

THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE PART 3

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Transcription of recording, slightly edited

The covenant of marriage – Part 3

Good morning, everyone. We are going to continue from what we were considering at the National Youth Seminar. For want of a better title, I have called this 'The covenant of marriage - Part 3'. We are taking our time to consider the very first marriage: what the Lord established as the covenant of marriage, and the fact that He gave that to Adam and the woman. The major point that landed for me (and I think certainly landed for all of us) is that the covenant of marriage was established and belongs to God the Father. He then gives that to a couple, and He makes them one. He joins them in that covenant of marriage. We are to then honour the Father by giving back to Him the fruit of the covenant of marriage which He has given to us. It belongs to Him and He has given it to us. As we bring forth fruit, we are actually to give back that fruit as belonging to God. This is the godly seed that He is looking for.

At the National Youth Seminar, we considered the unique season of courtship for Adam and the woman. Through this season, Christ was forming each of them as a unique vessel for marriage. Adam was becoming formed as the vessel of headship. That took for him to be joined to the offering of Christ, and he was losing his rib for that purpose of becoming a vessel of headship. The woman was being formed by Christ as the helper comparable to Adam. It is important here to understand that they were being formed as a unique vessel for marriage as husband and wife. They were not yet being formed as the unique vessels of father and a mother for the bringing forth of children. As we will see, there is a time when that was to come to pass, and that is part of the Lord's immutable purpose. It was to come to pass at a certain time that they would become father and mother, and we will consider that today.

They were formed at this point as a husband and wife together. We speculated a little bit in terms of what the first marriage service at the 'Chapel of the Tree of Life' looked like. We had a bit of fun with that. We looked at the nature of choice, which was: Adam chose the woman and the woman chose Adam. This was not an arranged

marriage. It was not the fact that there was no one else, so 'you will do'. They chose each other and in the full freedom of faith. That is where we were at the National Youth Seminar.

This is Genesis chapter 2 and verse 23. This is where we got to - Adam's confession. I love the sense that he is doing two things here. He is testifying of what the season of courtship has been for them and secondly, he is declaring a statement of faith (or a confession of faith) in relation to what their marriage covenant will be. He said in Genesis 2 and verse 23, 'Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of the man." ' In our order of service of the first wedding of history, this is the testimony of the groom. Adam's short statement here is quite meaningful. I am going to look at his testimony of the season of courtship and then his confession of faith in relation to marriage.

I have six points here: three in relation to what the season of courtship was, and three in relation to what their marriage covenant will be. I am sure there are more, but there is plenty to consider here.

The first point is that Adam was bearing witness to the fruit of offering. He acknowledged that unless he joined the fellowship of Christ's offering, he would remain alone. However, because he *did* join the fellowship of Christ's offering, life was multiplied from him and he is testifying, 'Here is my rib. I laid my life down in offering, the Lord took from me a rib, and now He has formed that into a woman.' He is testifying in this first point to say, 'Offering works. The offering of Christ works; it brings forth fruit, and I am bearing witness to that. Look at what Christ has done through offering. I joined Christ's offering and life multiplied.' If you think about the season of courtship (and particularly bonding) for a couple, this is what the man is finding. He is finding, that as he is laying his life down in offering, it is bringing forth fruit. There is change in him; he is being formed as a unique vessel. She is changing as well as she is touching the offering of Christ.

The second point is that Adam is bearing witness to the work that Christ had done to form the woman from His side as a unique vessel - a new and unique identity. Therefore, he is saying, 'She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.' He is bearing witness to Christ's forming of the woman from His side. She is a unique identity as female. You remember it says, 'In the beginning God... made man. He made them male and female.' The creation of man was not finished until from his side the woman was drawn as a female.

The third point then is that Adam is bearing witness to the work that Christ had done to form him as the vessel of headship and to form her as a comparable helper. He is bearing witness to that. It is like Adam saying, 'Look at you! Look at what Christ has done in you! He has formed you as the vessel of comparability.' The woman can likewise testify of Adam and say, 'Look at you! Look at what Christ has formed in you! You are the vessel of headship. I am receiving you as that vessel from Christ.' I love the sense that when a couple comes to the wedding day, they are able to rejoice and testify this way. They are able to say, 'Look at you - not just how good your dress looks and how good your suit looks - but look at what the Lord has done! We joined the fellowship of Christ's offering and look at you! You are the vessel of headship for the woman; I am receiving you from Christ.' The man is saying, 'Look at you! You are a comparable helper; I am receiving you from Christ.'

