

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 24

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Eden Restored – part 2”

Ephesians 5:25-33 ~ September 4, 2011

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

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Prayer gathering – 6 p.m.
- Men’s Min Breakfast – books are in – “Game Plan For Life” – no cost for books!
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Joke: The Mall For Husband Shopping

Our culture seems to have a commonly held belief that men/husbands are either relationally challenged, or incapable of having a meaningful, loving relationship with their wife.

Although this may be the experience of many, I disagree with this belief. I believe that unredeemed, sinful man is more concerned with themselves and their own needs, wants, and pleasures, which leads to dysfunction and ‘disability’ in relationships. But I do not believe men are inherently unable to love their wife, nor are they relationally incapable.

Last Sunday was ‘*part 1*’ of ‘Eden Restored’ – a look at Ephesians 5:22-33, and God’s instructions regarding marriage, and the roles of husbands and wives.

My thesis statement was:

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

Last Sunday, we saw that God directs spirit-filled wives to submit to their husbands in harmony with their submission to Christ, and that

the husband is the head of the wife, which means he is called to lead the home not through tyranny or gender domination, but through sacrifice and service.

Today, we will see that a spirit-filled husband can love his wife with the perfect love of Christ. When a husband obeys God's commands in this area, he proves that the relationship deficiency is not a problem with the male gender, but with those who are unredeemed – those who have not put their faith in Christ and are not “filled with the Spirit” (vs. 18).

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 5:25-33. In many ways, our passage this morning is an expansion of 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.”)

If we wanted to create a very simple summary of these verses, we could say that God commands wives to submit to and respect their husbands, and God commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church, and as they love themselves.

Look with me at vs. 25

A husband's love is sacrificial and selfish. vs. 25, 28-31

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...**28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- **30** for we are members of his body. **31** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Men, why do you think that God has commanded us (Gr: *agape* – present, active, imperative) to love our wife? Wouldn't you think your love is a given since you married her? Didn't you marry your wife because you loved her?

For whatever reason (obviously rooted in our sinful nature), over the centuries men have abused and mistreated women. The devastation that sin has wrought is not only on human beings individually, but sin has devastated the husband-wife relationship. In most cultures, marriage has been a plague throughout human history, because in virtually every culture in every era, marriage has been an institution that has degraded women and has put women in a ‘lesser position’.

I don’t want to take the time this morning, but William Barclay is not only a worthy theologian and biblical commentator, but his grasp of history – especially Greek and Roman culture at the time of Christ is of great value. He gives us some great insight into that first century culture, which helps us see how radical and liberating these commands were for the institution of marriage – and especially for the benefit, protection, and blessing of women ever since.

The command for a husband to love his wife “...as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her...” was a radical departure from the common practice and attitude of the centuries – and it still is today in most parts of the world. In our western society, we pride ourselves on being modern and we celebrate human rights and equality. But I believe the mindset of the ages toward the marriage relationship is still there! Unless the light of Christ has come into the mind and heart of men, the battle of the sexes which began in Eden is still being fought!

We see in vs. 25 that a husband’s love for his wife is to be sacrificial. The model for his love is the love of Christ, who “...loved the church and gave himself up for her...”. When Christ loved the Church, it was not empty words or an emotional

impulse. Love is a verb. A verb is a word of action, and Jesus' love is full of action, not empty words. The action that Christ took was to become flesh – to submit Himself to the human body, and all the suffering that He would endure out of love for His Bride. He sacrificed His life for His Bride. Christ is indeed the head of the Church, just as the husband is the head of the wife (vs. 23), but this headship “...*expressed care rather than control, responsibility rather than rule.*” (From John R. W.

Stott, The Message of Ephesians, p. 225, 229, quoted in Becoming a People of Grace, An Exposition of Ephesians, by Charles R. Swindoll, p. 168-169)

How does a husband love his wife sacrificially?

By serving her. By serving her needs, wants, and desires. By looking not only to your own interests, but to her interests (Phil. 2:4).

