wife, do you have the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life, producing the fruit of the Spirit, controlling your life and the things you do? And you, young persons, do you have the Spirit of Jesus at the center of your heart, controlling your life and guiding you in your relationship to your parents, to your brothers or sisters? You see, if God's Spirit isn't controlling your life, who is? Are you? Is the Devil? Is it the influence of your peer group? Is it your own desires and wishes?

Over the years as I have counseled with couples, I have seen so many sad marriages coming apart where the couple had begun their lives together out of God's will. They were not living their lives together according to God's plan for the family. But as both of them turned to the Lord, as both of them began to surrender their wills and their hearts to Jesus, dramatic changes began to take place. Frequently, it has been the case that where love had grown cold, or even died, there was a rebirth of their love and affection for one another. When they began to put their home in God's order and under God's design, incredible changes began to occur.

There may be some families here this morning where there are serious problems and deep trouble. It may be that there is tension and friction and even hatred among your family. I say to you, there is hope yet. You and your family do not have

to live that way. If you will begin to put God first in your lives, if you will put Jesus in the center of your hearts, if you will let the Holy Spirit control your wills, God's glue will begin to spill over the broken fragments of your family and pull you together again.

It may be this morning there are some members of your family who are already separated or alienated from one another. Do not let that discourage you or deter you. Begin now--no matter how late it is--to put your life under God's plan for the family. The way you do it is to take the first step by asking Jesus to be your Saviour and by asking His Holy Spirit to take control of your life. It may be that complete healing may not occur--some daughter may be lost, some son may not turn--but begin now to live your lives by God's plan before more damage occurs. It may be that some day that lost mate or that lost child may be touched by the change he or she sees in your life and turn again. No, it is never too late with God. Even this morning it is not too late no matter how badly things have gone. You may have lost what you might have had, but do not lose more than you have already lost. There is still so much God can do. Put the shattered fragments in God's hands and he will do a new and wonderful thing in your life.

That's God's plan for the husband and wife--to be of one body, one mind, and one Spirit.