Point four: Adam's statement also expressed faith in relation to their marriage covenant. He was understanding that when the Lord joined them in the covenant of marriage, they would be made one. Therefore, Adam was saying, 'This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.' He is describing what is happening by the covenant of marriage - the union of their biological flesh as well as their union in soul and spirit. Jesus said, 'So then through the covenant of marriage, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together let not man separate.' Mat 19:6. Adam was confessing his faith that the Lord is going to make them one through the covenant of marriage - they would be one flesh, one soul, and one spirit.

This is the fifth point is Adam's confession of faith which included the definition of their marriage covenant and what it would look like. He said, 'She shall be called Woman, and he would be called Man.' These Hebrew words are unique because he was not referred to as man before this time. He was referred to as Adam, meaning 'from the dust'. He is calling her 'Woman' and there is quite a lot of meaning in that. The names Man and Woman defined a package of works for them as husband and wife in relation to their marriage covenant. If you connect name with works, then what Adam is saying is, 'She shall be called Woman', meaning that she has a unique package of works in marriage. 'I shall be called Man. I have a unique package of works in relation to this marriage.' He is also testifying, 'I am being redefined in relation to my wife, and she is being redefined in relation to her husband.'

I love the sense here that when he is saying, 'woman', he is describing all the works that she has to do in this marriage. I have listed a number of words here. The first thing he is bearing witness to is that her work will be as a helper comparable. We know that the Lord said, 'I am going to find you a *helper comparable*.' He is bearing witness — 'In marriage your works will be as a helper comparable.' Also, as a *sister*. Remember Abraham said to Sarah, 'Say that you are my sister.' She would be his sister in marriage. Also a *companion*. The book of Malachi describes 'the wife by covenant will also be your companion.' Mal 2:14. There is a companionship in marriage. She shall also be a *friend* in marriage, and also a *wife*.

When Adam is saying, 'She shall be called Woman', he is describing her as the helper comparable, a sister, a companion, friend and wife to the man. He is saying the same in relation to himself. His name as 'Man', described a package of works as *head*, *brother*, *companion*, *friend* and *husband* to the woman. This is the process of redefinition. This is a very important phase, particularly in the bonding question of courtship when a man and a woman are bearing witness to the need to be redefined in relation to the other. The question shifts from 'Am I choosing you as my spouse?' to, 'Who am I to be in relation to you?' You need to answer both questions. Having answered the question of, 'Yes,

I am choosing you as my spouse', the next question is, 'How is the Lord forming me in relation to you? Who am I for you?' This is what Adam is testifying to when he says, 'Man' and 'Woman'.

The final point [sixth]: In Adam's statement also, he understood what the fruitfulness of their marriage covenant would be. That is, that as she was drawn from his side, so too the woman would proceed from their unity to become two, as they manifested through offering, according to their sanctification, the diversity that sprang from their unity. The Lord was forming them as one, but multiplication is going to happen as they are then proceeding from that oneness to become two. Adam understood that all his house and family would be multiplied through her, and this was pointing all the way forward to her works as Eve, which would be the 'mother of all living'. The apostle Paul said, 'For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through the woman; but all things are from God.' 1Co 11:12. They are one, but yet now they are two by offering and multiplication is happening as they are meeting one another in this way.

I will introduce another block that we will consider today. I am going to read an excerpt from our Friday devotions [August 22], which comes from *The covenant of marriage* book. We read: 'To become a comparable helper in Adam's work, the woman would need to choose by faith to participate in the fellowship of headship at the tree of life according to her sanctification, as being of her husband in one spirit with him. However, we know that the woman had not personally chosen the fellowship of headship with her husband. This lack of clarity was subsequently exploited by Satan. Notably, neither had Adam personally chosen the fellowship of headship because he chose to receive another word which did not come from Christ in the fellowship of headship. He instead received an alternative word from Satan through his wife.'

