

We have been studying in the book of Genesis and we've seen from the latter part of chapter 2 that principle of one man, one woman together for life. And we have seen that the emphasis here at the end of this text that is often used for marriages that those who are married that they are to be marked by a leaving, and a cleaving, and a weaving and as we spent some time –three messages– looking at something of the requirement of marriage that physical intimacy plays only in the context of marriage. We also are now spending three weeks focusing on this weaving and the sense of a spiritual oneness and an emotional oneness. What is it that we can do grow in that process of having a greater love and a greater integration of life? Well, we've been asking the question, what if in the physical realm, you kept spending money from your local bank account, writing checks when there would be an inadequate amount within the bank. We are all aware of that painful notice that comes (maybe someone's not had that painful awareness) having the notice come from the bank that is letting us know that we're in trouble. It's not the sort of thing that if you've been a member of that bank and been a participant there and a good depositor for 20 years, that doesn't matter. If you pull out more than what is there, they want to speak to you and they want to see you in there pretty quickly. We have seen that there is such a thing as sinful withdrawals where you do things that just flat out hurt your marriage. It's like pulling the money out of the ATM and then just leaving it there and walking off. Those holes we can put into our marriage boat would be flourishing pride, failing a marriage commitment, embracing unbiblical roles, and engaging in poor communication. We talked about . . . there are some big holes that can be drilled or split into our marriage boats. Adultery would be one of those big ones. On the other hand, there can be an accumulation of all sorts of little sins compared to adultery. Little sins where it seem like someone is almost taken in a determined fashion a half inch drill and drilling all these holes. It doesn't matter if you have one or two big holes or you got all these little holes. It's going to do something bad for your marriage boat. We have seen under the permitting pride and selfishness of failing in the commitment of the engaging –the patterns of poor communication –poor self-disclosure. If you're married, you need to open your heart as you would to a friend. He or she is to be your best friend. Poor anger management, poor encouragement, poor problem resolution, and poor manner in communication. We saw last Lord's day, that there is that requirement of these righteous deposits.

Making the deposit into our marriage bank of a mutual love, a mutual respect, and a mutual society where we are in friendship relationship that is nurtured. And we noted as well that there can be that dangerous thing of thumbing, where you're in the presence of someone, but instead of focusing on that individual, right there in front of you, that you're focusing on the 734 of your closest friends. Well, with that little introduction . . . where we've been and where we're going let's come this morning to see a second installment now on righteous deposits.

First of all, Roman numeral one, consider with me the deposits of mutual forbearance. The deposits of mutual forbearance. What can I do that will really help my marriage? Well, one of the best things that you can do is to become a shock absorber. The shock absorber is that part on your car, that when your wheel drops into a hole, it has the fancy responsibility of making the jolt into the hole to be felt less. It absorbs something of the shock. If you want to have a better marriage, then be a better shock absorber. I know, you were hoping for something a little bit more glamorous. Recognize, as Mr. Bolton says, (this is under the biblical basis of the marital duty of mutual forbearance) "it is not two angels that have met together, but two sinful children of Adam from whom, must be looked for much weakness and waywardness, remembering that we have no small share of our own that calls for the forbearance of the other party." I would fully expect that on Sundays you may need to be the primary shock absorber in your relationship. But I'm also confident that there will be other days where your spouse has got to be the primary shock absorber, because you're just a "little off" today. 1 Peter 3, verse one says, *"Wives, likewise be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the Word, that they without the Word may be won by the conduct of their wives. 2 When they observe their chaste conduct accompanied by fear."* There's got to be a patience. There's got to be an overruling principle; even if the husband is an unbeliever –that I'm going to absorb things, that I am going to try to win him to Christ. 1 Cor 7:16, motivates in this marriage as well: "For how do you know, a wife, whether you will save your husband? How do you know, a husband, whether you will save your wife." If you're married, it's not all about you. If you're married and a believer and your spouse is not, God may have intentions of bringing the Gospel up close and personal to this individual that you're married to for their spiritual profit.

