

# Walking with Jesus in a Weird World

## Resilient Marriage

Unedited Transcript

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Hey, I'm on. I'm on. I'm on. Sorry. Thank you very much, man. It's good to be with you guys this morning, Friday during July. You guys are the spiritual remnant, right? Yeah, I hope so. I think so. It's good to have you here. It's good to be with you. You know, we are continuing this series Walking in a Weird World: Resilient Marriage. Listen, before we get going, let's pray. Talking about marriage, we need to pray. Don't you think? All right. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your goodness. Thank you for these men and the opportunity to be together. Thank you that we could be your sons at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We commit our time to you now in Jesus' strong name, amen.

Well, my wife told me just before I left to get over here this morning that I better be careful how I talk about women and marriage and all that. She's not here, I can say whatever I want. Karen and I have been married 37 years. That's not as many as some of you guys have married. They've been the best 37 years of her life, I want you to know. Marriage is tough, though, isn't it? Whenever we talk about marriage, we're talking about a subject that raises guilt and challenge. It's tough. It's very difficult. What I want to do this morning is after I talk a little bit about living in a weird world, I want to talk more about this text in 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Marriage is difficult and I want to start out with a testimonial of a really cool-headed woman. It's a testimony really about how she was a clear and sure shot against a vicious predator that came her way. It's a testimonial but it also relates to marriage. Here it is. It's about a Beretta Jetfire testimonial. A Jetfire's a small 25 caliber Beretta. She says this, "While out walking along the edge of a Bayou just below Houma, Louisiana with my soon-to-be ex-husband discussing property settlement and other divorce issues, we were surprised by a huge twelve-foot alligator suddenly emerging from the murky water and charging us with its large jaws wide open. She must have been protecting her nest because she was an extremely aggressive female alligator. If I had not had my little Beretta Jetfire 25 caliber pistol with me, I would not be here today. Just one shot to my estranged husband's kneecap was all it took. The gator got him easily and I was walking away in a brisk pace. It's one of the best pistols in my collection, plus the amount I saved in lawyer's fees was more than worth the purchase of the price of the gun." Now, that's a testimonial, isn't it?

Marriage, what a challenging thing it is. Psalm 127:1, I have this on a text in back of me, "Unless the Lord builds a house, they labor in vein who build it." Would you all agree with me? We need God's grace in an amazing way in every area of life as men, but marriage in a very special way as well.

Now, before I talk about marriage, I want to talk to you about why we live in such a weird world. How many of you would agree with Patrick's title for this series that we live in a weird world? Would you agree with that? Getting weirder in many, many respects.

My friend Dan Lacich who's the pastor of Northland Oviedo and I were getting together the other day. We were having coffee and he said, "I'm going on a mission trip." I go, "Where you going?" He goes, "Well, I often go to South Africa. Every year, I go to South Africa once or twice." He says, "I like it there because they are about fifteen years behind us here in America. It feels comfortable." For some of us, we struggle with the way America is right now. Translation: Our world has changed big time. If you're in your 40s, 50s, and above, the world is weirder and weirder and getting weirder and weirder. America is not the same America that you entered in 20s and 30s. The guys who are in their 20s and 30s, they know nothing else but the world as it is now. It's the normal for them. It's the normal for them, always has been.

Haydn Shaw, in his book *Sticking Points*, talks about how and why our world is so weird. He makes this point because he's talking about the different generations. He makes the point that once half a new generation enters into the work force, a tipping point takes place. Did you catch that? Once half of the new generation gets into the workforce, there's a tipping point that changes everything and now half of the young millennials have gotten into the workforce and they do things differently. Don't they, Scott? They always want to do different. They think different about how they dress, about how they work.

I remember in Haydn Shaw's book, it was fascinating, talking about a lady who had said she was going to have to fire her most effective worker. He said, at a conference with this lady, "Why are you going to fire your most effective worker?" She said, "Well, she plays on the internet three hours a day at work." "Well, what's the problem?" "Well, that's demotivating to the rest of my workers." "Let me get this straight," he says, "You're going to fire your most productive worker because she works three hours, she plays three hours on the internet?" "Yeah." "Can't you do anything about that to keep your most effective worker?" These are some of the issues that we're facing.

