

RFBC0711 Christ and His Bride, A Pattern for  
Marriage, Eph 5:22-23

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RFBC2011 Christ and His Bride

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5:22-23

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**Chalcedon Presbyterian Church**

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Beloved, before we read from Ephesians chapter five, the topic that I have been assigned to preach tonight, let's go to our Lord in prayer.

*Blessed God, we humbly bow before you. We have many needs, but, Lord, our greatest need is you. Come to us. Fill us. Fellowship with us. Be our friend. Be our Lord. Be our God, our Comforter. Come and fill us up with yourself and come and overwhelm us with your glory and majesty. Lord, overwhelm us with your beauty and let us not leave here unaffected and unchanged. Lord, I pray for our marriages tonight. Help us. Give us a vision of Christ. Give us a vision of his glory and his love and passion for the Church. Give us fidelity and faithfulness as a church. Lord, may our marriages reflect the glory and work and ministry of Christ to a lost and dying world perishing in their sins. But, Lord, feed us tonight. Grow us up. Strengthen those who are married and, Lord, give knowledge and understanding to those who desire and will one day be married on the purpose and motive and glory of marriage. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Brothers and sisters, take your Bibles and turn to Ephesians five and I will begin reading at verse 22 and read down through the end of chapter five to verse 33. Hear now the precious word of almighty God.

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND

SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.<sup>1</sup>

And may the Lord add his blessing to his Word tonight.

Beloved, what we are learning in the book of Ephesians is that the Church of Jesus Christ is desperate for a vision of Christ. Paul writes this epistle in order to bestow upon these Gentile believers the glory of almighty God through his Son being poured out into the earth and filling up all things. Paul pens this letter to believers who were Gentiles. It is obvious that Paul is seeking to bring to these Gentile Christians great encouragement.

If you know anything about the city of Ephesus, if you were here for pastor Johnson's sermon this morning, you know that it was a vile, immoral place to live, very affluent, very beautiful, very artsy, entertainment oriented, but vile and immoral, so much so that Paul says in chapter five in the beginning of chapter five that they do some things that Christians are not even allowed to speak of. Some of their sins were so heinous and vile in the eyes of God that they were not even allowed to speak of these things, but, rather, bring light to these sins by living the life that Christ had empowered them and saved them to live. Bring light to the culture that you are living in by righteous, Christ centered, Christ filled life.

These dear Christians, this church at Ephesus probably was not like our churches. Most of our churches are filled with similar people. Ephesus would have been a church filled with believers that had been battered and bruised by sin, growing up in a very pagan, immoral, vile culture where sexual immorality was seen as a virtue.

Paul had a great work on his hands when he spent two years at Ephesus. In fact, Luke records in Acts chapter 20 Paul's farewell address to the Ephesians elders there. And the one thing that Paul says to these elders, he says, "I never ceased for one moment the time that I have been with you the whole counsel of God. I have done this publicly and I have done this privately. I have gone from house to house," Paul says.

And then he goes on in the text—and I am paraphrasing it. He goes... Luke goes on to report what Paul pressed upon these Ephesians publicly and privately and it was that person and work of Jesus Christ pressing them with his glory, his majesty and that that glorious, majestic God, the Son of God, has come and filled them with his Word, filled them with his power and he has saved them out of this life of debauchery and immoral living to live now righteous lives, holy unto the Lord God.

Well, what was Paul doing house to house? Counsel? What do you think Paul was needing to do from house to house? He was having to go and correct bad habits.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5:22-33.

Is that any different than today? How many of us, beloved, come into the Christian life with bad habits, bad doctrine, false views of God, this world, false views of sex, false views of marriage, false views of raising children, false views of church? And so much of the pastor's work, like that of Paul's, is publicly proclaiming the Word of God and impressing upon us his majesty and glory. Beloved, that we are so overwhelmed with him everything else falls in place. Not that it is not hard work, not that it is something that you can be passive in. We are not allowed to let go and let God. That was a very popular counseling phrase used in the early 80s and I mean early 90s. Let go and let God. That is not what Paul is advocating. Everything that Paul has been advocating is very active. We are to be actively pursuing Christ. We are to be actively filling our minds with his glory, knowledge, filling our minds with knowledge of Jesus. What does it mean to be atoned for? What does it mean to have peace preached to us? What does it mean to be new creatures in Christ? What does it mean he has ordained works that we should walk in them? What does this mean that we were once aliens and strangers and now we have been brought nigh to God? What does it mean?

Paul was needing to keep the attention span of the congregation fixed on the most important essential things and that was Christ. I am sure there were many distractions in Ephesus as there are today. There are many good things, beloved, that we can get caught up in, but so many good things can lead us away from Jesus if we are not careful. We need to be busy, beloved, pursuing our Savior.

