

Good morning. Last week we celebrated an anniversary over 60 years. We want to celebrate this morning, actually the newest marriage. The McConnells are here, two weeks into this thing. Oh, I hope you guys are doing well.

And hey, this is actually our property over here too. So you can go back into the trees on this side too if you want to stay in the shade. We're in this final week of our series called Own It. And today we're going to talk about owning it in terms of our house. And so I went down to the Goodwill and I just picked up your run of the mill dollhouse. And this one has a little tree on it in the back, right. And it's got a little swing on it, but you can't see it. Sean's not at the camera, but those of you online, this is it right here.

If you guys see this, because this is an incredible house and it actually has the option to open up. Oh yeah. Like you can come in and you can decorate this thing. You can fill it with furniture, the whole nine yards. So, we're talking about this morning owning it, right? What does it look like for us to own our homes and, kids, owning your home, students, owning your home, parents, owning your home? This has to do with what you and I bring into this home and how you and I live in our own homes. And, if you're younger, what you're going to discover as you get older is that there isn't a church police out there that is going to come to your home and have a checklist to make sure that you're owning it, that you're taking care of your home. You're going to discover that. You're going to find out that at some point, nobody tells you this, but it's actually up to you to care for your home, to own it. So students, you're in high school. What you're bringing in, what you're doing in your home, you can do things in your home that affect and direct the influence and the future of what your home's like. Even the present. Mom and dad, parents, friends, whoever roommates. However you're living. It doesn't matter. Apartment, home, condo. The question is, are we owning it?

What we bring into our home has a direct impact on the health of our soul, splashes up on everybody else too. It's not easy to contain this. In Exodus chapter 20, it's a familiar passage to most of us, God says this right here at the beginning. Very, very memorable commandment, right? He says it multiple times in scripture, you shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God. And if you go on and you start reading through Joshua, and then you read Judges and 1st and 2nd Samuel, and 1st and 2nd Kings, and 1st and 2nd Chronicles, what you find is what Israel started to do was to bring in idols into their homes. It wasn't just a national idol. They would actually bring household idols into their home to worship them.

You read over it and you follow this through the Old Testament, you see the prophets start talking about this. And Isaiah talks about this day in the Bible, that people will throw away their idols and get rid of their idols that are in their homes. Ezekiel talks about the idols of our

fathers. Almost every prophet references idols in the prophecies. Romans comes in, Paul says this, "We've exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." That's Romans chapter one, I think around verse 19. What happens in the church, and John says this later on, he says, "Children, those who follow Christ, keep yourselves from idols." You read through the Bible in the Old Testament, it's interesting. You hear some, there's some repeat offenders and the Old Testament of idols. And some of them, you may know if you've read through the Old Testament there's Baal, right?

We know that one. If you've read the famous story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal like that whole thing. Baal's around a lot. There's another idol out there. That's Asherah, which Baal and Asherah were the same kind of idols. They built these idols for fertility, for the land, for families, for sexuality, those side of the things. And you have the idol of Mammon, which Jesus talked about that, right? But the idol of Mammon is materialism, money, worshipping that God. There's another idol, this one is a violent idol. Molech is a god of power and violence. And they worshipped that even to the point of killing their children in front of Molech to gain his favor and his power.

You start reading through it and see the pattern of this it has to do with sexuality. It has to do with money. It has to do with power. And it has to do with violence, all those gods. And I'm thinking, well, that sounds familiar. That sounds real familiar. We're still doing it, right? It's important to understand something. I'm talking about idols and this is what we start to bring into our homes, right? So let me just give a little background into idols real quick, and then we'll move on. Deuteronomy chapter 32 says this, God makes this direct connection between idols and Satan's kingdom, Deuteronomy 32:16. It says, "They stirred Him (God) to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations that provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never feared."

Leviticus 17 says this about idols, "So no more sacrifice." There are sacrifices to goat demons and the context there was idols. And what God was saying is behind them, the idol is satanic power, demonic power. And the idols themselves are nothing right there. That's an inanimate object. Maybe something that even God created, something we've formed with our hands. There's nothing in and of that thing that has power is what's the behind idol that's the problem. It's always connected with the demonic.

