

# (A Heavenly Home) 4. the Home - a Sanctuary for God

by Zac Poonen

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*A Christian home must be a sanctuary for God, where peace, contrition, and holiness are prioritized.*

**Scripture:** Luke 10:5

**Topics:** "Christian Marriage", "Holy Living"

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## Description

Zac Poonen delivers a powerful sermon at the wedding of Sunil and Anugrah, emphasizing the importance of making their home a sanctuary for God's presence. He highlights the need for peace, humility, and holiness in their marriage, urging them to prioritize God's happiness above all else. Poonen encourages the couple to focus on pleasing God, maintaining peace, being sensitive to each other's light and wisdom, and walking in holiness every day.

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## Transcript

(Message given at the wedding of Sunil (my fourth son) and Anugrah)

God's Word is the foundation for our life, for our home and for everything else in this world - because God created this world by His Word. And so if we keep God's Word alone as our foundation, nothing can go wrong.

In Exodus 25, we see for the first time, God revealing His will that He wants to dwell with man. God says there in Exodus 25:8, "Let them construct a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." That was referring to the tabernacle upon which the fire of God rested - the glory of God that marked those Israelites out as different from all the other people in the world.

It is easy to make a tabernacle exactly like the one we read of in Exodus, because all its dimensions are given there. We can make an exact replica of that tabernacle, but there is one thing there that we will not be able to duplicate - the glory of God that rested upon it. The most important thing about that sanctuary was the glory of God that rested upon it - and this indicated His presence among His people.

Sunil and Anugrah, now that you are getting married, the most important thing you must do is to make your home a sanctuary for God - not a place where you seek to please each other, although you should seek to please each other; not even a place to bless other people, although your home should bless other

people; but primarily a place where God can manifest His presence, and where Jesus feels at home. God says "Let them make a place for Me to live".

And I want to say to both of you: God is commanding you to build a home for Him to live in.

We all know how when we go into some homes that we don't feel at home there. Whereas in other homes, right from the moment we enter, they make us feel completely at home. It is difficult to explain this feeling, but we all know it. A Christian home must be a place where Jesus feels completely at home. That means that He is happy about everything He sees there. He is happy about the books you read, the magazines you get, the conversation between husband and wife, the things you talk about, the programs you watch on TV and everything else. In many Christian homes, they have Bible-verses hanging on the wall. But Jesus does not feel at home there.

Can you imagine with what tremendous anticipation God brought Adam and Eve together. What wonderful plans He had for them as a Father. I am a father, and I know with what anticipation I see my son getting married today. But what I feel is only a fraction of what God felt when He brought Adam and Eve together. He hoped that they would have a wonderful home where He would always be first. But how soon God was disappointed. He was not angry with them, He was sad. I believe there is a lot of sadness in God's heart today when He sees the condition of many a Christian home, where there is no peace, but only quarreling and fighting. They turn to Him only when they are in trouble. The people of the world turn to God only when they face some problems. But as Christians we are to be different. God is not an emergency number that we are to call when we are in some difficulty. No. God must be the Centre of our lives at all times.

God's Word has been given to us exactly like the "Manufacturer's Instructions" that we get with any gadget that we buy. All of us are so careful after buying an electronic gadget to follow those instructions exactly. If your gadget has some problem and you take it to the manufacturer, the first question he will ask you will be, "Did you follow the Manufacturer's instruction-booklet exactly?" In fact, in most guarantee cards it is clearly written that the guarantee becomes invalid if you don't follow the instructions exactly.

The wonderful thing about God however is that when we go to Him with our messed-up life at any time, He is still willing to rectify it. His is not a one-year guarantee! It's a life-long one! If you come to Him with your broken life, He will straighten it out. That's the wonderful thing about God - He is a loving Father. And it's very important that you know that the One Who is asking you to make a sanctuary for Him in your home is a loving Father. He is very, very interested in your lives, right from this very first day, and He wants you to be happy until the day that Jesus returns.

I have tasted a little bit of that happiness with my wife for many decades in our married life. And I can tell you that the most wonderful life you can ever live is one where Jesus is the Centre of your life, and where everything in your home is determined by whether it makes Jesus happy or not - the way you spend your time, the way you spend your money, and the way you do everything else. If you live like that, then when you come to the end of your life, or if Christ returns before that, and you stand before Him, He will say, "Well done". It won't matter then what others thought about you.

One characteristic of man is that he judges by the outward appearance. I did that myself for many years, when I was a legalist. But I now see more clearly that it is the heart that God looks at. I want you both to remember that it's your heart that should always be pure. Whether your home is a palace or a hut is secondary - the outward appearance is secondary. It's your heart that God sees. So make sure that your hearts are together a sanctuary - a holy place - for God to dwell in.

