

(27) WIVES, HUSBANDS, AND CHRIST, PART 2
(SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2020)

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:18-25; Eph. 5:28-33

INTRODUCTION

Psa. 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Rom. 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

These passages and others direct us to consider the incredible wisdom and power of God in terms of the physical creation.

We also should rejoice as we consider God's work in ordaining marriage, the family, the church, and civil government.

Now we have to be careful. When we look at creation we know we are seeing creation groaning under the fall and God's judgment.

When we look at the institutions God established, we come face to face with sinners and rebellion.

But the presence of sin and rebellion are not the only things we are to see.

We can still rejoice in a beautiful day, a sunset, a majestic mountain.

We are to rejoice that God established marriage between a man and a woman.

We rejoice that marriage is a picture of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Jesus when he was tested by the Pharisees regarding marriage and divorce made this point.

Matt. 19:8 He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

I am sure that you have read, studied, and listened to many sermons coming from our text at the end of Ephesians 5.

What is the goal as we consider this text once again?

First, it is good to hear and consider what is familiar.

Second, this text directs us to rejoice in the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ and consider the profound nature of marriage and the bond of Jesus Christ and His church.

Turn to Col. 3:18-19. This section goes to 4:1, but the words given to wives and husbands are found just in these two verses.

Col. 3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Col. 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Comparing Ephesians and Colossians we can say that the basic instruction given to wives and husbands is exactly the same.

On the other hand, we have more expanded instruction in Ephesians than Colossians.

We also keep in mind that likely the book of Ephesians was not just sent to the church in Ephesus.

The letter was meant to be shared with other churches in that region and ultimately for the entire church.

As I emphasized last week, do not ignore the commands that are given respectively to husbands and wives. But we also must consider the incredible union that we have with Jesus Christ.

Consider your duty in light of your union with Jesus Christ.

We will look at Ephesians 5:28-33 in three parts:

- 1) The Command to Love, Part 2, vv. 28-29a
- 2) Christ and His Church, Part 2, vv. 29b-32
- 3) Command to Love and Respect, part 3, v. 33

1) THE COMMAND TO LOVE, PART 2, VV. 28-29A

In the NKJV, verse 28 begins with the word **so**.

It might be better translated as “in the same way...”

This adverb is also used in verse 24 and verse 33.

In light of all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for His church – His sacrificial death, the cleansing of His Church, the future presentation - in light of this, a husband must love his wife.

A husband cannot save his wife.

A husband, of course, cannot do the exact same thing for his wife as Christ does for His church, but we can say a husband is called to love in light of this love.

- 1) It is not based on his wife's worthiness
- 2) It is sacrificial
- 3) It seeks the spiritual growth and maturing of his wife

How much as husbands do we love like this?

What is interesting then in verse 28 is that Scripture calls for the husband to consider this duty or obligation to love in light of how we love our own bodies.

Further then we have the point – he who loves his wife loves himself.

I believe this is the only place where you find this exact language in Scripture.

What we have described in verse 28 is what we can call self-love.

There is proper self-love and, of course, there are many perverse forms of self-love.

What we have described in verse 28 one commentator calls the law of life and the extension of it to similar care for one's spouse is the law of marriage.¹

Everyone seeks his or her own good, whatever form that may take.

Verse 29 uses two verbs translated as nourish and cherish. Both verbs are only used two times in the NT.

The verb nourish is used interestingly in Eph. 6:4, where it is translated as bring them up.

I don't think we have to force the same meaning in both passages, but there is a relationship in terms of duty.²

Then the word cherish is used by Paul in 1 Th. 2:7.

1Th. 2:7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.

The idea is provision and care.

Nourish and cherish are richer words.

The ultimate provision and care are what the Lord Jesus Christ does for His church.

¹ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 165.

² See BDAG.

Husbands must seek to love their wives providing that which is most important and doing so with care.

This is the great challenge given to husbands.

Only as you keep your focus on the Lord Jesus Christ can you hope to keep this instruction.

2) CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH, PART 2, vv. 29B-32

For all we know about the Apostle Paul in Acts and from his letters, there is much we don't know about him.

Was Paul ever married?

Did his wife perhaps leave him after the Lord so powerfully saved him?

This is all speculation.

Certainly, Paul was not naïve concerning marriage.

But we can say that Paul's main focus was the relationship of Jesus Christ and His church.

This did not lead him to make less of marriage. Just the opposite. But we can also say, Paul's goal was not just to make people happier or more content with life and marriage.

Listen to the end of Col. 1 in terms of what motivated Paul.

Col. 1:28 Him [Jesus Christ] we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. **29** To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

We have noted that throughout this section, Paul cannot help but speak about Jesus Christ even as he gives vital instruction to husbands and wives.

The word **body** has been used already eight times in Ephesians.

Follow in your Scriptures as we note some of these earlier passages.

Eph. 1:23 which is **His body** [the church], the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Eph. 2:16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in **one body** through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Eph. 4:4 *There is one body* and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph. 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the **body of Christ**,

Eph. 4:16 from whom the **whole body**, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Eph. 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and **He is the Savior of the body**.

Marriage is a wonderful institution that brings together two people such that they are one.

In God's incredible work of redeeming sinners, those who are saved are also joined together and become part of the body of Jesus Christ.

Eph. 4:25 ends by saying, we are members of one another.

We are joined together as we are united with Christ.