One reason the world is so weird to so many of us is because the millennials, my kids and some of your grandkids, they're millennials, they're changing the way we think about everything. That's one reason why the world is so weird right now.

Let me go to another reason why the world is so weird. Let me offer to you some suggestions of books to read for those of you who want to look a little bit deeper. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* by Samuel Huntington and *The Fourth Turning: What the Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Rendezvous with History*, both of these books came out in 1996 and 1997, respectively. I read them but I'm reading them again and they make more sense now than they did then because they were, in a sense, prophesies of where we are right now. We're in a fourth turning. Every generation, these guys say, every culture has generations to it. The world is so weird right now partly because what we're seeing in America today is that we have gone from a young age, from childhood to youth, to middle age to old age as a culture in many respects, and we're in a fourth turning. They both prophesied that by 2025 or 2030, there's going to be another major world war, if not before.

Some of us are wondering, "What's happening?" Just the title of that first book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, gentlemen, isn't that what we're seeing in America today, in the world today? A clash of civilizations that aren't going together well. That's why our world is weird. That's why we look at it and we say, "All this stuff, I don't understand it."

Philip Rieff, in his three culture views, that's the next slide, brother, gives us something a little bit easier to grasp. He says one reason why our world is so weird is the difference between three cultures. The first cultures believe in fate, many gods, taboos, and spiritual forces. You've seen those first cultures in history as you've read about them. The many gods of Mount Olympus. Second cultures, the second slide, come along and in the second cultures, we see they emerge from scriptural code, from monotheism, and really is talking about Judaism and Christianity and the monotheistic religions that came along and changed culture, didn't they? We fought against Paganism. Christianity in the western world won and took over. One reason why our world is so weird right now is that we're in a third culture turning, according to Rieff. I think he's absolutely right. A third culture defines itself primarily against the second culture from which it has emerged. Its energy is spent deconstructing inherited sacred orders and traditions, all authorities are undermined and relocated in individual will and expression. Some of you are saying, "What? It's too early for this." I know.

Here's the interpretation. This third culture that is coming today, this progressive culture that is on the scene is hellbent on destroying everything the second culture, ie Christianity, developed. There's a progressiveness, they say. What they want to do is destroy everything that we believe in. That's why we Christians often feel this world is weird. It's bad. It's against everything that we believe. Gentlemen, it is. That's why we don't feel at home in this world.

I admit, I'll go public. I am to the right of Attila the Hun, politically. Get that on the table. Having said that and watching the political rallies in the last several months, I'm not going to step on anybody's toes here, I don't care if you're Democrat or Republican, you could be wrong. When Bernie Sanders was up there, it blew me away. You might be for Bernie. I mean, he's not going to be the nominee, I'm sorry. At bottom line, he was up there and he was saying, "We want a revolution." What are all these people doing behind him? They're cheering and yelling. I'm going, "I don't want a revolution. Not like that. I want some fiscal responsibility. I want people to have jobs." Gentlemen, there are millions of Americans that want a revolution. It's because this third culture's here. It's replacing what happened in America. That's why this weird world we are in is so weird to us.

Two times in the book of 1 Peter, Peter says, "You're aliens and you're strangers." The first Christians were that way and the beginning of the twenty-first century is very much like the first century. We are the aliens and strangers, culturally.

All right. Happy thoughts. Now, what can we do about it? What can we do about the world that it is? You say, "I thought you were going to talk about marriage?" I am because the reality is we can't change a whole culture but Peter is calling us this morning to think in terms of how our marriages can impact a culture, can make a difference in the culture. As soon as I start talking about marriage, some of you guys are thinking, "Oh, man. This is not where I do well. This is not where I've succeeded, I've gone through a divorce." One, two three, one of my friends, five times. I know. That's a strikeout by any calculation. This is not about doing marriage perfectly because none of us have. All of us are learning still, but it is an insight into how we can make a difference by being different from the world around us. Marriage in a weird, weird world.

What's the difference? What's going to make the difference? Resilient marriages. I love that word, resilient.

I got to speak a couple of weeks ago up at St. Louis with former Navy Seal Eric Greitens. Do you know that name? Eric Greitens wrote the book Resilience. He's running for governor. The guy's one of the

most impressive Pagans I've ever met. He's brilliant. He's brilliant and I love that word resilient. His book is sort of a Jewish Pagan approach to how we can be resilient.