Longsuffering, forbearance. It's in the fruit of the spirit, isn't it? The fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering. But I invite you to turn with me to Eph 4:1. *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the ward, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called with all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."* The key general duty that Paul is talking about here is the endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. He's talking about church members bearing and forbearing with one another. Now again, that's not the most glamorous directive that is given to a church member. 'Well, I thought that we're all just gonna love Christ and there's never gonna be a rub and they're gonna love everything that I do and I'm gonna love everything that they do.' Paul says, 'You're not in heaven yet.' There are going to be things that rub you the wrong way. Sometimes we need to rebuke. Sometimes something needs to escalate even to the direction of church discipline. But where we start is looking at these attendant duties. If the main thing is we want to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, then what comes along with that? Well look at verse 2. "Humility, gentleness, patience, and a loving forbearance." So what Paul is urging us is to see that we live in a sin-cursed world and a church is made up of partially-transformed individuals. As we've seen in our earlier studies we're taking some of these directives that may come to believers living together in the church and say that if you've got church members that are living, then, together in the same home then these broad principles apply within the home as well. How will I maintain peace in the home? There's going to need to be a patience or a longsuffering and a loving forbearance.

This is why we have the realism of the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 15:1, God, through Solomon, tells you and me, *"A soft answer turns away wrath; but a harsh word stirs up anger."* Why am I going to need to know how to turn away wrath? Well, it's because you and I live in a sin-cursed world. Prov 15:18 *"A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention."* . . . lessens, reduces the intensity. Allays, pacifies. Prov 17:14 *"The beginning of strife is like releasing water, therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts."* There's that little bit of bickering that has started and you feel as though, 'I'm just going to say I got two good jabs in, then I'm going to sit down and be calm.' It doesn't work that way, does it? Your "one-two" jabs require three jabs in return. And if you're going to escalate it to that level, then I'll meet you and raise you four jabs. That is the remnants of sin within us. Prov 19:11 *"The discretion of a*

*man makes him slow to anger and his glory is to overlook a transgression."* The glory of a man or a woman in a relationship as you come and hit that pothole is to overlook it and it is to absorb it and minimize it instead of accentuating it. What did you say? Jas 1:19 carries over that Proverb-like thinking to the New Testament: *"So then my beloved brother, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."* Your getting in your quick two little jabs of anger is not going to work the righteousness of God.

Secondly, "B". The practical requirements of this marital duty of mutual forbearance. Number one, make the deposit of forbearance towards your spouse. Regenerate sinners forge long-term relationships by forbearance. Can you think of a friendship that you have for twenty years where there's not been some little rub that you needed to work through? That you needed to absorb? So, if that's true just in friendships out there how are you going to maintain and develop closeness within the home. There's going to need to be the deposit of forbearance. 'I am sick and tired of hearing you complain.' 'Oh yeah? Well, I'm sick and tired of hearing you complain about my complaining!' . . . on it goes. A few years ago I saw an article with the headline, "Perfectionists Have Less Than Perfect Marriages." While that may be saying something to the perfectionist, it's really saying something to all of us. No one has a perfect marriage. Those who have the better relationships are going to know something about forbearance—*are going to know something about absorbing that pothole of trouble along the road of life.* Again, Proverbs: Prov 20:3 *"It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can quarrel."* 'I'm gonna get these two jabs in . . .' A fool can do that. And any fool can respond with three coming back. Prov 29:8 *"Scoffers set a city aflame, but wise men turn away wrath."* Do you want to be viewed as wise according the book of Proverbs? You need to be a shock absorber. You need to just at some time—just take it. Just take it. And just take it again. Now, there may be times when you feel as though you need to say, 'Dear, I have been in my judgement, I have been the shock absorber for the last three or four days and I feel like it's getting pretty close to being your turn.' We sometimes say that in our heart, but it helps to verbalize I'm working towards anger. I'm working towards not feeling like I want to be the shock absorber. But hopefully, in even saying that, we recognize that we don't really have control over how many potholes are in the world or in this particular stretch. We have the responsibility to allay, to lessen, the intensity the passion of anger. Prov 26:20, I want to leave this for you and then

look at it a little bit more. Prov 26:20 says, *“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is not tale bearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coal and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.”* ‘I’m just gonna get my two, three quick jabs in.’ ‘I just always have to have the last word.’ ‘I have to win this argument. That’s more important than long-term peace and happiness.’ How can we help to put the fire out? What does the proverb tell you? By quit putting wood onto the fire! Let it burn out. Stop arguing. Politely, but firmly excuse yourself from the other parties company, ‘I don’t think we are presently able to talk about this in a way that is right before God, so I am stepping out of the situation and I will gladly talk with you again when we can talk calmly and rationally with a hope that good will prevail. Maybe you just paid the bills. Maybe just try to pay the bills. So, there is a reason to be a little prickly. She may need 24 hours to pass before entering back into this difficult discussion. Make the deposit of forbearance.