And that is essentially what Paul has done in giving to us the precious gift of Ephesians. Beloved, Paul is teaching us that a Christianity that does not change the way you think is no Christianity. A Christianity that does not change the way you speak, is no Christianity. A Christianity that does not change the way you walk and conduct yourself in this life, is no Christianity. Right?

We see Paul's pastoral burden and passion in chapter one when he says, "I pray on your behalf. I do not cease giving thanks for you that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him."

You know, beloved, it is ok to pray for people that have never been born and God can answer that prayer tonight in us tonight that our eyes would be open, that our minds would be filled with the revelation and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul goes on to say, he says, "That our hearts may be enlightened so that you would know what is the hope of his calling and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

These pagans have been brought to Jesus and Paul in a very pastoral way is saying, "I am praying that you will be filled with the knowledge and revelation of Christ, that you would be enlightened and that you would be filled with all hope and glory, that when you walk down these marble streets of Ephesus and you see all of the debauchery around you,

you would pray, “Lord Jesus, come and take it away. Lord Jesus, come and exercise your authority. Lord Jesus, come and bring your gospel.”

You know, the Church today is very consumed with itself. The Church today has practiced self indulgence. It is all about the Church. It is not about Jesus. We have church movements, all different kinds, left and right. You can shop for a church just like you can a pair of a pants and a shirt. Take the ones you like. Don't worry about the ones you don't like because you know there are just... well, it is just up to you, right?

Can you imagine the apostle Paul having that mentality? Can you imagine the apostle Paul walking down the road, coming up to this great glorious city? He could see it from the hill top. He sees this majestic work of man out there. Do you think the apostle Paul decided at that time to send out some flyers and really go try to impress people with his creativity and show people how clever he is with making up new words about the church and new relevant place, you know, not your grandma's church, but just make up all of these creative terms and just making people excited about a new religion.

Now the apostle would have never thought of such a thing. The apostle Paul walked and he saw this city and he began to proclaim it for Jesus Christ. He began to proclaim it for Christ's glory. Why? What was it about Paul's theology that gave him such hope and encouragement and boldness? He knew Christ. He was filled with Christ. He saw Christ. He understood that what the world needs is not a relevant Church, but a Christ centered Church. He didn't send out a flyer and say, “I will tell you what, Barnabas, what we need to do is just figure if they are pre-modern, modern, post-modern. Let's find out what their psychology is. And then we can be faithful and we will preach to that.”

It didn't matter to Paul. It didn't matter. Paul came to preach the power and glory of Jesus Christ and it did not matter what philosophy one held. The power of Christ in calling his Church and elect was way more powerful.

Paul never fretted about the religion of Ephesus. And, in fact, God used the apostle Paul to kill Diana. That's true.

Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God and he is placing all of his enemies up under his feet. How? Sending his preachers out preaching the gospel. And when Paul came to Ephesus he started preaching the gospel. Got in all kinds of trouble, but that didn't stop him. I mean, they were killing him, stoning him. And if you go back and read Acts 19 they knew what was going on because Demetrius was not a dummy.

He said, “Hey, if we let this guy keep preaching, we are going to lose all kind of money. If we let this guy keep preaching the whole world that worships Diana, well, she is going to die. She is going to perish.”

And guess what? The Lord delivered a fatal blow to Diana. But he let her wax and wane for another couple of hundred years and then finally when the temple was destroyed in

the third century it was never rebuilt again. Do you know why it was never rebuilt? Because nobody cares about Diana anymore.

They don't care. So what?

Beloved, how did that happen? It happened with Paul being filled with the power and the glory and the love of Christ and all he wanted to do was preach it. That is what we need preachers to do. And praise God we have had that here today, this week.

Beloved, we come to Ephesians five and I have to pick up where my dear brother, pastor Johnson, left off this morning addressing sanctification and addressing that lifestyle that comes when Christ enters into one's life.

Now I need to say something about the theological and practical because we have all learned one thing. Even though we can look at the book in that way, a theological section and a practical section, we have learned that Paul's practical and theological throughout the epistle.

There is another way I like to describe it and that is Paul is both heavenly and earthy. Paul is both heavenly and earthy. If you look over at Ephesians one, look at verse 10. Notice what he writes. He says, "...with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth."<sup>2</sup>

Paul is consumed with the heavenly glory and earthly responsibilities. Paul throughout his writings point us constantly and consistently to Christ, to focus our vision upon Christ so that when we work we are reflecting Christ.

You can see the Lord's prayer in Paul's writings. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

How Paul consistently counsels people to view and seek after and look to the Lord Jesus Christ. I can prove this in just a few ways and then you can take it from there.

Beloved, how did the apostle Paul address immorality in Corinthians, in the church at Corinth? Well, he didn't just say, "You know, that is bad for you. You know, you might [?]. You know, you ought wait get you a [?] or whatever the case may be, have a little ceremony."