Not every interest or desire! (husband w/visa)

The husband's love is not only sacrificial by nature, but it's also selfish by nature.

28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- **30** for we are members of his body. **31** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Husband...do you love yourself?

You might not know how to answer that question...the question seems a bit weird for us, but it is a simple one to understand. Just think about this...what do you do for yourself?

- Do you like to eat when you're hungry, and when you eat, do you like to eat food that you enjoy?

- Do you take a shower not only for the sake of others, but because it feels good to be clean?
- Do you shave, comb your hair – or better yet, do you care what you look like and take some basic effort to be presentable to others?
- Do you exercise not just for vanity, but for good health?
- Do you take any vitamins or medicine, and in general try to make sure you aren't neglecting your health?

If you do any or all of these things, you're loving yourself.

Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as our self (Matt. 22:36-40), and through the pen of the Apostle Paul, he tells us in vs. 28 that we need to love our wife as we love our own body. He goes on to say that this is another picture in marriage that shows us the love that Christ has for the Church. Christ loves the Church – it is His Body – and He loves the Church by giving it gifts, by caring for it through the Holy Spirit and the truth He has given us.

Another aspect of a husband's love is his care and provision for his wife. Vs. 29, "After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church..."

"feeds" / "nourishes" – The Greek word means to '*nurture, nourish, to bring up to maturity*'. This has the idea of the husband providing for his wife, but the sense is much more than food or clothing. The term means that the husband is to help his wife in all areas of her life – to 'nourish' her physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

"Care" / "cherish" – The Greek word means '*to warm*' and has the idea of a child being held or comforted by it's

mother. As a husband, to cherish your wife means you comfort her – embrace her – care for her.

Then, vs. 31 quotes Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

The Bible’s teaching is clear – that through the sexual union of husband and wife, the two become “one flesh”. Therefore, when you love your wife, you’re really loving yourself! The word “united” means ‘*to be bonded to*’ – ‘*to glue*’ – ‘*cleave to*’. It has the intent of permanence – something that is never intended to be separated! Men...women...is this how you approached your marriage? Is this how you view your spouse – that you are with them until ‘death do you part’?

A husband’s love sanctifies his wife. vs. 26-27

A husband’s love for his wife – and his role as leader in the family has a purpose beyond himself. His primary role as a husband is to present his wife to Christ as a holy, sanctified child of God. Sanctification means to be set apart – to be cleansed.

Sanctification includes spiritual protection and growth. Protecting your wife (and the family) from things that can harm her spiritually, things that threaten to draw her away from Christ, or sin that can take over their life. Your spiritual leadership in marriage – and over your children, should result in a safe, loving, caring home that honors God’s truth and grace. The second purpose within sanctification is to cleanse or purify. This is the idea of “washing with water through the word”, and not having any “stain or wrinkle or any other blemish”. The

protective aspect is more defensive in nature, and the maturity aspect is more pro-active, taking the lead in things that will foster spiritual growth. Encouraging your wife by praying for her, asking her what you can pray for, asking what concerns she has, making it possible for her to attend Women's Bible Studies, sending her to conferences like 'Women of Faith' that are designed to encourage and teach her in the faith, and give her the freedom to invest in friendships with other Christian women so she can have good, wise counsel and relationships with others.

Marriage is a snapshot of Christ's love. vs. 32

32 This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

When you wonder about your marriage and what it should look like, just remember, marriage is a picture of the relationship and roles of Christ to the Church. Wives, when you wonder how you should treat your husband, think of how the Church is called to treat Christ. Husbands, when you wonder if you truly love your wife, think of how Christ loves the Church.

A husband's love stimulates respect from his wife. vs. 33

33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

KJV – “revere”

As the husband loves the wife as Christ loves the church, and as he loves himself, then the wife is called to respect him. If both are “filled by the Spirit”, then her response to his Christ-like love will be both submission and respect!

Application

Husbands...serve, sacrifice, sanctify

Marriage is a permanent, life-long union

Wives...respect your husband.

Close in prayer...transition to communion