We need to upgrade this little section of the book, if you are happy to do that with me today. The way it is written there, implies that there was some inherent lack in their choice from the beginning of their marriage, and then Satan in time exploited that lack of choice. However, that is not the case. Here is our upgrade we are

needing to understand. The nature of their choice was sufficient and adequate in relation to their marriage, and there was to be a whole season of fruitfulness. This is the first point to note: There was nothing deficient with the season of their courtship; there was nothing deficient in relation to their choice of one another in the freedom of faith; there was nothing deficient in relation to their marriage covenant by which the Lord God joined them as one. Their marriage covenant is the best. There is no sin or other law; there is no other image (or pattern) that they are being yoked to. There is nothing deficient in relation to that season of their marriage covenant and their choosing of one another. Through their participation in the offering of Christ, Adam had received the capacity for headship and through the woman's participation in the offering of Christ, she had received the capacity to be comparable helper. As such, they were made one by the Lord and they were established in the fellowship and order of headship. The tree of life was a picture of this fellowship. They were joined by the Lord, and they were established in the order of headship. This order originates from God the Father, through Christ; then that order is given to the man. Adam would receive from Christ that order of life and then he would minister that to his wife as the agenda for their marriage and household.

The tree of life then became the picture of this fellowship of headship. It is a lovely picture. Each evening in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife would come to the tree of life and they would there commune with the Lord, and the Lord would minister to them the fruit of the tree of life. They would have an *agape* meal. Part of that meal would be a discussion in relation to the works of their sonship for the coming day. Therefore, you can say they had chosen the fellowship of headship. You could ask the question, 'How do we know that?' It is the fact that for 3,000 or plus years, the whole of creation was actually sustained because they had chosen that.

Adam and the woman were receiving the fruit of the tree of life. Adam then ministered that life to the whole of creation as a steward. The whole of creation was in harmony. That is quite an amazing point. We do know they chose the fellowship of headship because it is all working

for 3,000 years. Not only were they eating the fruit of the tree of life, but they were also ministering that. Adam was ministering that to the whole of creation. The harmony and fruitfulness of the whole of creation for 3,000 plus years is evidence of the adequacy of Adam and the woman's personal choice of the fellowship of headship. Are you understanding? Helpfully we are upgrading this point. They had chosen and it was working.

To add a point here (I think it is really helpful to say... this is a very helpful point), in terms of the fruitfulness of a marriage which God desires, it is firstly two sons of God (a husband and wife), participating in the fulfillment of the will of God in their lives. It is not firstly about how many kids you can have, or how many people you can evangelise. You are two sons of God, as a husband and wife, participating in the will of God for your lives. That is fruitful and the Lord is rejoicing in that fruitfulness. Otherwise, you would say for 3,000 years, what were they doing? There were no kids on the scene; there was no one to evangelise. Were they just hanging around for 3,000 years? No, this was very fruitful, and the Lord saw that it was good - very good; and He is rejoicing in that.

This is a helpful point for older married couples when we are talking about marriage reformation and bringing forth fruit to God. Unless you are receiving a specific word to quicken your mortal body at age... (was it 90 that Sarah was...?) If you are sitting here and married at 90, unless you are receiving a specific word, I am not thinking that you need to bring forth another child to bring forth fruit in your marriage. All of us can bring forth fruit. You are two sons of God participating in the will of God. Is this not a beautiful point? The man is focused on the quality of his house being sonship. You have the two of you. There are two sons of God; you are fellowshiping in the will of God today; that is fruitful. More than that, the Lord has joined you in a house-to-house network which constitutes the bride of Christ. As part of the bride of Christ, you are participating in the travail to bring forth other sons of God.

It is also helpful to add in here, that this is the same for a person who is single and who has faith and has received grace to be single. The Lord likewise has given you faith to be part of

the bride of Christ, and to be part of that travelling woman to bring forth fruit. We know in the Psalms that it says that 'the Lord puts the solitary into *families*' being plural. He does not add you as an addendum to a family. You are not the long-lost uncle or something. He places you into a network of houses in which you are participating as part of the bride of Christ. We do not all have to be married to be part of the bride and to be fruitful in that regard.

For 3,000 years there is a fruitfulness in their marriage. Once the Lord had joined them as one, the Lord then gave them a word and He blessed them and said in Genesis 1 and verse 28: 'God blessed them, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ' Here were the works of their marriage and that was what they were doing for 3,000 years. They were subduing creation, and they were fruitful in regard to that. Also, in this, God is giving them the blessing and mandate of procreation. They were to become a father and mother and to bring forth children by procreation. That is an amazing blessing that God gives to a married couple - to bring forth an eternal identity that was foreknown in the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim* before but comes to pass in relation to you as a married couple.