This is the Biblical view. Let's look at it. 1 Peter 3, "Likewise, wives ..." Now, we don't have any wives in here today. I want you to know this is such a cool text because of seven verses, six of them are for women. We get to talk about women. What's said here stays here but it's going to be fun. "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands." That rings wonderfully to my ears.

"Be subject to your own husbands so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be one without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear, but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. You are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands," here it is, "live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as a weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be ..." What, gentlemen? "Hindered."

Now, Peter is a genius. I know a lot of us think of Peter as that crazy guy. Peter is a genius when he's under inspiration of the Holy Spirit like he is here. When he's not under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he's a menace. He walks into a room mouth first. He causes all kinds of problems. You read this book, and I reread the entire book again in preparing to be with you today. I want you to know it's a genius text. The whole book is supernaturally put together. We tend to think of Paul the apostle as talking about all of the gospel in the first parts of his book and then the applications to the gospel in the second part of his book, don't we? Paul talks about the indicatives of the gospel, what Jesus has done, and then he gets to the application. Do you know what Peter does in 1 Peter? He talks about the gospel a little bit in two or three or four verses and then gets to application. He talks about the gospel again and then gets to more application. He gets to the gospel again and then gets to more ... You can trace it throughout the whole book. Peter is much more cyclical.

I want you to note that right here in this text, he's dealing with the practical stuff but he's just said something very, very powerful. He says in chapter 2 about Jesus, 2:22, "Jesus, he committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judged justly." Catch this. Here's the gospel. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds, you are healed." That's gospel.

Gentlemen, when I read that in preparing for this passage on marriage, I realized, again, it struck me again, that the bad is news I'm a sinner and I'm in trouble, that there's absolutely nothing I can do to make myself right with God, but it was Jesus by his wounds that I've been healed. It is by his suffering, death, burial, resurrection that we've been healed. This passage on marriage will not make sense unless you understand the gospel of grace. Grace is received in what we don't deserve when there's every evidence that we deserve the opposite, but when we understand ... I'm looking around here and I know some of you and some of you know me and you know my stories and I know some of yours. We're badder than people know.

I've met with a young man who showed up yesterday at the Bible study I teach on Thursday morning at Four Rivers, 23-year-old guy. I sat down with him afterwards. I said, "Tell me your story." He said, "Well, when I was seven, I became addicted to pornography." I said, "Seven?" He's 23. He's 23 right now. He got addicted to pornography at seven. By 21, he had already had an affair and had been separated from the woman that he was living with and Jesus met him. It was awesome to hear his story. He goes on and on and he's so vulnerable. I go, "Wait, wait, wait. I don't want to hear this. Too much information." He was telling me stuff about his involvement in pornography that I didn't want to know. We're badder than other people know and it's only by the wounds of Christ that we've been healed. Isn't that awesome? We gather here and not play spiritual games. This is not religion. This is what Jesus has done to change us.

Now, the gospel impact then for wives has some teaching. I want to give you that and I'll tell you why I want to explain this and then I give you some gospel teaching for men, have you out of here by 9:30. I got ten more minutes. Hang tough.

Here we go. Gospel impact for wives because of what Jesus has done. Notice it says in verse 1:2 that the women should be submissive to their own husband. That is said two times in these six verses, that a woman is to be submissive to her own husband. Gentlemen, did you catch that? The view of the church has often been that women are to be submissive to the men. No, no, no. That's not what the Bible teaches. They are to be submissive to their own husband. In fact, in the original Greek, the word is *ídios*, their own. *Idios* sounds very much like another Greek word, *idiotes*. *Idiotes* sounds very much like what? Idiot. Now, I just laughed when I saw that in the original Greek. *Idios* and *idiotes* are different words but it's important to understand that a woman is to be submissive to the *ídios* in her life, not to the *idiotes* in her life. You're not an idiot. Sometimes you're not an idiot.

Have you ever said that in your marriage? You go, "Oh, honey. I'm sorry. I'm an idiot." I did that last week when in dealing with my wife, I said things in a way that was not acceptable to her and she got all ticked off and then we got it worked out later. She said, "You know, it's not what you said. It's how you said it." I said, "I know that. I'm an idiot." I'm an idiot.