Secondly, make the deposit of kind and gracious reproof. Regenerate sinners forge long-term relationships by reproof that leads to forgiveness and restoration. You know the Gospel dynamics that Jesus gives recorded in Luke 17:1-3. Somebody sins –you need to rebuke them . . . but where you hope that goes is that the rebuke will lead to repentance that will lead to a restoration of relationships. That’s our pattern for dealing with one another. Now there may be –I’m well aware of Eph 4:26, *“Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to the devil”*. As a general rule, we need to put lights out at a point where we are at peace –every day at peace– then there’s not going to be a residual that’s going to build into bitterness. But the bitterness only lasts for one day and then its dealt with at the night, well that’s good. As a general rule, you want to resolve issues on a daily basis. However, there may be some situation that is so jarring and so upsetting to your spouse that you say, ‘You know what, I think that we better sleep on this and hopefully after our sleep deprivation is dealt with we will be able to respond to this in a righteous manner. So there is a place for delay. There is not a whole lot of wisdom in grabbing someone – emotionally grabbing them by the collar and saying, ‘This is wrong and we’re at odds and we need to deal with this right now. You need to straighten up.’ There may need to be a little time that goes through there, but that doesn’t mean that we don’t deal with issues. Leviticus 19:17, ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him.’ It’s in the context of what the next verse is going to speak of the importance of love in our relationships. You’re not

going to hate him. So how do you not hate him? Just wipe the offense clear from your mind. No. It is, “You shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him.” Prov 6:23 “Reproofs are the way of life.” If you are newly married and you’re hearing someone say, ‘You know, there is “this” about you,’ we may grit our teeth and we don’t want to hear that. Reproofs are the way of life. In one sense, reproofs are the way of life in that if you will heed these reproofs, it’s going to take you to a good place in life. An in another sense, reproofs are just something that happen in normal Christian living, because we live in a sin-cursed world and we are not two angels that were joined together. Prov 27:6 “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” We’ve got to deal with issues.

Can a wife ever reprove her husband? Doesn’t 1Pet 3 require that she is only to use her life to speak to her husband? Well surely 1Pet 3 has something to say about the manner that a wife will go about saying something to her husband. A bitter tirade against a husband’s weakness is not the most likely method to succeed and it’s certainly not the most righteous form of reproof. Let us learn from the example of Abigail who is married to Nabal (that means fool). She was married to a fool and she knew that when he had done wrong, she needs to go seek peace or there’s going to be a bunch of dead people; but she does confront him and let him know about his sin. Martha Peace comments on this. “They are not only husband and wife, but also brother and sister in the Lord. Christian marriage partners are to help each other to be as much like the Lord Jesus Christ as possible since they are fellow heirs of the grace of life.” 1 Peter 3. “Others believe that a wife should not reprove her husband because if she does, she is not loving him unconditionally. In other words, she is to love him in saying nothing whether he ever changes or not. But godly love rejoices in the truth. It does not rejoice in unrighteousness. When a wife discerns a pattern of sinful behavior in her Christian husband, she needs to go to him, privately, gently, and in a straightforward manner, reprove him in love. If he forbids her to reprove him, then he is asking her to disobey the Lord. She must choose to obey God rather than her husband. Is this biblical advice? Well, if they are friends, both the friends have a responsibility to speak the truth in a word of reproof.

Further, in the practical directives, number three: Make the deposit of putting your spouse’s vice in perspective with his or her virtues. John Engle James,

“Justice as well as wisdom requires that in every case we set the good qualities against the bad ones and in most cases we shall find some redeeming excellencies which if

they do not reconcile us to the failings we deplore should at least teach us to bear with them in patience and the more we contemplate these better aspects of the character, the brighter they will appear. For it is an indomitable fact that while faults diminish virtues magnify in proportion as they are steadily contemplated.”

Let me try to illustrate. When there is this fault of your spouse and you get out your magnifying glass and you are looking at that fault and you set that fault on the table you come in with your magnifying glass, what are you seeing? Only that. Now your husband or wife is a lot more than that particular fault. But if the magnifying glass is out and you’re up close, the only thing you see – and once you start looking at relationships with that kind of perspective, you can justify any sort of behavior. I mean, a man or a woman who consists only of that fault, they don’t deserve nothin’. John Engle James is wisely telling us to see the fault, to step back, and see that there is at least somewhere around here, there’s a little bit of good if you look for it. In most husband-wife believing relationships, you’ll be able to find it and it puts things in pers— Am I saying that if there is a glaring fault, look for the good and then just pass over it altogether. No, the fault still needs to be addressed. Sweep problems under the rug until there’s a lump in the rug and you’re tripping over it and then deal with the painful things of pulling up the rug and addressing the fault.

