

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 23

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Eden Restored – part 1”

Ephesians 5:22-24 ~ August 28, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand God’s perfect roles and actions for marriage.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- YMCA All-Church social – 3:00-5:00
- Men’s Ministry plans for the year

Turn to Ephesians 5

Quick review of last week: We looked at vs. 21, and I attempted to show that submission is not a result of sin, it’s not evil or sexist (I’m not denying that it has been corrupted and abused by sin and has been the vehicle for these attitudes and actions), but submission is a wonderful thing...a crucial thing that enables our entire society to operate with efficiency and order. One of the ways I made this point was by looking at the submission within the Trinity, and we looked at Jesus’ submission in obedience to the Father - and due to His love for us.

Submission is not the problem, what sin has done to submission is the problem.

22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.**23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Honorable Mention – Titles for Eph. 5:22-24

- A perfect world
- Adam’s Rib...A Great Investment”
- 'Admit, Commit, Submit and You Shall Be Set Free!!!'
- “What a Wonderful World”
- “Bum!,Bum!,Bum!”,”Bluer Than Blue”
- “Can you Feel the Love Tonight?”

- Am I going to get in trouble for this?
- Obey- Submit - You've Got to Be Kidding!
- What! Me, Submit to Him?
- I don't submit to anyone!
- I love you, but submit?
- I'm to do what?
- "Two heads, NOT better than one!"

Top 10 Titles for 5:22-24

10. "Sure, He Can Take the Blame"
9. "Say What!"
8. "God Said It, I Didn't Make This Up"
7. "Sweet Surrender"
6. "New Dress...\$120, Shoes...\$80, Dinner...\$50, Eph. 5:22-24...Priceless!"
5. "Things Not To Discuss On a First Date"
4. "Every Man's Dream"
3. "Keep Dreaming"
2. "You Can't Always Get What You Want" – Rolling Stones
1. "Listen to What the Man Said" – Paul McCartney

For many non-believers – and unfortunately for many believers – our passage this morning is outdated at best, and at worst, it is sexist, demeaning to women, and misogynistic.

I couldn't disagree more with that critique...and I hope, by the end of our time this morning; you will see these verses as a gift from God that affirms and protects women!

Now, keep in mind, that there are two sermons to digest...today and next weeks. If you take one out of the context of the two, then you will not have the balanced view that Scripture presents to us. So, even though we are looking at 5:22-24 today, these three verses are not to be considered independent of vs. 25-33 (next week's sermon).

Here's my thesis statement:

- A wife's submission and a husband's sacrificial love, if applied daily, guarantees the best possible marriage.

This is why I titled today's – and next Sunday's sermons "*Eden Restored*" part 1 & 2, because applying these verses to your marriage will bring you as close as possible to the original.

God is not content for you to have a marriage that simply survives the years...a marriage where you stay together but lack joy, passion, and pleasure in one another. He wants and desires us to thrive! And He has given us the formula – the instructions of how this can be done!

So, don't see these verses or a portion of these verses as something we must overlook or explain away due to our modern sensitivities and our modern outlook on life. These verses are the infallible, perfect Word of God (Deut. 6:24, 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:16), and their instruction on marriage - specifically how a wife and a husband are to approach their roles within the marriage, is a source of Godly wisdom, blessing and joy.

One last thing before getting into the passage this morning...

Men...husbands...your wife's submission to you will be either a joy or a curse, depending on your obedience and faithfulness to love and lead her sacrificially.

If you lead her with selfish motives that desire your own pleasure, power, and satisfaction, you are not only living in drastic disobedience to God, but you are destroying the foundations of your home and damaging your wife and kids. Your wife may love you,

she may submit to you, but she will not enjoy you and take delight in you! More on that next week...

Let's begin to dissect our passage today.

A Spirit-filled wife submits to her husband. vs. 22

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord”

Vs. 22 not only has a direct connection to the command in vs.18 (“...be filled with the Spirit...”), but it’s a very direct and simple verse to understand. It says what it means and means what it says. “Wives” is not qualified in any way here...God, through the pen of Paul, is giving instruction to all wives – not just those with good, sensitive, loving husbands. The word “submit” is not in vs. 22 of the Greek text...it’s understood due to the connection to vs. 21. (No period after vs. 21 – vs. 22 is the same thought as vs. 21)

Lit. - “Submit to one another in fear of Christ, wives to your own husbands as to the Lord...”

Vs. 22-24 - Paul gives us some very important and helpful analogies in these verses which help us understand what wives are called to do in the marriage relationship. Notice first, that the wife is called to submit to her own husband – not someone else’s husband.

Second - and more importantly, notice that her submission is to be “as to the Lord”

This little word “as” is very important.

So, to understand proper submission, you need to ask yourself, *“How do I submit to the Lord?”*

Answer: Completely...in all areas of life.

Question: Am I supposed to submit in the same way to my husband? (Good wives book – clip art with X through it)

Answer: Yes & No. Yes, when he is living in obedience to Christ, No when he is not living in obedience to Christ.

Granted, nobody is ever living in perfect obedience – at least not for very long. What I mean is that your submission to your husband is to be total – but not in violation of Christ or His Word. If your husband is leading you and the family in obedience to God’s Word, then you are called to submit. If your husband is leading you and the family away from God’s Word, you are to submit to Christ – not your husband.

