The Power of a Spouse

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 June 2026

Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0:00] Good morning. My name's Matthew Capone, and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

We're continuing this morning our series in the book of Genesis. You remember that Genesis is the origin story of God's people, Israel. And this summer, we are looking at the story of Isaac and Jacob, mostly Jacob, in chapters 25 through 36.
And to a certain extent, it's the same theme we saw last year, last summer, in the story of Abraham, which is that we're answering the question, what does it look like to follow God in faith?
But as I've been telling you, the story of Isaac and Jacob adds some more layers, some new themes that are introduced. Last week, we were in chapter 27, where Jacob cheats Esau out of the blessing.
And so we saw God's work in and through dysfunctional families. This week, we're going to continue the story of Jacob. The topic this morning's already been introduced with our New Testament reading this morning, and it's this.
[1:09] We're going to discuss why Christians should only marry other Christians. Now, as I say that, I realize some of you are not married to Christians, and you might be thinking, oh, no, am I going to get beat up on this morning?

Is this the moment where the pastor criticizes me and shames me? That's not our goal. It is my job as a pastor to provide warnings from God's word, but it is equally my job to remind you the great hope that we have in any situation because of the power of the gospel.
And so with that, I invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 27, starting at verse 41, which you'll find on page 7 of your worship guide. As we turn here, remember that this is God's word.
And Isaiah chapter 40 tells us, the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. So that's why we read now Genesis chapter 27, starting at verse 41.
Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said to himself, the days of mourning for my father are approaching.
[2:25] Then I will kill my brother Jacob. But the words of Esau, her older son, were told to Rebecca. So she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said to him, Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.

Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban, my brother in Haran, and stay with him a while until your brother's fury turns away.
Until your brother's anger turns away from you and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?
Then Rebecca said to Isaac, I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?
Chapter 28. Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.
[3:49] God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham.

Thus Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau's mother.
Verse 6. Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there. And that as he blessed him, he directed him, You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02

And that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan Aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.
I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we do thank you again for your word that speaks life to us, that shows us our great need for your mercy and your grace, and also assures us that you meet us at that very same place of need.
[5:22] We ask this morning that you would show us our need for the gospel. Even more, you would highlight your mercy and your grace, that you'd be at work in our hearts and our minds by your Holy Spirit, growing our love for you and setting our eyes on you more than anything else.

And we ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. We are picking up this morning our story from last week.
You'll remember in chapter 27, there was this conflict over who would receive the blessing of Isaac. Was it going to be the son Jacob or the son Esau?
Isaac wants the blessing on Esau because Esau is his favorite, but Rebecca and Jacob work together to deceive Isaac and actually get the blessing for Jacob.
And you'll remember we talked about the fact that everyone behaves poorly. The consequences of all of that are significant, and there are three consequences right away.
[6:28] First, Esau wants to kill Jacob. See that in chapter 27, verse 41. Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him.

And Esau said to himself, The days of mourning for my father are approaching. Then I will kill my brother Jacob. So in other words, he's not going to kill Jacob until Isaac dies.
And I mentioned last week that it's actually going to be 20 plus years. It's not till Genesis chapter 35 that Isaac actually dies. But the consequence one then is Esau is out for blood.
That leads to consequence two, which is that Jacob must flee. That takes us to verse 42. Rebecca finds out about Esau's plan, and she once again, as she always does, has a plan of her own.
So she tells Jacob, look, run away to my uncle. Run away to Laban. He will protect you and just hide out there. Let everything calm down. And when the temperature is lower here, I will send for you.
[7:38] Now if you're familiar with the story of Genesis, you know she never sends for him. That's consequence three. Rebecca loses her favorite son.

So one, Esau wants to kill Jacob. Two, Jacob therefore needs to three. And Jacob has to flee. Therefore, number three, Rebecca loses Jacob. And that's just a review of what we saw last week. I told you the scheming, the lying, ends up hurting everyone. Doesn't lead to any good. And so I'll tell you this.
I promise for the last time for a little bit. Page eight of your worship guide. I've mentioned this two times recently. This quote from Crime and Punishment. Your worst sin is that you have destroyed and betrayed yourself for nothing.
And the book of Genesis is trying to make that clear for us. Look, it's actually in God's glory that we discover our good. All this running around, disobeying God's commands and laws, it doesn't just offend him, it also hurts you.
[8:45] Sin never pays. Never pays. This leads us into the narrative about marriage. You'll notice that Rebecca is very crafty here.