So what I, what I have here is, um, I would bring somebody up to do this. So what I got here in front of me is, we have a dog and our dog is Henry, and I got some Henry dirt, right? It's not even fresh and it's still bad. So, Henry, we let Henry out. And Henry does this thing around the yard, and if you have any kind of pet, cat or dog, and if you have a riding mower, right? Or a push mower. You ever have that moment when you run into something and then it's on the wheel. And it keeps circling all the time as you go; you literally have to go over and hose off the wheel to get rid of the smell or else it's just wafting every two seconds of rotating? So Henry dirt stinks, right? Your pet dirt stinks, right? Poo, right? Whatever. This is going to stand for

idols. This is going to stand for what we bring into our home.

And what's interesting about idols is I think often when we hear that word, we think, "Oh, that's what happens in South America. That's what happens in Africa. That's what happens in animistic countries." Even we just had Bat Nyamaa here from Mongolia, and she talked about worshipping the spirit of the mountains and the rivers, right? So that is what we think of. When we think of idols, we just don't think of them as being like, well, that's not us. We're out of the enlightenment and we don't think that way. (Inaudible) But it actually is that way. So imagine this kids, students, adults, this, this is what we do, right? So we have household idols here. We just don't, we don't pay them like they do in other places. What we bring to our home, we bring a little nugget, right? (Scott puts Henry dirt into the dollhouse.)

And we just bring it over here to the corner of our rooms. What does it say? It's the god of Baal, right? The idol of Baal, which is sexuality. We bring pornography into our home, but it is over in a bedroom. It's just tucked back here in a bedroom. Nobody can see it, right? You just hide it, delete the history. Nobody knows about it. Nobody has to know about it. But, that's not the spiritual reality of what's going on. The spiritual reality is that stuff is in the home. And not only that, it doesn't look like it's affecting anybody else, but the fact is it's affecting everybody else because it has a spiritual smell. It has a spiritual power and it's splashing up on everybody.

And it may not be like what somebody else was looking at, because that's really bad. And that's the justification, right? That's how we get into these patterns. But the Holy spirit says "That there, that's just like dog dirt, and you're bringing that in." What about the god of money? Right? The god of mammon. Materialism. Can we get that? And what's crazy is we can actually turn this house (Scott turns the dollhouse.). And this house becomes our house. Our home becomes what we worship. Or what we want to decorate it with or what we want to fill it with. Or we're chasing after the materialism or the next shiny object or the next whatever. And we bring that in and we, we hang it up and we put it in our room and whatever. Jewelry. Cool.

What about this one? This is low hanging fruit. I hear this story all the time. We have the music we bring in, right? The music we fill our brains with and fill our home with. We need to put that on the stereo. I mean, you guys would see these houses just starting to get filled up. See all of that stuff. Too bad the TV is not 4D. We can't fight the smell of it. That's a spiritual reality, right? I have stories. I can't even count how many stories I have of people who started to follow Jesus. And then they started listening to their music. And they go, "Oh my goodness. I can't believe I'm listening." You may be thinking, "Well, what music are you talking about?" I'm not going to tell you. That's between you and the Holy Spirit. I'm not going to start creating that. I just watch people over and over and over.

Then all of a sudden you realize, wait a minute, this stuff is filling my mind. I think this is filling my home. It's impacting other people in my home. What is it that you struggle with? What are you bringing in? I can say the easy one, addiction, because that's so obvious to people. But there's other things. What are we bringing in? Maybe it's anger. Maybe it's fear. Maybe it's

something for emptiness. And we just, we just pile it and pile it and put it in. And this becomes like the carpet we lay in the great room, right?

You know over the years I've had people give me an account, come forward. And they talk about it. They're sheepish or embarrassed and they don't know what to do. And they say, "Look, I got an experience that's happening in my home." And generally, the story goes something like this, "There's something crazy happening in my home" and it ends up being some kind of a dark presence that is bringing fear and scaring them. And then whether it's nightmares, it's literally moving things, it's doing all kinds of things, causing people to be sick. And they look at me and they look to others and say, "Am I going crazy?" And you know, what I read in the Word is no, actually you're not. That is actually spiritual. And it's real. We can get rid of it. Alright we can get rid of it with Jesus. But yeah, we fill our homes up with these things. And then sometimes it's me. Sometimes it's one of our elders. Sometimes it's a community group leader, and sometimes it's just people that are close by, anybody who has the Holy Spirit and Jesus can go and do this. And we send people off and pray and we've seen, it goes. We just had a story this past week. Someone with horrible nightmares. We prayed over them and guess what? Had a great night's sleep, all through this week. It works.

