

Ephesians 5:22-33

Author: Paul

Audience: Church at Ephesus

Theme: The Body of Christ is Blessed

v. 22-24

Submission and Love

- A very touchy subject in our current culture.
- This is one of the most prominent ways that we can stand in opposition to the world.
- When we think of the word submission we automatically think of it in a negative connotation.
- We see a picture of one fighter putting another in a painful position against their will and forcing them to submit to his will.
- That's not the Biblical picture of submission.

Wives

- Called to submit to her own husband.
- This is not a command to submit to all men as an inferior gender.
- The reason that Paul gives for wives to submit is because, just as Christ is the head of the church, the husband is the head of the wife/family.
- This is not a worship relationship.
- The wife is not to worship or idolize her husband.
- This call is to believers.
- A wife must not submit to her husband if what he is wanting is sinful.

- This is why it is crucial that you find a man that is God-fearing and wants to lead you into a deeper relationship with Christ.
- There are many men out there for you to marry but you must be very selective because marriage is a lifelong covenant and is expected to be kept and honored by the keeping of the roles of man and woman.
- If you as a woman cannot submit to a man then you should not marry him.

As the Church Submits to Christ...

- What does Biblical submission look like?
- Does it mean for the wife to become a doormat?
- Does it mean that she can't think for herself?
- Does it mean that all of her hobbies are now gone and his hobbies rule?
- Biblical submission means that we subject ourselves to another's care and leadership.
- This does not refer to the negative connotation that submission has when one fighter puts another fighter into an armbar or chokehold as to break the will of his opponent.
- A Christian wife is called to grateful acceptance of her husband's care and leadership.
- The Church is under Christ's leadership and care in all things.
- This is the model that the Bible says is right for the Christian family.

v. 25-27

Husbands

- Called to love his wife as Christ loved the church.
- This is the more difficult call because Christ literally gave His life for the church.

- Husbands are called to be the leader of the household while also surrendering his desires for the betterment of his spouse and children.
- It is a call of self-sacrifice.
- Many men will use this as justification to be domineering over their wives.
- Some even go so far as to misapply this in defense of their abuse of their wife.
- This should not be.

Christ's Leadership

- How does Christ lead?
- He is the sovereign and the judge yet He lovingly leads.
- He showed His leadership by being obedient to the Father in His death.
- He showed His love by taking on the sin of the world.
- In this way husbands are to lead their wives.
- We see the example of Christ and we are to follow it.

The Purpose of Christ's Leadership

- Christ leads and cares for His bride so that we would be purified and presented to Him in splendor on the last day.
- We as the members of the Church are the gift from God the Father to God the Son.
- We belong to Him.
- He lovingly leads us so that we would be made to be more like Him.
- Jesus isn't an arbitrary figure that does random things.
- Everything is with purpose and that is the purpose that He leads and cares for us the way that He does.

v. 28-30

Love Your Wife As Yourself

- We are commanded here to not only lead our wives but to *love* our wives.
- To what extent are we to love our wife?
- The answer is simple to say but difficult to live out.
- We are to love our wives as we love ourselves.
- Do we starve ourselves?
- Do we inflict pain upon ourselves?
- Do we neglect personal hygiene?
- All of these things are evidence that we love ourselves and do not desire to suffer.
- In the same way that we love ourselves we should love our wives.
- The whole basis for Paul's argument here is how Christ treats the Church.
- Christ nourishes and cherishes His body, the Church.

v. 31-33

Christ and His bride

- We, the church, are referred to as the bride of Christ.
- There will be a marriage feast at which Jesus will receive us into eternity.
- As Christians, our marriages should point people to Christ.
- They are to be lifelong commitments, self-sacrificing, and faithful.

One Flesh

- We are told that a man should leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.
- The same is true for the wife.
- Upon our union we are made one flesh in the sight of God.
- This is something that is not to be undone.
- Divorce is something that God hates.
- Malachi 2:13-16
- There are Biblical grounds for divorce but our current culture celebrates the dissolving of marital unions instead of fighting for their preservation.
- There is forgiveness in Christ for divorce but it should be avoided at all costs.

Love and Respect

- Paul wraps up the chapter with a final exhortation to husbands and wives.
- He tells husbands to love their wives as they love themselves.
- God created women.
- He knows what they need because He made them that way.
- Women need love.
- They need patient understanding from their husbands.
- They need to feel cherished.
- Just as He created women, God created men and designed them.
- Men need respect.
- Men desire to be respected and held in high regard more than they feel the need for love.
- It's amazing how God created us so similarly yet so differently!

Marriage and the Gospel

- God instituted marriage back in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve to be a picture of the Gospel.
- This picture shows unconditional love, undying support, faithfulness to one another, and sacrificing oneself for the benefit of the other.
- Just as Christ will not shun His bride, or separate Himself from her, we are not to separate ourselves from our spouse.

Small Group Questions

- 1) When it comes to sin, have things really changed much since Paul's day?
 - No, the church has been dealing with the same sins since the beginning of human history.
- 2) What does the word *Holy* mean?
 - It means to be set apart. We have been set apart by God for salvation and we are to live like it.
- 3) What does it look like to live a life that is set apart from the world? (Let them give answers)
 - We can't isolate ourselves from the world but we can live differently. By simply obeying the commands of Scripture we will be different enough that people will notice that. Usually that opens doors for the Gospel to be shared but along with that comes ridicule at times.
- 4) What does a Biblical marriage look like?
 - A wife that surrenders to her husband and a husband that is a gentle, loving, self-sacrificial leader.
- 5) This question is gender specific: As a woman/man, what does it look like for you to be a Godly wife/husband? Allow them to answer.
 - You must choose a spouse that is chasing after Christ. If not how can we ever expect them to fulfill the command given by Him? We are to submit/lead even when it is hard to do so.