She goes to Isaac and she does not say, hey, by the way, Isaac, one of our sons wants to kill the other one. Okay, she keeps that to herself. She actually says, hey, she comes up with this reason she thinks it's going to appeal to her husband.
Instead of making it about their sons, she makes it about marrying the wrong people. This is verse 46. Then Rebecca said to Isaac, I loathe my life because of the Hittite women.
If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me? Now we already know this.
The end of chapter 26, we found out that Esau had married two Hittite women, and there it said they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebecca.
[9:50] So this has been a problem for some time. The leadership expert, Michael Hyatt, says that there is a radio station, and that radio station is called WIIFM, what's in it for me?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02

And that that is a radio station that everyone in the world is tuned into. Rebecca knows that. She's crafty. She knows that this is what's actually going to appeal to her husband.
It's what's going to get Isaac's attention. Hey, you know all those problems we have with Esau's wives? If we don't do something, we're going to have the same problem with Jacob's wives.
Isaac, as we saw last week, he's ruled by his appetites, which means he's ruled by comfort and pleasure. And so she has to present something that's an immediate threat to his comfort and pleasure.
Hey, you know we're suffering now? Let's make sure we don't suffer more. I'm going to pull us out of the story for a second.
[10:56] So that's where we're at. And I'm going to explain to you why the Hittite women are so problematic. I'm going to apply it for us, and then we're going to jump back into the story. Okay?
The problem with the Hittite women, first of all, is not their race.

The problem with the Hittite women is their religion. Now, this gets confusing in the Old Testament because race and religion overlap in a way that's bigger than it does today.
But we have other places in the Bible that help us understand that race is not the problem. I'm just going to tell you one of them. It's from the story of Ruth. Ruth is a Moabite.
So she's not an Israelite. She's not from the people of God. But Ruth comes to Naomi and says, this is in Ruth chapter 1, your God is my God. So she's not the right race, which actually doesn't matter. She's the right religion, which does matter. And she marries Boaz. Another way of putting it is this. Boaz is better off marrying Ruth than many of the Israelite women at the time.
[12:07] So we have to clear that up. The problem is not that they're Hittites. The problem is that they are not people of the promise. They're not people of the covenant. That then takes us to some principles we have to lay out and understand about marriage.

And that helps us understand why it is that if we're a Christian, we marry other Christians. The first one is this. There is nothing in your life that is more important than your relationship with God.
Principle two, there is most likely no one who has more power and influence in your life than your spouse.
There is most likely no one who is able to turn you in one direction or another than your husband or your wife.
That is the person with the most influence and power. So if someone's able to turn you towards the Lord, it's going to be your spouse.
[13:27] If someone is able to turn you away from the Lord, it's going to be your spouse. And so you never want that person who has the most power in your life to be someone who would even move you an inch away from God.

Third principle, it is harder to raise our children to love and know God when our spouse is not helping us.
It is harder. And I say it's harder because I don't want you to hear it's impossible. I don't want you to hear me say that and for you to be discouraged. I am here to provide warnings from God's word, as I mentioned.
But also to remind you of the great hope that comes in the gospel. And we have an example from the Bible itself that gives us great hope. You may be familiar with Timothy, who is a church planter in the New Testament.
The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy were written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy. Okay? Timothy's dad was not a Christian. And Paul writing to him says, Hey, remember you learned the faith from your mother and your grandmother.
[14:37] So I don't want you to hear me say that. It is harder to raise our children in the Lord. It is certainly not impossible. So those are our principles. There's nothing more important than your relationship with God.

There's no one more powerful than your spouse. And it is harder to raise your children in the Lord.
Now, I'm going to tell you how this applies to both people who are single and people who are married.
First of all, for single people, at risk of stating the obvious, we do not marry people who are not Christians. Now, this is a constant challenge and temptation in the church.
And it's a challenge and a temptation for a number of reasons. First of all, it is culturally acceptable now. When you see someone who has an interfaith marriage, people celebrate about it.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02

When Chelsea Clinton, who I think was Episcopalian, married Mark Mesvinsky, who was Jewish, people thought, man, this is just so progressive and modern and good. Someone once told me about an interfaith marriage, you know, they said it actually works.
[15:45] And I thought, well, yeah, I'm sure it actually works if neither of you really care about your faith. I'm sure it works in that situation. But it's culturally accepted, right? So we're going against the current when we say, actually, we only marry people in our faith.