Your submission to Christ should be absolute – because Christ is perfect...He has sacrificed everything for you...you will never be hurt by submitting to Christ...your submission to Christ never leads to sin, only holiness.

But your husband is not Christ.

- Husbands are fallible, Christ is infallible.
- Husbands are finite in power; Christ is omnipotent – all powerful.
- Husbands are sinful, Christ is sinless.
- Husbands are selfish, Christ is selfless.

So, your submission to Christ always trumps your submission to your husband!

But, your husband’s imperfect status does not negate your duty to submit to him...hence the difficulty in submitting to him!

Look at it this way...you probably have a tough time submitting fully to Christ – who is God, the Creator of all things! So, if you have trouble submitting to God, who is perfect, don’t be

surprised that you'll have more trouble submitting to a mere man, who is not perfect!

In fact, you know the faults and sins of your husband more than anyone else on the planet, and this adds to the challenge of a wife's submission.

This is why I said last week, that our challenge is to recapture the original state and intent of submission, and put it into practice.

The analogy in vs. 23 gives us a picture of how this should work, and the Church's relationship to Christ is the model for us to use in defining what submission and leadership is.

The husband's loving leadership in marriage vs. 23

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior.”

Once again, the little word “as” is crucial. The husband's role is *'like'* Christ's role and position in relation to the Church.

These verses are not saying that a husband is the same as Christ, or that husbands carry the same authority as Christ. These verses are giving us a picture of the roles within the marriage relationship.

1 Cor. 11:3

“Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

This verse – and our passage today – clearly state that there is a hierarchy of authority – a picture of divine and human submission.

Question: How is Christ the head of the church?

Answer: The church looks to Christ for leadership and direction. We are under Christ authority, we are His Bride, He

has saved us, sacrificed His life for us (notice the emphasis on Christ being our Savior), and we serve Him. He leads us, and we follow His leadership because His leadership is perfect.

Question: What if my husband demands that I submit to something that is contrary to Scripture?

Answer: Then he is not emulating the headship of Christ over the Church. Christ would never lead the Church into sin, so the husband is not obeying God's command if he is leading out of selfishness or some other sinful direction.

Your submission to your husband can never usurp your submission to Christ.

In this scenario, you must submit to Christ and His truth, not your husband.

I hope you are beginning to see that these verses are not abusive or demeaning to wives...they are quite the opposite! They establish an order in the home – and they protect the wife from an authoritarian husband!

How? The wife is protected by establishing that the husband's motivation and method of leading are to be aligned with Christ and His motivation and method of leading the Church.

“This passage (vs. 22-33) is guarding headship against abuses, and it's guarding submission against debasement.” (Sermon by John

Piper, Husbands Who Love Like Christ and the Wives Who Submit To Them, 6-11-1989)

It is very clear that God has given the husband the position of leadership in the marriage. The husband is the “head of the wife”, which means God has given him the duty to lead his family. Husbands...you will be answerable to God regarding your

ability and effort in this charge. Before Almighty God, you are responsible to give Christ-like love and leadership to your wife and your children.

Two extremes we often see:

First – the passive husband.

Second – the domineering, authoritative husband.

The wife's total submission vs. 24b

“Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”

This is not a license for husbands to dominate and boss their wives around. This does not negate the principles we discussed this morning – mainly, that the husband is to lead his wife as Christ leads the church.

But “...in everything” is a very important reminder, that even though your husband is not perfect, God still calls you to submit to him.

“...in everything.” does not include:

Submitting to sinful requests

As stated earlier, if your husband is practicing sin – and he wants you to participate in it with him – whether it be falsifying tax or loan documents, gossiping about others, watching pornography with him, or getting drunk with him, you are under no obligation to submit to him.

You need to be clear and direct, yet respectful and mindful of the bigger picture, which is to restore him to holiness, not belittle him in his sin.

Submitting to abuse or criminal behavior

If your husband is abusing you, your children, or anyone else, it is your duty to report him immediately to the police. Christ would never abuse the church or harm His Bride, and a husband has no right – legally, morally, or spiritually, to abuse another. If he is using drugs, you are not bound to participate with him if he asks, and you are not bound to hide his crimes either. You should call the police and he should go to jail.

If you find yourself in this situation – or a situation similar to it and you don't know what to do, please contact me or the authorities ASAP.

Submitting to degrading attitudes and requests

Some husbands think that their role is to sit on the couch and have his wife serve his every wish.

Illus. - Joke:

A mild-mannered man was reading a book on being self-assertive and decided to start at home. So he stormed into his house, pointed a finger in his wife's face, and said, "From now on I'm boss around here and my word is law! I want you to prepare me a gourmet meal and draw my bath. Then, when I've eaten and finished my bath, guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair." "The mortician," replied his wife

Now I'm not endorsing any actions in that joke...but I share it to make the point. Chauvinistic, sexist, or superior attitudes are a heresy within marriage, and a wife is not expected to submit to demands based in these ideals.

Instead of submitting, your response should be one of respectful, but direct confrontation. Telling your husband that his attitudes toward you are unacceptable, and guiding him toward a Christ-like attitude is appropriate.

Now there are ways to do this and ways that will work against you in this (The steps of Matt. 18, or applying 1 Peter 3:1-6 might be best), but the point I want to make is that you are not bound to submit to these kinds of things.

Application

1. Ladies...choose a husband wisely.
2. Ladies...Love and cherish submission
3. Husbands...serve, sacrifice, sanctify

Close in prayer