So I want to talk about this idea of what it looks like at home. Because only you are responsible for your home. Nobody else is going to come and ask you, how are you doing with your home? And going into your home and walking into your home with a spiritual checklist. Only you. So kids, students you're responsible for what you're bringing into your home. You've got to own it. Parents. You've got to own it. But the reason I say students and kids is you're going to find out that you can sneak stuff passed mom and dad. You can. You can sneak it right passed them. You can hide it. You can bury it. You can stuff it under a rug. You can stuff it into a bin. You can do whatever you want to to hide it and they will never be the wiser. But you're bringing it into the home. Mom and dad, roommates, parents, husbands, and wives.

And if we don't want to own it, we won't have to. And I wonder do you have a vision for your home? So this is what I want to end with. Do you have a vision for what your home should be like? Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever talked about that? Because if you don't have a vision, guess what's going to happen? Nothing. We won't have a vision. See God has a vision for your home. He has a vision for our home, one that we would own it. And that we would own it in his way because He says this, "I want you to worship me in your home. I don't want any idols in there. I don't want any dog doo doo in there. I want only me. This is my vision for your home. Me, my presence."

My wife, Jo and I, when we bought our house out there and actually at all our houses, we've always prayed over our homes. "God, would you make this place a place of peace, a place of refuge." So when people come in and they wouldn't even be able to explain it, but they would say, "Wow, it's so peaceful here" and we would go, "That would be God."

And we fight for that vision. We prayed for that vision because it's something worth fighting for. And we have conversations when we do something or bring something in, we're having a conversation like what's going on? This shouldn't be in our home. What's happening? Why is that happening? And there's times of confession. There are times to say, "I'm sorry." And there's times when "Wait a minute. This is not what God would want here in our hearts and in our home." I want to challenge you because this is something that the whole family has to be a part of. What does that look like for you as a family? What does that look like for you as a mom and dad? Or husbands, wives, spouses, or friends, if you're roommates with people, I would say, talk to them. What is the vision you want for the home?

Pray about it. Because if you don't stuff starts to collect and it starts to stink. It starts to affect everybody in the home. And if some of you are bringing in things right now into your home, that stink like this and there's flies already gathering. Talk about the lord of the flies, right? I mean, the flies start coming. They smell it a mile away. Some of you need to confess to some things. You need to clean out your house. Some of you guys have stuff to confess that's actually, it's going to be very difficult and painful for other people to hear. And you may want to pull someone else in who's close. Someone who is spiritually mature. That could be a community group leader. Students that could be someone who is maybe one of the leaders, volunteer leaders in the youth ministry. That could be someone who walks with Christ in deep ways. And you can trust them. That could be someone on staff. It doesn't have to be with someone on staff. It could be anybody who is filled with the Spirit and Jesus and is mature. But don't do this road alone. If you have something to confess that is going to really drop a bomb. Make sure you take the time and go towards that with Christ with wisdom. But if you have things that need to be cleaned out, clean them out, let's own it. Cause we're in our homes a whole lot more right now than we've ever been. And what if our homes could really become the vision that God has for us, this place where His presence is, His peace is. When people come over, they go, "Why is it so peaceful here? Why do I feel so loved when I walk on this property?" And you can just smile and say "Oh that's God. You're feeling the presence of God." That's what He does for his people.

Let me pray. Will you, right now, with every person here, the children, will you speak to the children, will you speak to the students, all the grownups in the way that each of us needs, would you call us to a vision of what you want in our homes? Maybe it's a word, Jesus, that you're giving people right now. Maybe it's a Bible verse that you're giving to people right now. Maybe it's a picture, a vision. I don't know, but for each person, will you, in these days ahead, if not right now, would you begin to speak to each person, and give the vision you have for their home, where they live? Thank you for this day. Thank you for your word that leads us to worship you, to completely revert our attention, our pride, all that, and just walk away and just focus on you and worship you. That's the best thing that could happen to us. Lord, would you keep your church? You're the shepherd. Would you keep us close to you and each other in these days ahead? Would you lead us and continue to lead us to follow you? Amen.

Hey, God bless you guys. I hope you have some great conversations this week. Maybe even times of prayer over your home. We'll see you next week on sunny Sunday.