The word here is *ídios* and it's so important that we understand that the Bible is commanding Christian women to be submissive to their own husband. In the Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures that the Bible represents, that was standard. That had to happen. All those were patriarchal cultures and the women, in order to be godly women, in order to adorn the gospel, had to be submissive to their husbands or they would bring shame upon Jesus Christ. That's why Peter is saying this.

You can imagine how difficult it would have been for a woman coming to faith in Christ with her husband steadfastly refusing to follow Jesus. Ain't going to do it. I'm not going to follow Jesus. How does she act out her Christian life with a husband who's leading the family in an ungodly way? What did submission mean? It meant this: not to try and usurp his leadership, not to demean him in the presence of his children or other people or publicly. It meant to try to do her best to be a team player in the marriage. Submission meant not being a manipulator, emotionally or physically. Submission for her meant not using her womanly charms to manipulate her husband. In the three areas where they did it in the first century, the same areas they're doing it now: with their hair, with their jewelry, with their clothing. We see that in the text. In fact, there's jokes the Roman women used to pile their hair so high sometimes they would say that she was twice as tall because of her hair than she actually was in reality. They're doing the same things today that they did back then.

Now, I want you to note that he's saying don't, women, let your adornment be external only. Some adornment is important, right? A couple things I've learned. I learned a long time ago that beauty is skin deep but ugly goes all the way to the bone. Isn't that true? Which of us have not seen a stunningly beautiful woman whose personality was horrible? You can't control your wife but you can train your daughters. You can lay a foundation for your granddaughters about what a godly woman looks like. A true woman doesn't have just external adornment. Now, don't get me wrong. Some adornment is necessary and needed. Please, ladies, adorn yourself some but don't let that be the only thing.

Now, I also learned another thing a long time ago. It was that some women really understand how to use their bodies to control men. Have you learned that? You say, "Well, they're not trying to. Come on." You know that, right? I'm not speaking to idiots. You do know that there are some women who are not just following the trends in the way they dress but are deliberately dressing the way they dress so that they can get you to fall. You know that, don't you? Proverbs talks about it all the time. Now, not all of them. You can't walk up to a woman and say, "Why are you dressing that way?" You're going to get in real trouble. You'll probably get shot. You and I know that there are women who dress the way they dress to control us and that's why the Bible calls Christian women to dress more modestly. Immodesty, gaudiness, and revealing clothes are not the means, Peter says, for a Christian woman to minister to her Pagan husband. Not going to win him that way. That's a mistake to go that way. There is a way to lead your husband and it's in a different way.

I was telling my guys at FORGE the other day about the guy who was going through difficulty in marriage. One of his Christian buddies said, "You know, sometimes God speaks to us through our wives." He kind of got big eyes and goes, "You're kidding me. I had no idea God used that kind of language." What's the point? I don't know. I just like that story. No, the point is that God speaks to us through our wives often, but wives have to understand how to speak to their husbands in an important way and that submission ... This is what it was. Submission was seen as an evangelistic tool to reach a Pagan husband. As Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest put it, "Incompatibility of religion did not justify the disillusion of the marriage." In verse 6, I have a slide on this, "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, you are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening." This submission for a Christian woman, you need to understand what it was for in the early church. I do too. When a woman trusts in the Lord, then she doesn't have to live as a manipulator. Now, we can't control our wives but we can teach our daughters, we can teach our granddaughters to be modest.

Gentlemen, let me tell you this. One of the biggest challenges of pastors today when it comes to worship teams is making sure that the women that get in front of the church are dressed modestly. Your pastors are going to get in trouble sometimes as they try to get the women in the worship team to try to dress modestly, because if they don't, on Sunday morning, men are not worshiping Jesus if there's immodest women up front. Stand with your pastors as they try to bring modesty into the church and you men ... Can I put this strong? I speak as a pastor, we have to be responsible for bringing modesty into our homes with our children, with our daughters. I can't control your daughter but I can control mine. My wife and I had to work together on that. We need the men of the church to understand the importance of this as well. The gospel impacts marriage for women.

