

## **Three Weeks on Marriage Repent – Believe – Build**

### **Here's hope for your marriage**

John 2 is one of the most hopeful chapters in the whole Bible when it comes to marriage. Jesus was invited to a wedding – and He showed up, along with his disciples. This is how Jesus chose to begin his ministry. This is where his first miracle was done. This is where he first displayed his power and glory.

Hold on to this. It's a sign. It means that Jesus is for marriage – 100%. He is for your marriage – 100%. It means that Jesus does miracles, right in our homes, in our marriages and families. I know it is true, I have seen it over and over again: dramatic stories of Jesus saving marriages, healing and changing hearts, restoring love. It's amazing. In week two of our study we will hear a personal testimony of this.

### **Gospel truth you'll never hear from Oprah or Dr. Phil**

Everybody knows that marriages are in trouble. We've all heard the statistics. It's a mess. But it's more than statistics: it's personal stories; real lives that are hurting to the core – maybe your life is one of these stories.

So we look for help; advice; a strategy. But the “guru's” of relationship advice in our culture don't seem to be helping. We have wings of bookstores dedicated to self help books on marriage and relationships but the situation just goes from bad to worse.

Something more is needed – something far more radical. This is where the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes in. As a pastor, my job is not to dispense relationship advice like Oprah or Dr. Phil! My job is to call and equip followers of Jesus Christ to believe and live in the power of the Gospel in every aspect of life – including marriage! This is infinitely more radical than dispensing marriage advice. This is what these three weeks on marriage at River West are all about. Let's think and live like followers of Christ. Let's apply the Gospel to marriage. Here are three key words of the Gospel that will guide us: Repent! Believe! Build!

### **Repentance is the entry point of the power of the Gospel – start here**

There are two words that Jesus intentionally put side by side and connected to the Gospel: “repent and believe” (the Gospel), see Mark 1:15 and Acts 20:21. Repentance is the entry point of the power of the Gospel. We don't hear much about repentance these days. Maybe that is why we fail to see the power of the Gospel unfold in our lives (and marriages). The truth is, repentance is a perpetual way of life for those who follow Christ. This means that we have bought into the failed and idolatrous thinking of our fallen world and we need to repent. To repent means we radically change our way of thinking (and hence our doing). This is not something we do only once as Christians. The world keeps pulling us back to its idolatrous, self-centered focus. Oprah keeps spewing. We need to continually come back to God and turn our hearts and minds back to the truth, the values, the vision, the purpose and plan of Christ. This is repentance and it IS powerful. This is week one of our focus on marriage.

### **Believe in Christ. Believe the Gospel. Live in hope**

Jesus said to “repent and believe.” Repentance opens the door of faith for us. It allows us to truly believe Christ for His miraculous work in our lives. Repentance and belief lead to real hope. To give up hope for your marriage is a denial of the Gospel. This is week two of our focus. I want you to believe in Christ's power to turn your life and your marriage around.

**Build something amazing**

“Build” is our third word of the Gospel. “Build” is a Gospel word, because through the Gospel, God is building something new and amazing in our fallen world. To build has been God’s plan all along. From Genesis 1 we see it. We see it from God’s original command to man and woman in the garden. We see it in God’s original design for marriage. Sin has entered our world and our lives and it has twisted, hampered and distorted God’s original design. But through the Gospel, God is restoring his original purpose and design in our lives and our world. Now he calls us to build with Him. The epicenter of God’s plan and purpose is to build something amazing in our marriages and families. Week 3 of our focus is all about building something amazing, lasting, significant, and world changing by fighting for our marriages. The time has come for us to fully apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our lives – and that includes marriage!