

Ephesians Chapter 5: 25-27; “Husbands, Love as Christ Did”, Message # 47 in a series entitled – “The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for June 28th, 2023.

In our last study we saw how wives are to submit to their own husbands as unto the Lord. And now, here, we find Paul telling the husband to love his wife just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. In verse 21 we saw that in the body of Christ, the church, that we are to submit to one another in the fear of God. Here in this section of verses from verse 25 to verse 33 we will see that a husband’s headship over his wife is defined in the context of his loving her, and giving himself for her, even as Christ did in relation to the church.

The whole emphasis of these verses is, that in order to have a strong, God-glorifying and satisfying marriage, the man must take the lead, in a loving way, in their relationship. But as he goes about to do this, he must become more like Christ in the way that he loves his wife. He must give himself for her even as Christ gave Himself for His Bride, the church. This is what we want to think more about together in this study at this time.

What will this mean? It will mean a several things in relation to verses 25-27. 1st of all – A Husband must remember how Christ gave himself for His church in prayer. (verse 25) 2nd – A Husband must remember how Christ gave Himself for His church in preaching and teaching. (verse 26) And 3rd – A Husband must remember that Christ gave Himself for the church so that she would be glorious. (verse 27)

1st of all – A Husband must remember how Christ gave himself for His church in prayer.

In verse 25, Paul says that we husbands are to love our wives and to give ourselves for them. What this means is that we are to give ourselves for them in providing for all of their physical and spiritual needs, just as the Lord gives us the strength and the wisdom to do so. We begin to learn how to do this, by our giving of ourselves, each and every day, to prayer. We see this in the ministry of our Lord Jesus. This is what He did for His church. He was going to redeem her by obeying God’s law perfectly and then by going to the cross. But He often prayed for His complete obedience to the Father’s will.

All through the time of His earthly ministry, He was giving Himself for His church by His loving words and actions. But you will also notice that this was preceded by prayer. This is the first way in which Christ showed His love for us, His church. In this, He is a pattern to all husbands who would better love their wives. Turn with me over to Mark chapter 1, verses 35-38. “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there he prayed.” “And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him.” “When they found Him they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.’” “But he said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’”

So, I want you to see, that although our Lord Jesus was the God-Man, that in terms of His ministering to people and ministering the word to them, He believed that it was important to spend time in prayer. He did not rush into His work from the time that He awoke. Instead, He spent some time alone with His Father in prayer. Men, if you would love your wife better, you must give yourself more to prayer, even if you are not going to be with her during the day.

Yes, you will be going to work. And it will probably be a good thing if you can usually be the first one up in the morning, because you are the head of the house. And you may have a big day ahead of you. But remember who you are working for. Yes, you may be working for an important

business or a company, and yes, you are to work as unto the Lord. But the reason that you go to work is to supply the needs of your household. You are working for you and for your wife and your children, if you have them. But you are doing all your work as unto the Lord, as Jesus did. So, when you get out of bed, give your wife and kiss to show her that you love her. And then prepare for your day. But don't forget prayer, for both for you and for her. Even though she probably will not be going with you to work, yet because you are husband and wife, she will want you to know that she will be thinking of you.

You will need to tell her, and show her by the way that you live your life, going through your day, that you will also be thinking of her. How can you do this? Well turn with me over to 1st Thessalonians 5, verses 15-18. "See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all." "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." That is true love. That is Christ-like love.

For Christ was always thinking about His disciples during the time of His earthly ministry. And He is always thinking about you now, even though you cannot see Him now, at the right hand of the Father. He is always making intercession for you. When you get up in the morning, perhaps your wife is already up, and she is preparing things for you. But out of your love for her, don't you forget her. Remember to speak with her briefly, before you go to work, and even to pray for her if you can. Even at that time, she will be thinking of what your day will mean for you. And you should be thinking about what your day will mean, not only for you, but for her as well.

Jesus was already so great in relation to His ministry that people were seeking Him out at the crack of dawn. His disciples hunted for him and came and found Him and told Him this. Your wife probably knows your schedule of what you are going to be involved in, just as much as you do. You will want to cultivate the thought in her mind that you will be thinking of her, even as you go through your day. A loving husband often thinks upon his wife; how precious she is to him. And how He can lovingly encourage her, and teach her by his own example what it means to follow Christ closely. This is part of the essence of what it means to give yourself for your wife.

Your relationship is a special one, even as Christ and the church. Your relationship is an exclusive one, of giving yourself and your lives entirely to one another. You should be learning to give her your thoughts on every subject of importance. And also lift up your prayers to God in relation to both of you. And in this holy way you will be showing her that you love her.