## 1. A Home Where There is Peace

Where does God dwell? First of all in a home where there is peace. When Jesus sent His disciples out to different places to preach, He told them in Luke 10:5-7, to look for a home where there was peace. And when they found a home like that, they were to stay only there and not look for another home. Why did He say that? Because He knew that they would not find many homes where there was peace.

God dwells in a home where there is no fighting. What do husbands and wives fight about in any case? Mostly about material things - some earthly matter that went wrong. Things will go wrong in this world. But when something goes wrong, remember that the only thing that is serious is sin. All other matters are secondary and unimportant. I hope both of you will see this clearly: That the only thing that is serious is sin. If you have bitterness at any time and won't talk to each other because of earthly problems, that will grieve God's heart. Let me share this little bit of wisdom with you: Hate sin - because that is the only thing that can destroy your marriage.

Remember that your home is to be a sanctuary for God. And if anything comes up that disturbs the peace in your home, it won't be a sanctuary any longer. I am not saying that the Lord will be angry with you or curse you. No. He will never curse you or be angry with you, at any time. But He will be unhappy. And I am sure you want Jesus to be happy in your home from Day One.

I pray that in everything you do, you will say. "Lord, we are not interested in whether men are happy with us or not. Are You happy? Is there anything in our lives, in our thoughts or our attitudes towards one another that is making You unhappy. We want you to be happy in our home. We are going to assess everything in our lives by this question: Will this please the Lord?"

Can you imagine what your home will be like then? It will have the same glory of God that shone on the tabernacle. And people will be drawn to the living God through your home.

God dwells where both husband and wife are willing to give up their rights for the sake of peace. Once a young couple came to me, who were on their way to catch a train and they said, "Brother Zac, can you give us an exhortation in two minutes?" I said, "Sure. Here it is: Always be ready to ask forgiveness from one another; and always be ready to forgive one another."

If you're ready to ask forgiveness as soon as you have done something wrong and you're ready to forgive immediately, as soon as the other person asks for forgiveness, I can give you a written guarantee that your home will be a home of peace, everyday.

Your home can be like that. But you have got to be very sensitive in this matter. If you get a thorn in your foot, you won't wait even for a second to remove it. In the same way, as soon as you sense some disturbance in your heart, you must remove it at once. It's a thorn; and it will destroy you. It will infect your heart more than any thorn can infect your foot. Pursue peace at any cost. Never mind whatever else you may lose - money or whatever. Those things are not as important as peace. I hope you both will recognize that if you were to weigh peace and money in a balance, peace will be found to be much heavier than money. Remember that!

Did something go wrong at home one day? Did the food get burnt? Never mind. What does it matter if you can't eat one meal because the food was burnt. That will probably keep you fitter and healthier and perhaps even make you more spiritual! But if you get upset over it, then the devil would have won the

victory.

Remember what happened to the first home that God established. The devil was just waiting on the sidelines trying to come between Adam and Eve. And he succeeded. He succeeded in coming between Job and his wife too. And he succeeded in coming between Isaac and Rebekah as well.

It is never God's will that Satan should come between a husband and a wife. So may it never happen to you. May God be happy with your home always and may He grant you peace at all times.

## 2. Where Husband And Wife Are Contrite And Broken

The second thing I want to say is found in Isaiah 57:15 : "God dwells in the high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit". God dwells with those who are contrite and broken in spirit. A broken person is one who is more aware of his own lack and failure than anyone else's. The world is full of people who are aware of the failures of other people. In the average home today, the conversation is mostly about the failures of other people and their families. We are quick to notice failures in others. But often, we don't see the good points in those people. We have all been guilty of this. I have been guilty of it myself in the past. But God has given me light on this evil, and I have repented.

We have no right to throw stones at anyone, for we ourselves are sinners, saved by God's grace. But hopefully, we are people who don't want to keep on committing the same sin again and again - especially the sin of speaking about the faults of other people. We all know the difference between a bathroom mirror and a driving mirror. In a bathroom mirror we see our own face. In a driving mirror we see someone else's face. It says in James 1:23-25 that God's word is like a mirror. But is it a bathroom mirror or a driving mirror? Whose face do you see in it? Do you see in it a word to preach to someone else? Or do you see in it something that you are not obeying. It says in Hebrews 10:7, "In the Book, it is written about me."

I spent many years of my life foolishly, looking at God's word like a driving mirror, looking for verses to preach at other people. And in those years I was miserable, and I brought others into bondage too. But I have been liberated from all that now. I still have my convictions, but I never impose them on others. I share them with others, but I never impose them on others, because that is not my business. I have to live before God's face alone.

And now I know this wonderful truth, that the other person may not have as much light as God has given me. This truth has helped me so much in the past 20 years and more. Before that, I expected everyone around me to have the same light and understanding of sin that I had. But I have discovered through the years that each person has only got a certain amount of light and understanding. And Almighty God expects each person to live only according to the light that he himself has, and not according to the light that someone else has. We know how much light God has given us. But we don't know how much light God has given that other person. So we must be merciful.