I. Deposits of a mutual forbearance.

II. Roman numeral two: Deposits of a mutual assistance.

First of all (A): A biblical basis of this marital duty of mutual assistance. Why should we assist one another? Well, let’s start with the husband. Eph 5:25 says something to the effect that men are to love their wives with the same sort of self-denying love that the Lord Jesus Christ manifested when he died on the cross on behalf of his bride. Was that helpful to that bride? Yes. And men, we are to love like the Lord Jesus Christ, denying ourselves, to do good to that wife. Drop down a couple of verses to Eph 5:28, “Husbands ought to love their own wives as they love their own bodies.” And when you’ve got that cut and you need to get the peroxide out and wash it out and then you need to put the antibacterial agent on there and then you need to carefully put the Band-Aid on, ‘No not that way, the other way. Pull the skin together. Get it all in there just so . . .’ Is that helpful to your body to do that? Does it assist your body? That’s what you’re to do toward your wife.

And then on the part of the wife. What passages come to your mind that would speak of something of assistance? Well, how about if we start with Genesis 2:18, “I will make

a helper comparable to him.” Or Proverbs 31 of the virtuous woman, “Who can find her? Her worth is far above rubies.” Verse 11: “The heart of her husband safely trusts in her, so he will have no lack of gain.” She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.” So, whether you are a man or whether you are a wife, yes, there are those rules we talked about earlier, but there is a mutual assistance that is required in a God-honoring marriage.

Secondly, (B): The practical requirements of this marital duty of mutual assistance. Make the deposit of working together —of assisting one another in your work. Recall that the dominion mandate is given to Adam and Eve together. They, together, are to subdue the earth. This points to a shared life and their dominion of the earth. It’s something more than . . . ‘Alright, you’re going to subdue the earth in your realm and I’m going to subdue the earth in my realm and I’ll take no interest in your stuff and you’ll take no interest in mine; stay away.’ John Engle James, again, slightly adapted for our day:

“A woman may not be a specialist in her husband’s vocation, but still her counsel may be sought in a thousand cases with propriety and advantage. The husband should never undertake anything of importance without communicating the matter to his wife, who, on her part, instead of shrinking from the responsibility of a counselor and leaving him to struggle alone with his difficulties and perplexities should invite him to communicate freely all his anxieties. For if she cannot counsel, she can comfort. If she cannot relieve his cares, she can help to bear them. If she cannot direct the course of his business, she may decurrent[?] his feelings. If she cannot open any source of earthly wisdom, she can spread the matter before the Father and fountain of lights. Many men, under the idea of delicacy to their wives, keep all of their difficulties to themselves which only prepares the wife to feel the stroke heavier when it becomes apparent.”

‘Things are tight. She doesn’t need to know that.’ ‘We’re in bankruptcy.’

Recall the example of the Shulamite woman and her husband. Here’s a woman that evidently gets the thought first, alone. There’s the prophet, Elijah, and his route takes him right by our place. Assuming we will have him here this one time, now let’s prepare the upper room for him. Maybe a little spartan, but there is all he needs there, a bed, a table, a chair, and a lampstand. So it will be there whenever he comes. And all she has to do, is she speaks to her husband and says, ‘Let’s consider this.’ Meets with his approval because it gets done. She takes the initiative and she is free to do this. It’s interesting to me —remember later on in the narrative of the Shulamite

woman where the miraculous son in their old age dies. And she'll go to the field and she'll say, 'Send me a young man and an animal that's going to take me to go—I need to go see the man of God. Shalom. All is well.' She's got to go see the prophet of God. She's at least going to communicate, 'But I don't want you to worry.' Some, with reason, suggest that she was anticipating that this miraculous child could be raised from the dead and that's why she put him up there on the bed of the prophet. I'm not sure. But we're not there. We're talking about husband and wife relationships and the closeness and the freedom for a wife to make suggestions and for them to work on things together. Priscilla and Aquila. Is it right for me to give her name first? Two times out of the five times that Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in the scriptures, she is mentioned first and one of those is Paul is giving greetings at the church at Rome, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila." I notice in going through those verses, they were tent makers. Now there's someone who could definitely share in the family vocation there together. But not together only in their work. When Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos, they took him aside and they explained to him the way of God more accurately. It demonstrates something of this mutuality of this assistance—of helping one another—of working together. Our hope in life ought not to be that his wife, 'You do your track over here, and husband, you do your thing over here and maybe if we're apart for eight to fourteen hours a day, there's a greater chance of us getting along.' There is this "shared" life together. Now, if you don't know how to work through conflict. Well then maybe it is better. But the best is to learn how to go through conflict. Some of you have heard me say that I was in a situation. Someone outside the church asked for marriage counseling. I said, "Sure." We sat down, and they were having troubles getting along, troubles working through conflict. I said "Okay, share with me. Name one area of conflict that you've worked through together." And they looked at one another and looked back to me and said, "There is none." In seventeen years of marriage, they could not remember one time where they had worked through to resolution. My optimism of me helping them went down very quickly.