2nd – A Husband should remember what the purpose of Christ's love is.

Verse 26 says – "Christ gave Himself that He might sanctify and cleanse His church with the washing of water by the word." And you will also recall that in verse 38 of Mark chapter 1, that Jesus said to His disciples – "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." So we see here that Christ's main purpose during the whole time of His earthly ministry was to be a preacher and teacher to Israel. And more specifically, a preacher and teacher to those who He would save and make a part of His bride the church.

The way that I want to apply this truth to the text that we are studying, is to say that every faithful husband is interested in his wife's sanctification, just as much as he is in his own. Sanctification is our being set apart to holiness by and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ gave Himself to work out a perfect obedience on our behalf so that we would by faith in Him be justified before God. In definitive sanctification, when we are first saved, we are seen by God as holy ones. We are seen as His saints, based upon what Christ has done for us by His perfect righteousness and His sufferings on the cross.

Even though we are not perfect in holiness, a good work is taking place in us, which over time, will make us more and more holy in God's sight. You can see this if you will turn over to 1st Peter 1, verse 13-15. "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

When it says that we are to rest our hope completely on the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, it does not simply mean the revelation that will come to us when die, and the sanctification of our spirit is complete. Or even, at the time of Christ's second coming, when Christ will return and give us the glorified body. Although it may indeed take in that future grace to be bestowed, I believe that it also means the revelation which can come to us now, by learning what it means to be like Christ, better.

In progressive sanctification, we increasingly become more like Christ in our character, and the way that we live our life. This takes place by means of God's imparting grace to our mind and heart. Imparted grace is worked into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He helps us to see how we might learn to do His will in a better fashion, and He enables us over time, to make progress in righteousness and holiness. This is where a husband's love for his wife, loving her as Christ would, giving himself for her, becomes an effectual means to her sanctification. Because day after day, she sees how her husband loves her, and how greatly he desires both of them to become more like Christ.

Even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, so that He might sanctify and cleanse her, even so a husband's self-sacrificial love helps in this process of bringing her, as well as himself into greater conformity to Christ. It also makes them both better witnesses to His grace. Christ sanctifies and cleanses His church, it says here in verse 26, by the washing of water by the word. Even so, a husband helps his wife on to greater sanctification by his showing her the love of Christ in many practical ways.

He shows her his love by giving himself for her in a thousand different small ways of service to her. And he learns to help her, even as he thinks Christ would help her. He also loves her by leading her in their devotions to God as a couple. He helps her to better understand the word, both in its doctrinal and practical implications. A husband who loves his wife, learns to help to complete anything that is lacking in his wife's faith, or knowledge of the word. You see this in 1st Corinthians 14, verses 34 and 35. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says." "And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

To "sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" is what Christ had to die for, for His church to be able to obtain these blessings. They are applied at the time of the believer's conversion to Christ, and all the way through the Christian's life. Christ uses His word in connection with His finished work of redemption, to sanctify and cleanse His church, in an on-going basis, so that she will be cleansed and purified, and set aside to His service in all that they do for Him.

Therefore, a husband ought to see it as his duty to be able to help his wife understand the word better and better, through his own instruction of her, in relation to it. He may not have a gift of teaching, but he can, every day, read her the Scriptures and try to help her understand them. He can help her to apply them to her own heart and mind, so that they are agreed in their doctrine

and practice in relation to the local church which they are a part of. Because he loves her, he gives himself for her in this very practical way.

3rd – A Husband must remember that Christ gave Himself for the church so that she would be glorious. (verse 27)

“That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” I will have more to say about this verse when we look at verses 28-33 in the next study, but I want you to be able to see the object that Christ aims at, in regard to His sanctifying and cleansing of His Bride, and His washing her with water by the word. It is, so that He might present her to Himself as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

The object of all of Christ’s having given Himself for His church was that she might be beautiful and perfect and completely glorious in every respect. He will accomplish this objective. He will not fail in any respect with regard to it. By Christ’s grace we will be perfectly righteous and holy someday. And even in this life, we shall increasingly realize the greatness of His grace to transform us into His blessed likeness and image, as we are faithful to Him.

This is also, on a smaller scale the same thing that a husband desires his wife to be, in every aspect of her life with him. He wants her to be glorious by Christ’s grace. He wants her to be made glorious in her spirit. He wants her to be made glorious by the grace of Christ working in her mind, her heart, and in every aspect of her family life and her life with him. This will be seen even by other believers in the context of the local church. They will see her husband’s love for her, and they will understand that it is Christ’s grace that has brought him to show her this kind of love. He loves her and gives himself for her, even as Christ did for the church.