[The video-light goes off at this point due to a loose connection]

Did you see the way that light went off just now! That's an illustration. Recognize that some people see things clearly in a very bright light, whereas others see things in a dimmer light. It was good of God to give us a demonstration of this truth before our eyes right now - with that light going off!

So Sunil: Recognize that Anugrah may not have as much light as you have in some areas.

And Anugrah: Recognize that Sunil may not have as much light as you have in some areas.

Each of you must live by the light that you have, and leave the other to live according to the light he or she has.

A sixth standard student knows more than a second standard student. So if a sixth standard expects a second standard student to know as much as he does, then he is being foolish. And if I, at the age of 65, expect a 26-year-old to have as much light and understanding on God's ways as I have, then I am being foolish. But I won't be foolish.

Many Christians are foolish. They expect others to acquire in one year the wisdom that they themselves have acquired in thirty years.

How much wisdom then do I expect this young couple to have? Only the wisdom of people in their twenties.

And Sunil and Anugrah: I'll tell you something to encourage you: You will probably do ten times less foolish things than I did when I was your age! I hope you are encouraged by that. But God has been merciful with me, and He has encouraged me in spite of all my mistakes.

Let me say something to you both as a father. And by the way Anugrah, I am not your father-in-law. I decided a long time ago, that since I was not under law but under grace, I would never have a daughter-in-law, but only daughters. You can test me out on that in the next few years and see whether I treat you like a daughter or a daughter-in-law. And if I slip up at any time, please remind me of what I said today that I would treat you like a daughter. I will.

What I want to say to both of you as your father, is that I will never expect either of you to have the light or the wisdom that I have. I hope you will have as much wisdom as I have, before you reach the age of 65 - perhaps by the time you are 45. And by the time you are 65, I hope you will have a lot more wisdom than I have right now.

So when you meet people who expect you to have the wisdom that they have acquired in 40 years, just ignore them. There is a lovely verse in Isaiah 42:19 that says a true servant of the Lord is both blind and deaf. Be blind and deaf to the opinions of people around you. That verse has helped me tremendously. It will help you too. It is only as you are blind and deaf to the opinions of people around you, that you can live before God's face as His servants.

So seek to find out what's wrong with yourself and not with the others who criticize you. If others want to destroy themselves, by criticizing you, let them destroy themselves. But I decided years ago that I was not going to destroy myself like that. I did many foolish things in my younger days. But I have a little more wisdom now. Paul said, "When I was a child, I behaved like a child, I spoke like a child, acted like a child. Now that I am grown up, I have put away childish things" (1 Cor.13:11).

I want to encourage both of you also to grow up quickly.

### 3. Where Husband And Wife Are Holy

God dwells in a home where the husband and wife walk in holiness every day.

It says in Ezekiel 43:12: "This is the law of God's house - the entire area shall be Most Holy."

The tabernacle had three parts - the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place. And of the three, the Most Holy place was the smallest.

But here we read that in the new covenant, there will be no outer court or holy place. The whole area will be the Most Holy Place. That means that the glory of God under the new covenant will rest not just in one corner like in the tabernacle, but over the whole compound.

What that means for your life is that you are going to be holy all the time - not just on Sundays but every day. You are going to be holy not just when you read the Bible, but when doing anything. Every nook and corner of your life and of your home is going to be holy. And holiness is not a matter of following certain religious rituals, but of avoiding everything that displeases God - according to the light that you have. May this be true in both your lives.

God has a wonderful plan for your lives together. When God first made Adam, there was no Eve. God breathed life into Adam and when Adam opened his eyes, the first person he saw was God. And I hope, Sunil, that the first person you see every day in your life will be God Himself. Then God put Adam to sleep and took out one of his ribs and made Eve. And when Eve opened her eyes, the first person she saw was God too. And I hope, Anugrah, that the first person you see every day in your life will be God Himself. Eve didn't even know that Adam existed when she saw God. It was only after that, that God brought Eve to Adam and said, "OK. Now both of you can get married." They really loved each other then - because they had both seen God first. That is the secret of a continuing love in marriage - both must see God first.

And what God did for Adam, He also did for you, Sunil. 26 years ago when you were born, we were happy as your parents. But God knew about your birth long before that day. Your name was written in the book of life long before your Mum and I were even married. The wonderful truth is that God had planned for your marriage too, before you were born. And so, a few years after you were born, God brought a little girl to birth in another part of India - with a plan that you didn't know about and that Anugrah didn't know about either. God is a great Matchmaker and He had this wonderful plan for both of you that neither of you knew anything about. And as this little girl grew up, all the time God had you in mind for her. And then one day, He brought you both together, exactly like He brought Adam and Eve together. How good God has been to you.

And so my prayer for both of you is that God will be really happy with your life and that you will build your home as a sanctuary.

May God bless you both. Amen.

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