Second reason it's a challenge is that finding a spouse is really hard. You have to find someone you're actually attracted to. Then you have to be compatible with them.
Then you have to have a similar vision for life. You're going to have to want the same things. And then on top of that, you're going to add the same faith. That just makes it even more complicated. That takes the pull that I had and it shrinks it even more. Why would I add that as a limiter when there's so many other limiters? Third, and this one is especially insidious.
It is tempting to believe that some marriage is better than no marriage. It's tempting to believe that some marriage is better than no marriage.
[16:50] And so what they say is, hey, at least I'm not alone anymore. At least I'm not single. I won't be lonely. The problem is this.

There is more than one type of loneliness. There's more than one type of loneliness. Yes, it is lonely to be literally alone, that there's physically not someone with you.
There's also something that can actually be worse, which is emotional loneliness. It is incredibly lonely to be with someone who does not share your deepest values and convictions.
It's incredibly lonely to be with someone who uses a totally different compass than you do in life. It's lonely to be with someone who has a different north star.
Marriage will not necessarily make you feel less alone. In certain circumstances, it might make you feel more alone. So it's a myth.
[18:03] It is not true that it's better to have some marriage than no marriage. Fourth reason is this. It is tempting because often non-Christians are more exciting than Christians.

I'm not going to go into all of the reasons for that, but you'll hear people say things like this. The Christian guys that I know are really boring. The Christian girls that I know are really boring. I had a friend in seminary who was frustrated with all these seminarians not knowing how to date, and so he told me, I'm going to run a seminar for you all on game.
I'm going to teach everyone how to have game, which is a way of saying, I'm going to teach you how to be less boring. I'm going to teach you how to date. The problem with that is this, that the excitement that you sense with that person is going to wear off.
It's going to wear off because excitement naturally wears off as you age, and it's also going to wear off as you realize, hey, we actually care about really different things.
Chemistry is only going to take us so far. Fifth and final reason it's tempting is this. Often, sometimes, non-Christians treat you better than Christians.
[19:27] And so you'll hear people say things like this. I know he's not a believer, but he treats me better than any Christian guy ever has. Hey, I know she doesn't share my faith, but she's kinder to me than any Christian woman has been.

Now, you might find that shocking. We've talked about this before, though. Remember chapter 20 of the book of Genesis? We have this comparison between Abimelech, who's a pagan, and Abraham, who loves God.
And in that instance, Abimelech is actually more righteous. So there are times you'll meet a non-Christian, and they're going to treat you better than a Christian does. Go back.
We could review chapter 20. There's a lot of reasons we talked about for that. Ultimately, it's about the fact that we're made in the image of God, that God's characteristics still shine through in people who have rejected him.
The point of all of it is this. If someone does not share your faith, then they have no interest in your relationship with the Lord.
[20:33] At best, they will ignore it. At worst, they will discourage it or be hostile to it. If we're single, do not marry non-Christians.

By the way, I want to mention that we don't missionary date. You might say, okay, I'm not going to marry a non-Christian, but I'm going to date them, because as they get to know me, of course, they're going to get to know the Lord, right?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02

And I'm going to convert them. At the very best, you're in sort of this bait-and-switch situation. At the very worst, you end up marrying a non-Christian. Because the heart wants what it wants.
Kids, at some point, you will likely meet someone who is wonderful and beautiful, who shares your interests and with whom you have intense chemistry.
But they do not share your faith. It might be exciting for a time, for a short time.
[21:50] And it will also be lonely for a long time. Do not do it. I told you I was going to speak to single people.

I'm also going to tell you how this matters to married people. You might be thinking, okay, I'm married to a Christian. I'm a Christian. I'm not sure how this applies to me, but I'm glad the single people are hearing it. If you are married to a Christian, this principle still applies to you.
There is no one in your life who has more power and influence to turn you towards the Lord. You have more power in your spouse's life than anyone else to encourage them, empower them, and enable them to chase after God.
Use your power for good. Urge each other. Urge each other in a kind and loving and gentle way that we're going to be in church together.
We're going to be in prayer together. We're going to read the word together. No one can catalyze your faith more than your spouse. So do it.
[23:16] Do it for each other. Now maybe you're married, and you are married to a non-Christian. As I mentioned earlier, our goal here is not for you to feel defeated or discouraged or shamed or called out, because the power of the gospel is still at work.