This was to be a co-participation (or co-creation) with God the Father by which they could bring forth godly seed for the Father. According to God's immutable plan, the woman was predestined to be the vessel through which identities would be multiplied.

However, there is a season of delay between the proclamation of the word and its fulfillment at the right time. They are joined in marriage; the Lord is talking to them about this; there is a season before this is coming to fulfillment. The season of delay was a trial of faith for Adam and the woman. The word of the Lord was testing them both until it came to pass according to the immutable purpose of God. Immutability means that it is unchangeable over time. His plan will come to pass, and it has a unique process to come to pass.

We see that principle in the life of a seed. In natural creation, a seed follows a defined and

invariable process to come to full maturity. It has to begin with a figurative death as it goes into the ground and is buried. It germinates; it sprouts; it grows up. In time, it then brings forth fruit. You do not just go from a seed to a fully fruitful plant. It has to go through its phases or its seasons.

This is the same in relation to the man and the woman becoming a father and mother. Psalm 105 verse 19 is talking about Joseph. It says, 'Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.' We know Joseph had a whole season. He had received the word in relation to what the Lord was sending him to Egypt to do, but that word was testing him.

The period of delay for Adam and the woman became a context for the trial of faith. Importantly, this trial of faith was not in relation to sin or the other law. As we shall consider, the trial of faith was for the purpose of bringing them to maturity. This is the big point that we will consider. What is coming to pass is in relation to them needing to choose to mature. The trial of faith created the necessity for Adam and the woman to choose. The thing they were choosing was to mature. This is where they did not choose. They did not choose maturity which was to grow up. This was the step of maturity, from husband and wife to father and mother. The trial of faith created the necessity for them to choose. They had to choose to mature in the immutable timing of the Lord in the season that He was asking them to mature.

With the necessity for choice also came an alternative that needed to be refused - that is, the choice to stay immature. When we are considering immaturity, the issue is time. For a young child, they are not being asked to drive a car, for instance, because they are not mature to take on that responsibility. Before it is time, you could say, rather than say 'immature', you could just say it is 'young'. It is needing to grow; but it is not there yet. It is not needing to choose that. It is immature, but it is not past the time. Is that making sense? It is young. When they are young, the Lord is not asking you to choose. A young child is not needing to choose their gender as a male and female; but when you are coming of age, the Lord does require you to say, 'I accept the Lord has made me a male,' or 'I accept the Lord has made me a female, and I am choosing that.

That is the vessel I am choosing to become.' You cannot choose an alternative. This is the necessity of choice, but you are not asking a young child to do that. They do not have the maturity to appreciate who they are as a male and female. When you are young, the Lord is not asking you to choose, but when the time comes when you need to mature, that is the season when you need to choose. Can you see this is beginning to creep up on the point where they did not choose?

The issue for immaturity is *time*. Before it is time, a person is young. But after the time, they are immature (or they are stunted in growth) if they do not negotiate, through choice, the need to mature in a certain season. If you come to a season, you are needing to mature, and you do not choose that, you become immature. Immaturity in this point is sin because it is missing the mark. The immutability of His purpose for them was to grow to become father and mother, but because they did not choose that step of maturity, this became sin and they became immature. They did not choose that step of maturity.

This is Hebrews chapter 5 and verses 12 to 14. It says, 'For though by this time [here is the critical thing - 'for by this time'; the issue with maturity and immaturity is time] you ought to be teachers [or you ought to be mature, however], you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God [that really is the whole purpose of God from the beginning, when He said, 'Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness']; and you have come to need milk and not food. [Verse 13] For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe [or you could say immature]. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age [that is those who are mature - full age], those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'

The critical point is that Adam and the woman had chosen the fellowship of headship at the tree of life that was very fruitful for that season of 3,000 years. The Lord did proclaim a word, and He did say that there will be a season when they will need to mature. He said that they will need to choose that step of maturity. He said the day that they choose an alternative to that, that

choice will result in death. The Lord had already said there will be a choice that comes to them in time, in relation to the need to mature, and that is when they did not choose. That is a helpful clarification which we might consider more in the season to come. Peter then says, 'As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow...' 1Pe 2:1. It is not that you skip milk; you have to actually love the milk of the word (which is the present truth word), so that you can mature in the seasons the Lord is asking you to mature.