Now, how does it impact for us as men? Good, I've got about three minutes left. We don't want to talk too much about this, but let's look at it. The gospel impact for husbands. 1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel since they are heirs with you of the grace of life so that your prayers may not be hindered."

The truth here in this text is that the gospel of grace not only makes women able to submit in grace, but it enables men who are hard boiled and kind of tough to be more gracious to the weaker vessel. Now, bring this verse up to a woman and they're going to go, "You say what? I'm a what? What kind of vessel did you say I am?" A vessel, in this concept, Biblically, is a tool of God, a tool that God can use. That's the idea here. We're tools that God can use to change the world. Christian women are too.

What do you mean that a woman is the weaker vessel? All scholars, even Martin Luther, says this really pertains to physical weakness. We all know women that are sharp as we are, intellectually, sometimes sharper. We've all met ... Have you been at the gym lately and seen some of these women that are working out in the gym? I ain't messing with them. They're tough. Did you guys watch Ninja Warrior? Yeah, Jessie Graff. I think she was in the LA qualifier. She was the only one ... She was the first person to finish that qualifier. She beat all the guys. Finally, a guy won at the end. I go, "Oh, man. That's good." Come on. Help me out.

See, what happens here is the gospel of grace makes us gracious. It helps us understand our own weakness. Until we understand our weakness and failing as men and until we really get the gospel, until we look in the mirror and say, "I need Jesus big time," then we can't be gracious to other people. The gospel of grace makes us understand that our wives are physically weaker, that we need to struggle with our own stuff but to love them and to care for them, to see our wives not only as weaker in some respects and stronger in other respects, but also to see them as sisters in Christ. Some of us treat our wives in ways that we wouldn't treat a sister in Christ at church on Sunday. That's wrong.

Grace makes us gracious. It helps move us into an understanding compassionate way. It shows us a why, a big why. The big why is so that our prayers won't be ... What's that word? I know. There is an interesting correlation here between the receptivity of the God of the universe to our prayers and our connections to our wives. That's powerful, isn't it? This is how the gospel of grace works out for us and why we need each other around tables like this. This is why the questions that I put together for you to talk about are probably more important than what I just said up here today. I need brothers to help me be understanding because there's so many times I do not understand my wife. I do not understate how to be sympathetic to her. I've only been married 37 years. I'm making some progress. I have the sneaking suspicion that a lot of the success of our marriage was her, not me, that it was Jesus working in her more than me. Yet, we've all learned a lot, haven't we, in marriage? I still need to grow in this way.

This is where manners came from, by the way, opening doors for women and all of this stuff. We need to take our struggles to the Lord and not take them out on our wives.

There was a sign. An internet went down and I saw this sign. "Internet went down and I had to spend time with my family. They seem like good people." Isn't it easy to get so wrapped up in business and travelling and doing all that we're doing and all the stuff that we want to do and we don't connect? Grace makes us more relational. Guys, let me tell you what we do better. I'm almost done. What we do better than women is putting together large organizations. Historically, men have always been better at putting together armies and large corporations. Women have always been better at smaller units of relationships. We can learn from them in that regard. The gospel of grace makes us more relational. That's what this is talking about.

Somebody sent me a Chuck Norris picture when he's dressed as Walker Texas Ranger. You know Chuck Norris. He said, "I too was once a male trapped in a female's body but then I was born."

Listen, I have a female side. Her name is Karen. You have a female side if you're married and it's the name of your wife. Gender matters. Does gender matter, gentlemen? We live in an age where the culture's saying gender doesn't matter. Gender matters. Roles matter. Marriage matters. This is how we can be different in a world that's changing. In a world that's getting weirder and weirder and weirder, let your marriage get weirder in the Biblical sense and you will be more relevant. We're going to be Christian and impact a culture, it can start in our marriage.

Two quotes and then I'm done. Mark Sayers in Christianity Today said this, "The strongest witness for the gospel in a post-Christian society is not to blend in, but to stick out. Christian resilience is growing stranger by the day, yet as it becomes rarer, it becomes more valuable." Resilient marriages like this is what stand out in a culture. I need the gospel. I need's God direction. I need brothers like you to help me pull it off. Let's talk about it around the table before you head out, hit the bricks today. Have some good table talk. It's good to be with you guys again today. Thanks.