And the Bible speaks to this situation as well. 1 Peter 3 talks to wives who are married to husbands who are not Christians, and it says, win them without a word.
In other words, if your spouse is the most powerful person in your life, guess what? No one has more power to draw your spouse to the Lord than you.
Take heart. There's great hope.
You may very well be God's instrument in their lives. So there's a powerful principle, which is of the power of a spouse to bring close or draw away from the Lord that applies to anyone and everyone.
[24:36] I told you we were going to jump out of the story. Now we're going to jump back in. We're in chapter 28.

Isaac goes to Jacob, this is verse 1, and tells him, no Canaanite women. You need to go to Laban, your mother's uncle, your uncle, your mother's brother, get a wife there.
Then verses 3 and 4, he gives him the blessing that he should have given him before. So this Abrahamic blessing, remember we've talked about the chain of custody, gets passed on. Verse 5, Jacob does what he's told, which sets us up for the next part of the story.
Because we're going to spend a number of chapters with our friend Laban. Esau, on the other hand, completely messes it up.
He fumbles things. So verses 6 and 7, he sees what happens. He sees his father telling his brother, hey, make sure you marry in the family. Sees that that results in a blessing.
[25:38] He's like, oh, look. Okay, so if you marry someone in the family, the father's happy. He blesses you. Verse 8, this is pleasing to dad. By the way, it's interesting, there's no mention of mom in verse 8.

Esau's his father's favorite son, not his mother's. And so he thinks, okay, I want the blessing. I want to honor my father. I want to do what my parents want.
I'm going to go marry a relative. So he goes and he marries Ishmael's daughter. Ishmael is not included in the covenant.
Remember I told you this is not about race. It's about religion. Esau gets that flipped. Esau doesn't realize this is about religion.
He thinks it's about race. He doesn't realize that the marriage he's supposed to make is one of commitment to God and his covenant. The covenant does not flow through Ishmael.
[26:42] God made this clear in Genesis chapter 17. Remember Abraham's bargaining with him and Abraham says, hey, why can't you just bless Ishmael? This is when he has not had a son yet.

Isaac hasn't been born. And God says, hey, look, I hear you. I'm going to bless Ishmael and multiply him. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac.
Esau has never understood what is most valuable. He didn't understand it in chapter 25 when he sold his birthright for a pot of stew.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02

He doesn't understand it now when he goes for Ishmael and marries outside of the covenant. Esau is his own worst enemy. Spiritually numb, uninterested in the things of God.
He completely misses the point. He does not understand that his relationship with God is more important than anything else.
[27:46] Jesus. Which, by the way, is the opposite of what Jesus teaches. Matthew chapter 13, Jesus gives us two stories about how much the gospel is worth.

Stories about the kingdom of heaven. First of all, he says the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. And when a man finds out about it, he sells everything to buy the field.
It's worth losing every single thing he owns if he can have that. Then Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a pearl of great value.
And there's a pearl merchant who finds the pearl and he sells every other pearl he owns to have that one pearl.
Brothers and sisters, the gospel is of such great value that it is worth giving up everything else.
[28:57] The gospel is so precious that we cannot, we must not risk it on a mere relationship.

Why is the gospel so valuable? There's many reasons. I'll remind you of a few. First, as we've discussed many times, worshiping God is the only way to enjoy anything else.
Remember David Gibson says, in the created world, you can only truly enjoy what you do not worship. If you put that romantic relationship first, you won't enjoy it.
It will rule over you. It will be a thorn in your side. The gospel is worth more than anything else because our relationship with God actually gives us the full and true intimacy that marriage can only point to.
And the gospel is worth more than anything else. Because our eternal future with God in heaven hangs on the forgiveness that comes from following God in faith.
[30:33] There is nothing that compares in value to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our relationship with God is our only path to life.

And it is the only hope for those inside the church and those outside the church. And so we must not.
We cannot do anything that threatens that because the gospel is our greatest treasure. Father, let's pray.
Our Father in heaven, we do thank you and praise you that you offer us more than any spouse can give. That you can out-give and out-bless any relationship.
We ask that you would protect us from our own foolishness. That you would set our hearts on you. That you would remind us that your gospel is worth more than anything else.
[31:41] And that it would be the north star of our lives. That we would set our eyes on it. That we would let nothing get in the way. And we ask all of these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-09 19:15:02