The choice to mature

We are going to continue where we were last week. We were considering Adam and the woman and their marriage. We made the point last week that there was nothing deficient with their choice when they were joined by the Lord in the covenant of marriage and they were established in the fellowship of headship at the tree of life. Adam had received from Christ that capacity for headship and the woman had received from Christ that capacity to be a comparable helper to her husband. There was nothing deficient in their marriage covenant, in their choice, in their connection to the fellowship of headship. We made the point that how do we know this? We know this, because, for 3,000 plus years, the whole of creation is ordered, and it is fruitful. From their fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life every evening, Adam and his wife were proceeding then to minister that life to the whole of creation. That was quite a mandate.

In Proverbs 11 verse 30, Solomon said, 'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.' I love this point because the same is true for us. We are not just coming to *partake* of the fruit of the tree of life, we *become* that fruit to one another as we minister it in fellowship. That is what Adam was doing. He was then, as a steward, ministering that life to the whole of creation. Same too for us. We are not only *participating* and *partaking* of that fruit ourselves, but we are also to *become* that fruit to others. We are then ministering that same fruit in fellowship together. After they (Adam and the woman) were joined in marriage, God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' He stated this during the sixth day of creation.

Then the Lord said at the end of that day, 'This is very good' - that whole season. Evidently, we

know that there is a significant amount of time between that word being proclaimed to them and then it coming to pass in their life. If anyone is getting impatient with the word not coming to pass in our life, we have nothing on Adam and the woman. They have 3,000 plus years when this word is proclaimed to them. There was a season to come when they would need to choose to mature on the word they had already received. It was this issue of choice that was the real key issue for Adam and the woman. They needed to endure a season of delay from the proclamation of the word until its fulfillment. This season of delay was a trial of faith for them. The word of the Lord was testing (or proving) them until the time that His immutable plan would come to pass. The word 'immutability' means that 'it is unchangeable'. It is unchangeable over time and, over time, that word will follow a defined process in which it then comes to fruitfulness in the same way that a seed has a whole process before it comes to a plant that brings forth fruit. This is the immutable plan of the Lord for each one of us.

In Hebrews chapter 6 and verses 17 and 18, it says, 'Thus God, determining to show more abundantly [I love that. He is showing us all the more] to the heirs of promise [that is the sons of God] the immutability of His counsel [that is His purpose concerning your life is unchangeable], He then confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things [the promise and the oath], in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.' In Their own covenant fellowship, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit discussed the sonship predestination of every person who would ever live. This is God's immutable plan for each person that was established from Their counsel together. From Their discussion, there is an immutability with regards to each one of us. God's purpose for every person is unchangeable.

The important point to catch is that His plan includes the process and timing by which it will be fulfilled in our life. His purpose concerning you is unchangeable, and that purpose or plan has within it the process by which that word will come to fruition, and the timing through which that will come to fruition. This whole process of growing from immaturity to maturity reveals the

name of God the Father. In this way, the whole of creation reveals this point, because it is the Father who works that way. He works from a seed to a fruitful plant. That is how the Father operates. This is an amazing verse, [stated by the Lord] after Noah exited the ark. The Lord said to him, 'While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.' For this whole present heavens and earth, there is a principle here which is seedtime and harvest - things beginning immature and growing to maturity. That will continue for the whole of this creation. That is Genesis 8 and verse 22.

Come with me to Luke chapter 8 verses 14 to 15. The point is that the Father works on this principle of needing to mature, and there is a season when He gives us the choice to mature. This is an amazing point: maturity is a choice. At the time when the Lord addresses us on the issue, that is the time when we are needing to choose to mature. Before that time, we are young, and we may not even know that we have need to mature. It is like Adam and Eve. They were not even necessarily cognisant of the need for a phase of maturing or a development in them to go from husband and wife to become father and mother to bring forth godly seed. It is the word, when the Lord speaks to us, that is making us aware of the need to grow up or the need to mature on a certain point.

This is Luke 8 verse 14, talking about the thorny ground. You will note here that the thorny ground brings forth no fruit to maturity. It says, 'Now the ones that fell among the thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life and bring forth no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience [and we could add in there 'to maturity']'.