No, Paul said, "Listen. You are in union with Jesus Christ and did you know when you become one with this harlot you make Christ a partaker of that sin?"

To someone who loves Jesus that is shocking. Now if you don't love Jesus, well, that is not for you. If you don't love Jesus, you don't care what you make him a partaker of or

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 1:10.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:10.

whatever the case may be. But Paul points us to the Lord Jesus Christ and he says, “Listen. When you become one with this harlot you make Christ a partaker in sin because you are his and he is yours.”

How did Paul address selfishness? How does Paul address selfishness and self centered attitudes, you know, people who are really consumed with themselves, people who are all about themselves? How does he address them?

He says, “Let this same attitude be in you which was in Christ Jesus who considered it not robbery to be made man and laid aside his glory for a time that he might redeem a people for the Lord’s glory. Let this attitude that Jesus had when he became incarnate in flesh be in you. Look to Jesus. Look to Christ.”

And now does he address marriages? How does he address husbands and wives? Beloved, he points us to Jesus.

If you came here this evening hoping for a laundry list of things that you could possibly do to be a faithful wife, I don’t have much for you. I have a few things. If you came as husbands and you thought I was going to give out a long laundry list of things that you could do, I have a few things, but I don’t have much in terms of a laundry list for you, because I don’t think that is Paul’s intention of the passage. Paul’s intent of the passage is to overwhelm the Ephesians and us with the glory of Jesus Christ. All he is doing is repeating himself. He has already said, he has already expounded and explained the atonement of Jesus Christ and how much he loves his bride. He has already done this and yet he is doing it again, but now he is doing it in the context of the marriage covenant.

What we need, husbands and wives, tonight, we need a fresh glorious look at Christ and his Church. We need a renewed commitment as husbands to love our wives as Christ loves his Church. Wives, we need renewed commitment to demonstrate to a world that is confused about what Church is, fidelity, loyalty, help meet, support, submission to a husband.

Brothers and sisters, that is exactly what this passage does. Tonight I want to give you at least a way to help you remember what is preached here tonight. So as we address verse 22 through 33 we will look at this text of Scripture in three ways.

First of all we are going to notice our pattern for the marriage covenant. We will, from this passage of Scripture, glean what our pattern is for a Christian marriage. Secondly, we are going to learn that our privilege, the privilege that we have as husbands and wives to emulate Christ and his Church. Now that is two Ps, pattern, privilege. And I will refrain from using the word “duty” only because of this, only because, beloved, for us filthy sinners that Christ brought to himself and cleaned us up, is it not a privilege for us to love our wives as Christ loved the Church? Is it not a privilege for us as wives to submit to our husbands and demonstrate the fidelity of the Church of Jesus Christ? It is a privilege. It is a privilege. And that is what I want you to leave here tonight thinking. It is a privilege for me to submit to my husband in all things.

Now your sisters or your friends outside the Church may say, “Well, that is silly and crazy. You have lost your mind.”

Oh, I am filled with the glory of Jesus Christ and I don't care what you think. I don't care that you mock me and you think I am letting the feminist movement down, but my eyes have been fixed and focused upon Jesus and I can do no other.

Men, loving your wives as Christ loved the Church is going to be your primary call and it will be your hardest call and it will be the call that you must, day in and day out commit yourself to. To demonstrate to the world how much Jesus loves his Church, you must love your wife and demonstrate that before a lost and dying world.

We will have our pattern. We will have our privilege. And our third P will be, beloved, we will have our purpose. Paul is going to teach us that our purpose, that the purpose for our Christian marriages is to reflect the glory and the love and the affection that Christ has for his Church and then love and affection that Christ has for her bridegroom. That is the purpose.

You young people out there may think, “Well, I thought the purpose was to just get out of the house, that find me somebody quick and be gone and get attached and so I can just begin to do what I want to do.”

Beloved, so many lives have been ruined by that very thinking. So many lives in Ephesus had been ruined and here Paul brought the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ preached peace to them.

Well, let's begin unfolding these principles. First of all, beloved, what is our pattern for marriage? Our pattern for marriage is seeing in the example that Paul lays out for us in Christ and his covenant with his Church. What is this covenant? I am not going to make it hard for you tonight because I want you to really walk away here tonight with the intent that the apostle Paul is pressing upon us and that is that we become so consumed with the Lord Jesus and overwhelmed with his love for us that we, without ceasing, seek to emulate him and the pattern of marriage that he has laid out before us.

This covenant, beloved, is a bond of love. You know, that is the way he began the letter, right? Paul began the letter by teaching the Ephesians and us that we had been predestined in love. What does that mean? Well, it means that before we could ever do anything good or bad, God loved us in Christ. It was an everlasting love. It was a love that transcended anything that we could possibly do. Beloved, that God had set his love upon us and that love caused him to act on our behalf because of the need we have. It is a bond of love.