Number two: Make the deposit of helping one another spiritually. Listen to what Jesus does as he dies on the cross, to what end? That he may sanctify and cleanse for his bride with a washing of water by the Word. Jesus helps his bride to grow spiritually, and so a husband ought to help his wife to grow in grace. James again:

"The highest end of the marital state is lost if it be not rendered helpful to our piety and yet to this end is too generally neglected even by the professors of religion.

Do we converse with each other as we ought on the high things of redemption by Christ and eternal salvation? Do we study each other's dispositions and snares and troubles, decays and piety that we may apply suitable remedies? Do we exhort one another daily lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Do we practice fidelity without sin's seriousness and administer praise without flattery? Do we invite one another to the most quickening and edifying means of grace of a public nature and recommend the perusal of such instructive and improving books as we have found beneficial to ourselves? Do we mutually lay open the state of our minds on the subject of personal religion and state our perplexities, our joys, our fears, our sorrows? Alas, alas, who must not blush at their neglect in these particulars? And yet, such neglect is as criminal as it is common."

We need to help one another to be growing in grace. And men, as spiritual leaders in the home we need to take the lead and to field the greater responsibility that we share in the means of grace to help our own wife to grow in grace.

Roman numeral three: Deposits of a mutual sympathy; the biblical basis of this marital duty of sympathy. First of all, sympathy is the duty of friends. Job 2:11 Job's three friends hear of his calamity and they come to comfort him. That's the one thing that they did that was right. Their advice kind of takes a right turn. Sympathy is the duty of friends. Sympathy is the duty of brethren. 1 Cor 12:26 "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with him; or, if one member is honored, all the members rejoice in it." Do you see what we're doing again? Here's something of a directive of how believers are to sympathize with one another in the context of the church. But if those two believers are not only members of that church, but they're also members of the same household, something of that broad principle applies to their interpersonal relationship, even though it's more heightened than that of the church. They see one another more. 2 Cor 11:29 Who is weak? And I am not weak. Who is made to stumble? and I do not burn with indignation. Our emotions are not only about our own things. Heb 13:3 Remember the prisoners as they're chained with them. Those who are mistreated since you yourselves are in the body also.

Number three: Sympathy is the duty of brethren who are best friends. Friends. Best friends who are husband and wife. This sympathy is commended by the example of Elkanah. Now, right up front. Elkanah should not have had two wives. But if he does have two wives and if Peninnah is rued in provoking Hannah whose womb has

been closed by the Lord, then Elkanah does have a responsibility to come and sympathize with her. Then Elkanah, her husband, said to her, 'Hannah, Why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why does your heart grieve? Am I not better to you than ten sons?' He would give a double portion to her, for he loved Hannah. It may not have helped the situation. So, skip over showing preference to one wife after you have already skipped over the fact that there's polygamy going on here and just focus on this sympathy that comes out of Elkanah towards his wife. He's not rude. He does not just tell her to accept God's providence and get over it. He tries to compensate for her grief. He does not withhold nor hide his love from her. So, this sympathy –when you see it in Elkanah, you say, 'Alright, this part is wrong, but we all know this part is good. It's really good. This sympathy though commended by the negative example of Mrs. Job. Job has got all these difficulties. And in Job 2:7 he struck by Satan with painful boils from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. And there he is with his broken piece of pottery and he's scraping himself as he sits in the midst of his ashes. His wife, in a very plain example of what not to do, says, 'Curse God and die.' Do you think that would be very helpful to Job? 'I cannot and I' – I'm not suggesting he says this out loud, but he says it within himself very firmly– 'I cannot and I will not curse God, but I will glorify God in every circumstance that He puts me in as He gives me grace.' Mrs. Job shouldn't have done that. She should have sympathized with him and done something that would be lovingly helpful.