The Lord is looking for the fruit of maturity and for this reason, the ground of our heart needs regeneration and renewing so that we become good ground so that the seed of our sonship life can grow to maturity. This is the maturity and fruitfulness of New Creation in us, and we are needing that process of regeneration and renewing so that that can come to maturity. At

certain points in our life, it is almost like every word, every season of present truth is a season of maturity. 'Today if you hear His voice ...' He is talking about a season when the Lord is saying that there is need to mature on that point. As Peter was explaining, we are needing to apply ourselves to that word in the season that the Lord is delivering it to us.

In that sense, when the Lord is speaking to us, He is addressing a particular step of maturity. If we do not negotiate that step of maturity in the season when the Lord is calling us to grow up, then we are beginning to miss the mark; and missing the mark is sin.

This is why for Adam and the woman, for those 3,000 years - that was not sin; but then when the Lord called them to mature, and they chose an alternative, this became sin. They were suddenly missing the mark. There was a season for them to mature, and the maturity was to bring forth fruit to God. Adam and his wife were to bring forth children according to the pre-appointed timing of God the Father. This timing was fixed.

After approximately 3,000 years in the garden, Adam and his wife were approaching a new phase of maturity as a married couple. That would be true for all of us. There are seasons of our life, when the Lord draws us to a new phase of growth as an individual, as a married couple, as a household and a family. There are seasons when the Lord is calling us to mature. We could all probably bear witness to seasons when we have interfaced with that well and it has brought forth fruit, and other seasons when we have not chosen well, and then we reap the fruit later on of our choice not to mature at that point. I think we would all be cognisant of that point. Even at that point, we need to recover the things we did not choose in the time when the Lord was speaking to us.

Adam and his wife were approaching a new phase of maturity as a married couple. They would need to choose by faith to bring forth fruit (but not just to bring forth fruit) - to bring forth fruit to God.

The key understanding for us in this season is that the covenant of marriage belongs to God and He has given it in offering to every godly couple that He has joined as one. Then, we are to

understand as husband and wife, how to make offering and bring forth fruit from our marriage and then give that fruit back in offering to God the Father.

The most amazing picture of this is Abraham and Sarah, because like Adam and his wife, they too had a season which became for them a trial of faith. They chose an alternative to bring forth fruit for themselves in the same way that Adam and the woman did.

God had forewarned Adam about this to say, 'You will need to refuse any alternative that is presented to you when the time comes to choose the step of maturity.' The Lord said, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you [you could add there, 'choose to'] eat from it, you shall surely die.' Gen 2:17. The word addressing the need to mature also gives us faith to refuse any alternative option. Instead of bringing forth fruit to God, Adam and his wife chose to bring forth fruit unto themselves. Therefore, they heeded the lie of Satan, which provoked them to draw from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the resources they believed that were necessary for them to achieve that fruitfulness; but its orientation was fruit for themselves.

That is what we are beginning to understand in this season for all of us, I think. It would be true to say that we have presumed it is *our* marriage, *our* courtship, *our* romance, *our* house, *our* kids. We have wanted God to bless it, but we have not acknowledged that it is He who has given it to us. It is *His* kids; it is *His* house; it is *His* marriage - a covenant of marriage that He has given to us. It is like Adam and his wife were departing from that to say, 'Oh no, we could have this for ourselves.' We are all there. We have all said we can have this fruit for ourselves, and we are needing to return like Abraham and Sarah did to saying, 'No, no, the fruit belongs to God.' That amazing picture. Obviously, Abraham and Sarah are trying an alternative. It produces bad fruit. They are reaping the fruit of that choice. In time, the Lord is coming and saying, 'Okay, here is the time when the word that I have already proclaimed to you will come to pass. In a year, you will have a child.' Sarah is able to bring forth that child and then give that child in offering to her husband. Abraham then can take his son

with him up Mount Moriah and give his child back to God the Father to whom he belongs. It is an amazing picture of the true recovery.

A mother's focus is to progressively deliver a child back to her husband who in turn presents the child as an offering to God the Father. This is what Abraham and Sarah did. In so doing, her husband is giving back to God the Father the fruit of the marriage covenant which He gave to them. Is this not beautiful? God the Father has given you the blessing of a marriage covenant, and then you are able to give that fruit back to Him.