Do you know what, beloved? The things that I try to stress over and over in our own congregation because so many of us struggle with being loved. Children sometimes struggle because they don't think their parents love them enough. Adults struggle

because they don't think their spouse loves them enough. Sometimes we struggle with even friends because don't think we are loved enough by our friends. And Paul is impressing on us a love that is far superior than all of that.

Beloved, the kind of love that Paul has for, that Christ has for his Church is a love that never waxes or wanes or diminishes or increases. It is perfect from the very beginning. You cannot wake up in the morning and God love you less than he loves you right now. There is nothing you can do to increase his love for you and he loves you perfectly.

This bond, this covenant that he, Christ, has with his Church, beloved, is a bond of love. This love is expressed in the grace that he has poured out upon his Church.

Let's read the text again and fill our minds and familiarize our minds with what Paul is saying here. Notice what he says.

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands.<sup>4</sup>

Paul tells us that Christ is the head of the Church. He is its Savior. What does that mean? What does it mean to be the Savior of the Church? It means that he is her redeemer, her protector. He is her provider. He is everything she needs in order to be who they need to be. He provides everything for them as their head so that they can do what he has called them to do. Without the head, beloved, the body is useless. That is what Christ is to his Church. He is her head and Savior.

Paul goes on and he addresses the husbands. I am going to have to—because of Paul's mind here and the way he interweaves these subjects, we are going to have to go back and forth into the text, but I hope you can follow along with me. And what we see here and what it appears is that Paul is caught up in the glory of it. Paul is absolutely caught up in this glorious doctrine of Christ and the Church and he happily... you can see Paul relating this to the marriage covenant.

He says, "Look to the Lord Jesus and how much he loves and serves the Church as her Savior, as her head, as her provider, as her protector, as her redeemer, knowing that the Lord Jesus came to her when she had great need. There was no way she could redeem herself."

Beloved, how could we redeem ourselves? How could we protect ourselves from the wiles of Satan and the devil? We were caught up in the paganism of Ephesus. We were overwhelmed with bad doctrine. We were overwhelmed with foul practices. But our head came to us. He came to us. He redeemed us. He purchased us. He caused us to be recreated in himself.

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<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 5:22-24.

He goes on and he addresses the husbands and he says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”<sup>5</sup>

What an overwhelming example. You know, this is glorious theology. It is heaven theology. You know, imagine coming in to the apostle Paul’s counseling chambers and you sit down in front of the apostle Paul and you say, “Paul, I have got some problems with this man. He won’t do this. He won’t pick up his socks. He won’t do that.”

And the goes, “Paul, I have got some problems with this woman. All she does is nag and gripe. I can’t please her. I can’t make enough money.”

And Paul sits there and he waits for everybody to finish. And then he says, “Can I tell you about Jesus? Have you read any good theology books on the atonement?”

Paul, I am about having my supper cooked tonight.

Hey, have you ever thought about the cross?

Paul, my clothes aren’t being washed.

Have you ever thought about the shed blood of Jesus?

Paul, can’t you just help us here? We are drowning in selfishness.

Let me talk to you about Christ and the Church.

Let me ask you something, beloved. How many books on the atonement are in your house? How many solid commentaries are in your house?

You say, “Well, pastor, I am not a reader.”

Become one. Get busy. You are made in the image of God. You can change. Just because you were born that way and you have habituated yourself that way does not mean you stay that way.

Well, I don’t read well.

Work at it. That is one of the main excuses I get.

“Well, pastor, I am just not up... I just don’t read.”

I feel sorry for you because you are missing out on many authors and books that can take you to the throne of God.

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<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 5:25.

How many? You know, I figured up one time in my counseling of families because when you go in to counsel families one of the things you want to do is look at their bookcase. You want to look at their bookcase and you want to see what they are reading, what they are giving their minds and their hearts to. And you might find very few books. You might find a couple of Bibles which is great if they are reading those. But they need help understanding what they read in the Bible. And, you see, no commentaries and you may see a few paperbacks on, you know, 15 ways to be a useful housewife, 200 ways to be, you know, make your husband happy and those sorts of things. And, beloved, let me tell you something about those kinds of things. That is not Christianity. I am not saying their principles aren't useful. We have them in the Bible. But you cannot reduce the Christian life to a laundry list of things to do to make yourself happy, things to do to make your husband love you, things to do to make her more willing, things to do to make your children [?]. Beloved that is not Christianity. You don't see the apostles doing it. If it was, it would be in the Bible and we would have an authorized, ordained sovereign list of them. But that is not what we have. We have the apostles pressing us to seek and feast upon Christ and the truth of his Word.

And if you find people that... families that have a lot of books, one thing you have to ask yourself: Are they understanding what they read? Do they like just accumulating a bunch of knowledge? Do they like being able to read and quote the Puritans so they can get involved in the latest theological conversation at church? Are there seriously taking to heart what these men are teaching?