Secondly, "B": The practical requirements of this marital duty of mutual sympathy make the deposit of tender feelings like we see in the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 11:33 Jesus sees Mary weeping there at the tomb of Lazarus. He sees the Jews who came with her weeping and He groaned in His spirit and troubled and He said, 'Where have you laid Him?' And they said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. Jesus is the declaration of God's heart for us. Jesus is the example to us in every situation in life (WWJD theology?). There is some kind of picture here for us when we think of marriage as derived from the Trinity and all their closeness and all their integration of life. Jesus had these tender feelings. Some of us that are approaching that time when we might be willing to admit that old age is at least somewhere on the horizon. How would you be treated if you were, in the view of Ecclesiastes, that ailing grasshopper that is crawling along? You would have others to show you sympathy. 'I don't want to be a grasshopper. I don't want to be all boney and dragging along.' If I had a preference, I wouldn't –let the tears and the deep groans flow as you

look on a spouse and weep. Jesus groaned in His spirit and He had those quiet tears just rolling down His cheek.

Two: Make the deposit of sympathy in sickness and calamity. As we age, this is all the more important. James again:

"Husbands, I call on you for all the skill and tenderness of love on behalf of your wives that they are weak and sickly. Watch by their couch, talk with them, pray with them, wake with them, and in all their afflictions, be you afflicted. Never listen half-heartedly to their complaints and oh, by all means, by all that is sacred in marital affection, I implore you, never by your cold neglect or petulant expressions or discontented look call up into their imaginations –unusually sensitive at such a season– the phantom of a fear that the disease which has destroyed their health has done the same for your affections. 'If I weren't a grasshopper crawling along, he would still love me.' Oh spare their bosom the agonizing pangs of supposing that they are living to be a burden to your disappointed heart. The cruelty of that man lacks a name and I know of none sufficiently emphatic who denies his sympathy to a suffering woman whose only sin is a broken constitution and whose calamity is the result of her marriage."

Such a man does the work of a murderer without His punishment and in some instances without His reproach. But not all is without His design. The design of remorse of a murderer.

Will you or I be caring for a spouse who's dying an inch a day due to cancer? Well if so, may God grant that we would make the thousand-dollar-a-day deposit of a sympathy that is suffused with love. Are you a strong man? Then use your strength to console and comfort and thereby strengthen one who feels only present weakness. The husband and wife ought to be like two strings wound together in the musical instrument, when you strike one, they both reverberate with sympathetic feelings.

Number three: Look afresh to Jesus Christ, our sympathetic high priest. Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. According to this passage that you and I have weakness is a given. That Jesus Christ is full of sympathy to his children is a given. That there is a throne of grace that is open to the weak child of God is a given. Whether or not you go to that throne of grace is the only

matter in the passage that you have the slightest bit of influence over. Go to that throne of grace.

Now over the last couple of weeks, we have considered deposits in the marriage bank: Mutual love, respect, society, forbearance, assistance, sympathy. But I want you to know in the plainest terms that you can't engage in making this sort of deposit short-term or certainly not long-term if you're not rightly related to God and that the Holy Spirit hasn't regenerated you and taken up residence within you. For some of these traits (or maybe all of them) we've talked about are found in Galatians 5:22-23 – the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. I want to highlight as we speak to the husband-wife relationship that there is one relationship that ought to be more important to you than your husband-wife relationship. Your relationship to Jesus Christ is foundational to every other relationship. If you're not yet a believer, yours is not to get into the business of making these deposits as if you're going to be able to do it or do it

for the long haul on your own apart from the grace of God. If you are not yet a believer, you ought to be. I hope that you know that you are a sinner. I hope you know that you are barred from heaven unless Jesus washes away your sin with His blood. If you're a believer, come to the sympathetic Jesus at the throne of grace. If you're not a believer, come to the Lord Jesus Christ who was willing to go to the cross to pay the penalty for all of our sins, to forgive us, and then to transform us. Come to the sympathetic Jesus and tell Him of all your sins –those sins that at present qualify you for an eternity of weeping and gnashing of your teeth in outer darkness. Will Jesus be shocked to hear your sins? He knows of them already. There have been a thousand people as bad as you and worse that have come with the same sin. Will Jesus be willing to forgive your sins? That's why He came. And you shall call His name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins. What hinders you from coming to this sympathetic high priest?