This faith of godly parents was exemplified by Abraham and Sarah when Abraham took Isaac up Mount Moriah. That is a wonderful picture. For Adam and the woman, they too had to find this point of recovery. This was actually after a season of 130 years when the fruit of their choice to bring forth fruit to themselves brought forth no sons of God apart from Abel. Abel found recovery and that was to do with his connection to the offering of Christ. He is a son of God, and his blood still speaks. But you have 130 years, and you have seven generations of Cain, and you have no fruit of godly seed that they can give back to the Father. Then they become illuminated. Eve becomes illuminated and she comes and presents her repentance to her husband. Then they two together present their repentance before the Lord and the Lord opened Eve's womb again and she brought forth Seth. From that point, men began to call on the name of the Lord. It is an amazing journey of having to find recovery so that they could bring forth fruit to God - not choose to bring forth fruit to themselves.

We will read a verse here: 1 Peter 2 verses 2 to 3. The question for us is when the Lord speaks His word, there is a whole season of that word coming to fruition. We have to stay connected to it and believe that it is going to come to pass. If we choose to take it to ourselves (or choose an alternative) to try to bring forth the fruit before its time, that becomes for us sin. That is not the maturity the Lord is after. The question for us is: how do we interface with the word? This is the apostle Peter, in 1 Peter 2 verses 2 to 3. He said, 'As newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby...' The word of

present truth is the milk of the word, and it causes us to grow or mature in every season. Then in verse 3, he says, '...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Peter here is quoting from Psalm 34 verse 8, which says, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' Then it goes on to say, 'Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.' I love this point on trust being fundamental to each season of maturity. We receive the word, and we have received faith as we hear that word. Faith enables us to believe in God's immutable plan for our life. It is not going to change. It is going to come to pass. By faith, we need to choose to mature without knowing the process or timing of how this will come to pass. The Lord speaks to us; He grants faith; it is proclaiming to us an immutability of His purpose for our lives; but it is quite amazing that even though it is immutable, we still have to choose it. Otherwise, it does not come to fruition in our life.

We need to choose by faith to mature when we are choosing the whole season. When the Lord speaks it, we are choosing the season when He is going to bring that to pass in our life. This season becomes a trial of faith which is a refining and training process for new creation. The verse we have been looking at it in this season is Hebrews 12 verse 11. It says, 'Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.' Can you see there is a season when the Lord is bringing a word to pass? There is an 'afterwards' when it is bringing forth fruit, but there is a season when that word is coming to pass. Peter is directing us to trust. Trust the Lord, because when He proclaims His word, He will bring it to pass. We need to choose to keep walking with it.

To make the point for every godly couple, there is a process of maturity to bring forth godly seed to the Father. The Lord grants faith for this season of maturity, to grow from being husband and wife to becoming father and mother. That is a season of maturity. We can trust the Lord throughout this season because He desires the fruit of the marriage covenant. The reason He made you one is because He desires godly seed. He is going to oversee that matter, because He is immensely interested in the fruit of your marriage. We can be assured that He is

committing to see that you mature to become father and mother and the fruit then comes forth from your marriage.

However, for some, this can be a significant trial of faith. I was remembering all the heroes of faith (and we will conclude on this point), that there is a word to them, and then there is this massive season which becomes a trial of faith for them, because the Lord is talking to them about fruitfulness, and yet they are in a season of barrenness.

If you think about Abraham and Sarah, there is a word, there is a whole season of however many years, and they are going about it the wrong way, but in the end, the Lord brings forth that fruit in Sarah. Isaac and Rebecca - she is unable to bear children. Isaac prays to the Lord; there is a season of barrenness, then she has the twins. Then you have Leah, the Lord opens the womb of Leah so she can bring forth children. Rachel is barren. She says to Jacob, 'Give me children or else I die.' Gen 30:1. She has a whole season before the Lord is then opening her womb. To make the point (and this would be true on all points) but let us just take the point from husband and wife to father and mother. There is a season of a trial of faith, however long that goes for, when the Lord is bringing you to a maturity so you can bring forth godly seed; then to bring that godly seed with you and offer it back to God the Father. That is an amazing principle. There is Hannah: there is a whole season for her. This principle is a pretty amazing thing. Even if you look at all the families in the antediluvian (or pre-flood) era, they are not bringing forth their children for hundreds of years sometimes. Noah was 500 years old when he had the boys.

The point being, there is a long season when the Lord does bring us to maturity, but we have to trust. He will bring us to maturity and fruitfulness. It is going to get there. He is going to accomplish it, but we have to trust Him in the process.