And, beloved, I have figured out for less than 500 dollars you can create a very substantial, solid Christian library in your home.

Now most families blow 500 dollars in a year or two. But dedicating to support your marriage and your family, dedicating to supporting the sanctification of the Lord Jesus Christ, filling your head with knowledge of him, explaining how this works out in history and culture, beloved, is invaluable.

This bond of love is a bond of grace. We certainly don't deserve it. Ephesians two teaches us this. We have had this preached to us as well. But turn with me to Ephesians two and I just want to point something out to you there, because I want to read verse eight through 10.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”<sup>6</sup>

Not only is it a bond of love and grace, beloved, it doesn't just mean we don't get what we deserve. We don't just deserve Christ redemption goodness and love and mercy and blessings. We deserve hell and we don't get that.

But, look at verse 10.

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<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 2:8.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”<sup>7</sup>

Guess what? Marriage is a good work. Marriage is a good work, not fancy time. And maybe if we had a biblical perspective of our marriage covenant looking to the Lord Jesus Christ, what is he doing? Jesus is laboring on behalf of his precious bride. He had redeemed her. He has brought her, he has purchased her with his blood. He has brought her into this relationship with him where they commune together, where he is their God and they are his people and he loves them and they love him and he is working in them, changing their habits, changing their taste so that they love him more and more all the time, so that they are committing themselves to good works like marriage, raising children, working, not stealing from your employer, all the things we heard about this morning. That is a good work.

Beloved, and that is why. Listen to me, wives. Listen to me. That is why submission is not a passive role that you take as a wife.

“Well, I am just being submissive to my husband.”

It is active. You know, submitting myself to my husband to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Well, he is not worth it.

You are right. He ain't.

My wife will get on to me later.

But neither are you, ladies, as objects of sacrificial love. You see, that is the point. The point is we are defiled sinners brought and cleaned up by Christ so that we can now what? Act like husbands and wives to one another where there is submission, respect, and reverence and love whereby we are focused upon Jesus Christ. Because what is more important than my felt needs is Christ's glory. And we need churches that have that mentality.

Boy, when we have got people leaving churches.

“Well, you preach too long, pastor.”

I am feeding you the Word of God. I am trying to help you see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and sometimes you get so enraptured with the Church you can't do it in 30 minutes. Sometimes you can.

“You get too excited, preacher, too convicting. The church is not loving enough. The lights aren't bright enough. We don't have enough fellowship. We don't meet enough.”

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<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 2:10.

Beloved, if we could get this perspective that Paul is laying out for our marriages, do you know what we would see? We would see that our marriages become strengthened. We would see our families arrive at church and we would start being examples to those around us on what the Church really needs to look like.

He says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”<sup>8</sup>

These are the things, beloved, that we must do. This bond of love is a bond of grace. We don’t deserve it, but yet he saves us and he don’t just save us. He don’t just say to us, “Ok, now you are safe from the wrath of God,” but he blesses us. He loves us. He cherishes us. Christ just doesn’t do the bare minimum like so many couples do.

“I will do the bare minimum of submission so you can do the bare minimum of loving.”

I am not talking about pagan marriages. I am talking about Christian marriages. There is a reason why Christian divorce is just as high.

Lavish. That is what he says in Ephesians chapter two. We are not going to turn there, but what he says in Ephesians chapter two is that the Lord Jesus has brought those who were aliens and strangers, he has brought them nigh to himself that he might lavish upon them grace and mercy. That is a beautiful picture.

One of the things I love about the Puritans—and we don’t talk like this anymore, but we ought to. We should. We talk about beautiful babies, I mean, cute babies. We talk about beautiful women. But do you know what? When was the last time you said Jesus is beautiful? He is beautiful. Everything about Jesus is beautiful. Every thing about him is beautiful. He defines beauty. When you look into him, when you look and you can stare and gaze at his glory, beloved, you cannot help but be enamored with his beauty.

And you know, men, you know what it is like. I know what it is like to be a man with a beautiful wife. And as beautiful as my wife is, she pales in comparison to Jesus. Your wife pales in comparison to Jesus. And if you have go this view of Jesus, maybe you wouldn’t sinfully indulge your wife as much, but you would have this view of bringing your marriage along in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, seeking to be sanctified and growing in grace, seeking your marriage to do everything it can do to bring proper glory to his name.

This is a bond of affection. I mean, he loves us. He sympathizes with us. He cherishes us. He calls us love names. We are his. He is jealous over us. He does not want us flirting with the world. He doesn’t want us fraternizing and flirting with all those other vain philosophies. Oh, he gets angry and upset because he loves us so much.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Beloved, this is a bond of friendship and there is so much more. I am just skimming through here. It is a bond of friendship. We are no longer aliens and strangers, but we have now... we are brought near and made citizens with the saints.

Just like Jesus told the apostles, “You are my friends.”