The NKJV and KJV (v. 30) following a different family of Greek manuscripts end with a quotation taken from Genesis 2:23.³

Most modern versions don't have this phrase. The meaning is not changed at all, but I thought it was good to point this out.

For we are members of His body.

The concept of our union with Jesus Christ is so profound. We will not exhaust the depth of it in this life.

Listen to 1 John 4:12 which uses different language but expresses this great truth.

1John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

John Frame writes about the depth of this subject:

³ Found in: 8² D F G Ψ 0278 0285^{vid} 1175 1505 1739^{mg} ℣ lat

Union with Christ is an exceedingly broad topic. We will see that it underlies all the works of God in our lives: election, calling, regeneration, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification. All of these blessings are “in Christ.”⁴

All that you enjoy spiritually is connected with your union to Jesus Christ.

It is difficult to overestimate how important this is even as it is a challenge to really grasp it and understand it.

The Lord’s Supper sets forth powerfully the significance of this union and the life that we have in Christ.

In verse 31 we have nearly an exact quotation from the Greek version of Genesis 2:24.

This quotation from Genesis 2, obviously comes before the account of the fall which is in Genesis 3.

In the state of innocence and sinlessness, this ideal picture of the union of man and woman was established.

Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6 also quoted this text when challenged by the Pharisees regarding marriage and divorce.

Jesus said in verse 6.

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Francis Foulkes, a commentator I have come to really appreciate, said of this passage:

This statement from the creation story is the most profound and fundamental statement in the whole of Scripture concerning God’s plan for marriage. It has been the ultimate bulwark of the church against the arguments for allowing polygamy to remain in the societies where she has met it; it is the ultimate argument against promiscuity; it is the ultimate reason why the church can have no pleasure in the dissolution of marriage by divorce.⁵

⁴ Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 914.

⁵ Foulkes, 166.

Foulkes died in 1997, so we can add to this quote by saying Genesis 2:24 also shows how completely ludicrous is any idea of same-sex marriage.

No doubt this text from Genesis has been in Paul's mind throughout this passage.

In verse 32 Paul clarifies that he is not just thinking about marriage, but he is focused on the glorious truth that we are united to Christ.

The word **mystery** in verse 32 is a word we have seen already in Ephesians four times. This is the fifth and Eph. 6:19 is the sixth use of the word.

MacArthur gives this meaning of the word mystery: In the NT, "mystery" identifies some reality hidden in the past and revealed in the NT age to be written in Scripture.⁶

Eph. 6:19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Many husbands or wives would say that marriage is a mystery, but that would not at all be the meaning that Paul is speaking about here.

About 4,000 years before the coming of Jesus Christ, God established marriage as the joining together a one man and one wife.

The mystery that was then revealed 4,000 years after this event was how through the work of Jesus Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are brought together as one in Christ and how the church is united to Jesus Christ.

Now in the OT, marriage was also used by God to describe His relationship to Israel.

But only in the coming of Christ do we see the fulness of this picture and how in the death of Jesus Christ He would redeem His people and bring together all believers in Him.

I should also comment from verse 32 that this is one of the arguments that Rome uses to call marriage a sacrament, because in Latin the word mystery is translated as sacramentum.⁷

But Paul is not calling marriage the mystery or sacrament. Paul is speaking of Christ and His church as the great mystery revealed in the gospel.

⁶ MacArthur Study Bible, s.v. Eph. 5:32.

⁷ John Calvin comments extensively on the folly of Rome's argument.

3) COMMAND TO LOVE AND RESPECT, PART 3, V. 33

There is a beauty and thoughtfulness in this text even though it seems to jump back and forth from marriage to Christ and His church.

That is intentional.

Of course, Paul, clarifies his words so that there should be no confusion.

Nevertheless is a good translation here. Going back to the subject of marriage, Paul gives a recap of these verses.

Listen to a more literal translation of the start of verse 33.

“Nevertheless, you also, one by one, each his own wife so let him love as himself.”⁸

Every husband must hear and consider this word. **Love your wife as you love yourself.**

Love your wife as Christ loves His church.

Technically in terms of grammar, there is no command given to the wife here, but I think properly we understand the end of verse 33 as a command to each wife.

The wife is called to respect her husband.

The word **respect** used here is the word **to fear**.

The root of this verb is used three times in Ephesians as both a verb and noun – Eph. 5:21, 33; 6:5.

Our ultimate fear is to be of God.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, Proverbs so beautifully states.

In fear of God we are to show mutual submission to each other.

A wife then also has a special duty of a proper fear or respect of her husband.

⁸ NET Bible note.

This is very strange and even perverse to our culture, but it is the command of Scripture.

We know with the fall that the beautiful design of marriage that God established is perverted.

We see this in Genesis 3.

Gen. 3:16 To the woman He said:

“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;

In pain you shall bring forth children;

Your desire *shall be* for your husband,

And he shall rule over you.”

This is the result of sin. The wife desires to control or manipulate her husband, and the husband in response treats the wife like she is a subject.

I think we can say that the call of Ephesians shows not that the curse is undone in this age, but in light of Christ we must live as we were originally called to live.

Love and respect are to characterize the relationship not manipulation and force.⁹

CONCLUSION

Thankfulness

The profound nature of being part of the body, part of the church of Jesus Christ.

Consider your duty in light of your union with Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Hymn 626

⁹ We must realize the blasphemy that is exhibited when a husband and wife do not live as they are called.

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