Do you know that is a term of endearment? We are friends. Do you know what friends do? John 15. Friends lay down their lives for each other. Do you know why friends lay down their lives for one another? Because they love each other.

Now, beloved, that is a friend. How much more a wife and a husband? How much more that bond of oneness and unity that is expressed in the relationship of a husband and wife? Beloved, this bond of love is a bond of holiness. Paul tells us that is why we were saved. That is why he saved us that he might make us holy and blameless.

Look at chapter five. Look down at verse 27.

“...that He,” speaking of Christ, “might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”<sup>9</sup>

This bond, beloved, is a bond of holiness. Do you know why holiness is not as attractive to us as it needs to be? Because we lack a perfect love for Christ. We lack that fervent passionate seeking and loving of the Lord Jesus.

You see, you want to correct that. Love Christ more. Seek him. When you pray, beloved, pray that the Lord manifests himself to you and that you can see his beauty. I mean, sometime you talk love language to Christ.

“I love you. Come to me. You are beautiful.”

You say, “Jess, that is a little silly.”

No, it is not. Paul is teaching us here that Christ and his Church is the pattern for our marriage covenant. You don’t think your wives or husbands beautiful, affectionate, passionate? You don’t want your wives and husbands to be passionate and lovers of your heart and body and mind and soul and all that you are?

It would be absurd to think not. That is part of the oneness. That is part of the beauty of marriage. That is part of being the... being in a marriage covenant is that we have somebody to share our lives with and they are our best friend.

When God made Adam and Eve he did not create another male for Adam to, you know, pal around with, complain to.

“Oh, Eve. You wouldn’t believe what she is doing now.”

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<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 5:27.

The Lord did not create another woman for Eve so can go gossip and say, “Let me tell you what my husband... He is throwing his socks on the floor. He is doing all of these things. He is driving me crazy. I just wish he would [?].”

No. He created Adam and Adam and Eve so that they could grow in their relationship with one another so when they become a one flesh relationship they would learn to relate and grow and prosper and nurture one another, to help each other when they are sick and ill, when they are frustrated and tired.

And, beloved, that is our privilege, isn't it? That is our privilege that Paul would tell the wives to rise up, wives, and be submissive to your husbands as unto the Lord. That is your goal. That is your motive: as unto the Lord.

He is a rascal, but I do it unto the Lord.

And let me help you, ladies. If it is not whole submission it is not Christian submission. If you are only submissive 70 percent, that is not Christian submission. That is not Holy Spirit generated submission. That is not being filled with the Holy Spirit and oozing out of your life Christ. In fact, if you tell your husband he is the head of the house, that is not Christian submission. It is all stated fact. We don't need that. God has declared the man to be the head of the house. We don't need the wife to do it.

You know, you could see Paul going from house to house and saying, “Hey, I have got to clear up these statements people use all the time like if momma is not happy, nobody is happy.”

Well, what are you saying? Are you saying that when she is angry and upset she dominates the whole household, that no one can be joyful in the Lord because she is such a wet blanket on everybody? Is that what you are saying? That is ungodly. Don't speak that way anymore, particularly about the precious ladies and sisters in the Lord that he has saved and bought to himself and filled with his Spirit. Don't let that be said about you ladies.

Paul is saying, “Rise up, wives, and imitate the Church. Be a picture of fidelity, loyalty and reverence to a world that doesn't even know what a church is. Rise up, sisters. Be a picture the world desperately needs of the Church.”

You say, “What can I do, pastor, to demonstrate my whole hearted submission for my husband?”

Well, I would direct you to the Larger Catechism question 129 on the role of inferiors to superiors. I am just going to read a couple of these and I have changed some of the things around just to help us more conversationally deal with it.

First of all, ladies, it means you are committed with all reverence in heart, word and deed to your husband for Christ's sake, because you are filled with the Holy Spirit and it is your joy to do so. Remember, it is a privilege to rise up, sisters, and be counted and numbered with the people of God. Show wholehearted reverence and love, heart, word and deed. Submit yourself to your husband and be characterized by that total love of active submission. You are not a doormat. You are not any less than he is, but it is an ordained office that you, being the help meet and submissive to your husband by creation. That is the way God designed it which means this, ladies. You were made for submission. You were created for submission just as men were created to lead.

And let me tell you something. Just as women often times find submission repulsive, I can tell you men find leadership repulsive because most men are lazy. We would have a lot stronger churches if our men would rise up and be leaders to give a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ and be the men of their household instead of sitting back and saying, "Oh, I am the head because I let my wife lead."

Shame on that. Repent and do justice to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Ladies, find yourself actively submitting to your husbands with joy. In prayer, pray for him. Pray for his weaknesses. Pray for his strengths. Pray for his leadership.

Why is prayer so essential? Prayer is essential to the Christian life, period, end of the story. It is essential to your submission, sisters, that you commit yourselves to the Lord daily, hourly. Whatever circumstance you find yourself in, that you would joyfully, actively submit to your husbands, that you would find great joy in being what you were created to be as your husbands help mate without exception.

Partial submission is no submission. It cannot be recognized as Christianity, beloved, unless it fits this pattern. The Church owes wholehearted submission to the commands and precepts of Jesus Christ. Right? Who is going to argue with that? Who can argue about that?

Yet we find churches today, right, that say, "Ah, I don't think so. Well, I know what the Bible says and all, but I don't think it applies to me. Oh, I love Jesus, but I don't think he wants me to obey that."

I hear, pastors hear, "Oh, I love Jesus, but I don't think those commandments are for me. He wants me to be happy."

And yet the Church is a reflection of the marriage and the marriage is a reflection of the Church.

Do you know why we see the Church in shambles? Because our marriages are in shambles. And we can fix that tonight here. We can fix that by rising up with a fuller, greater vision of Jesus Christ and his Church. And, men, you can rise up and lead your wives in love and maturity. Ladies, you can rise up and submit to your husbands and give

the world the picture of what a true church looks like with a true Savior instead of all these fake ones.

Let me address quickly the men. Again, so much could be said here.

Husbands, Paul's charge for you is to rise up and love your wives.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."<sup>10</sup>

This is active sacrificial love. Just as the woman is to actively participate in submission, actively be a participant in this marriage covenant as a help mate, she takes great glory in it. You are to take great glory and be very active in your sacrificial love for your wife. Rise up, husbands and imitate Jesus. Rise up and show the world what the love of Jesus looks like by loving your wives.

She nags. So what? She doesn't cook my food right. So what? Many of the small things that bring so many problems to marriage, beloved, would fall by the wayside if both can have a vision of Christ and begin loving and sacrificing for one another.

Determine, husbands, to follow the example of the Lord Jesus. Determine this. Make this your plan. Don't just hear them out. Don't just, you know, don't leave here and say, "Well, I will pray about it."

It is done. It is a command by the apostle Paul. The only thing you need to pray for is for wisdom, is for perseverance. You need to pray that the Lord would give you the boldness to stand up. Maybe, men, you need to take the reigns from your wife because you gave them to her.

I knew I was going to start preaching sometime.

And because of this, beloved, because of laziness, we have distorted the picture of Christ and his Church, because we haven't been the sacrificial loving leaders that God has called us to be or the help or the submissive help mates God has called wives to be and we have given the world a very retarded, perverted and distorted picture. And that is why they can't love Jesus. They can't look at Christian homes and see [?]. They look at Christian homes and they go, "That is no different than mine."

Shame on us. Shame on us. That is an indictment on us because what the apostle Paul has taught us, we have been filled up with Christ's Spirit. We have been empowered. Oh, apostle Paul says, "I pray that you would just understand these things. I just pray that you could get a glimpse of it, that you could see it, that you could taste it, that you could become a part of it and that you would begin walking as a Christian ought to walk."

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<sup>10</sup> Ephesians 5:25.

Husbands, commit yourselves to the means of grace. Commit your family, your wife to the means of grace. Come to the Lord's Day with great joy. Why? Because every Lord's Day is an opportunity for you to grow as a sacrificial leader. Every Lord's Day is an opportunity for you to make use of the means of grace in a very unique and particular blessing of almighty... of the Lord Jesus Christ and to grow up and be the man of God that he has called you to be.

You know what children need, right? It is interesting that Paul begins with the husbands and wives, because children don't need indulging parents. They need godly parents. They need to look at their daddy and see him believing their momma sacrificially and lovingly. They need to see their momma submitting and loving her husband as a help mate actively saying, "Honey, we can do this. We can expand the kingdom of God in our home and we can do this and that kingdom runs out into the Church and we can be so much more because we are working in tandem together as a one flesh relationship."

Husbands, rise up. Beg God for grace and strength. You are lazy. You are tired. You say, "I don't have the energy for this." Beg God for strength and mercy. Seek him at every turn, at every angle. Know, beloved, that you are deficient to lead your wives lovingly and sacrificially and that is why you need to pursue Jesus hot and heavy.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew seven, "Ask, and it shall be given to you."<sup>11</sup>

Do you want to be a sacrificial leader? Ask God to make you that man you ought to be so that the world can rightly see Christ's love for his Church.

You know, we talk a lot about evangelism. How much more impressive would our evangelistic endeavors be in this day and time if we would just get this principle of husbands and wives right?

Do you know what? I am going to tell you something. And you know this to be true. There is nothing more beautiful than a couple who love each other in the Lord Jesus. There is nothing just more beautiful. You love being around them. It... they are contagious. It... Do you see the sacrificial love and submission and how it works glove in glove and hand in hand and how it is just this unity and this glorious package of just love and tenderness and affection because they are consumed with Jesus Christ?

And you love it and you want to be like them. That is what we need to make our families. Husbands, you need to be committed to seeing your wife grow in grace. Make very effort you can to have your wife feast upon the means of grace. Express... do not put unneeded obstacles in the life of your wife. Let her grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Do not overwhelm her and burden her with activities that are irrelevant in this life. It is your job, men. It is your job, husbands. Express to her your love regularly as Christ expressed his love to the Church regularly. Encourage her to feast upon Christ. Encourage her to be a theologian. Encourage your wife. Hey, about this book? This is, you know [?].

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<sup>11</sup> Mathew 7:7.

Well, I don't like theology books.

Well, maybe we can read it together.

Do what you can to encourage her to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make sure you don't do anything, husbands, to discourage her in her pursuit of the Lord. And every wife is different. Every husband is different. That is why we don't have cookie cutter Christian families. We all have to pursue this and grow. And the Lord blesses us and comes to us.

Now let me mention this because time has gotten away from us. Lastly, there is... and, again, there is piles of just truth here, but, thirdly, is what is the purpose for our marriages? The purpose, beloved, we have is to publicly bring light out into the open that the great mystery of the love that Christ has for his Church is visible to the world. We have the purpose of demonstrating to the world by our marriages the love openly, out in the open and publicly how much Christ loves his Church.

Notice what Paul says. Look down with me. Well, let's read the context. Let's read verse 28 and following.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**<sup>12</sup>

Notice what Paul says in verse 32.

“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”<sup>13</sup>

Notice what Paul, again, his mind seems to wander to the glory of this whole subject. So he sort of digresses a little bit, but notice what he says. He quotes Genesis. He quotes the passage out of Genesis that a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. And then he says this mystery, this revelation is great. But he goes, “I am not talking about the man and husband. I am talking about Christ.”

Here is the point Paul is making. And this will seal view [?].

Paul is saying, “It is no mystery that men are attracted to women and women are attracted to men. That is not the mystery. That is the way God made it. That is the way God designed it. What is the first thing that Adam said when he saw Eve?

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<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 5:28-31.

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 5:32.

“Shazam. Hey, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. Excellent job. She is mine. Thank you, Lord.”

I mean, no. I mean, I am not... hey, he was excited. That is not a mystery. It is not a mystery that we are attracted to our beautiful wives.

Paul says, “I am not speaking about that. The mystery I am referring to is so great and grand.”

And this language in the original, I mean, what Paul is trying to say here is that it is beyond human comprehension, this mystery that I am referring to about Christ and his Church is beyond human comprehension. I can barely explain it to you, but here is what it is. The mystery is this. How can somebody so beautiful like Jesus, so lovely, love us who are so ugly, [?] and scarred with sin? How can our beautiful bride groom who is so glorious and beautiful love the Church?

You see, beloved, if Christ with all of his glory, with all of his might, with all of his beauty, his majesty, can love us, how much more can husbands and wives who are attracted to each other love each other?

So, beloved, don't walk out of here tonight thinking that she has got to do this if she wants me to sacrificially love her.

Christ and his Church.

Well, I will submit to him if he would love me a little more and hug on me a little more.

Christ and his Church. Christ and his Church.

What I want you to think about. When you begin to think about yourself, I want you to think about why does he love me? Why does he love me? What a great mystery that he would love me with all of my baggage, with all of my sins.

And that is why Paul ends in verse 33, just sums it up. He just sums the whole topic up.

He says, “Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife.”<sup>14</sup>

Don't love somebody else's wife. Love your wife.

“..as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”<sup>15</sup>

Beloved, just as our covenant of grace is this bond of love where Christ comes and

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<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 5:33.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

blesse and nurtures and redeems and protects and... and guards and guides and all of the sealing and all that he does for the Church, so our earthly marriages must reflect that even though it is small in degree, beloved, where we must offer a bond of love in our marriage covenant that we would yield and grow in grace and seek to have Christ honored in our marriages.

Is that your desire for your marriage tonight? Is this your view of marriage? How many books do you own on marriage? How many books do you own on the atonement of Jesus Christ? How many books do you own explaining the work of Christ in his Church?

Beloved, let's not leave here tonight without a fresh commitment to filling our minds and lives with Christ. And if we are married, let Christ fill us up and ooze out into our love affair with our husbands and wives.

Let's pray.

*Blessed God, we have but scratched the surface of a much glorious truth and, Lord, we pray that you would answer the prayer of the apostle Paul and our prayer tonight, that you would fill us and consume us with Christ's glory, his love for the Church and the Church's love for him in yielding joyful submission. Lord, bless our homes, our families, our marriages, Lord, that we might exemplify to the world this glorious covenant of grace. Though we are unworthy, we are so willing, because we have been made and recreated in Christ. Bless us, oh Lord, bless us, we pray for we are needy. In Christ's name. Amen.*