

Sermon 22: Delighting in Christ's Love for His Church: Ephesians 5:22-32

Text: Ephesians 5:22-32 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church..."

Introduction:

- **Christianity radically pushed back against the chaotic view of marriage and sexual ethics in the Greco-Roman World:**
 - Marriage is not simply a legal way to maneuver in society or create legitimate male offspring.
 - It is a sacred covenant between one man and one woman for life.
 - Men and women are not held to drastically different sexual ethics.
 - Men must be faithful to their wives, learn to put to death fleshly passions, and treat all women with respect as image-bearers.
- **Paul's instruction had four basic layers:**
 - **Healthy human relationships begin with a healthy relationship to God: 5:21** "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God..."
 - **There is a distinct order created by God for our homes and we must embrace that order: 5:22-23** "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife..."
 - **Husbands should never abuse their authority in the home: 5:25** "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it..."
 - **Christians must embrace a broader perspective of marriage: 5:32** "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church..."

Summary: Since marriage was ordained by God as a picture of Christ's love for the Church, we must reflect on this picture, delight in it, and model it in our daily lives.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: We belong to Him: 5:23 "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body..."

- **Two aspects of this relationship:**
 - **Aspect 1: He is the Head:** "Christ is the head of the church..."
 - **The word "head" can have two possible senses:**
 - **First:** It can be used to describe an authority structure in human relationships.
 - **Second:** It can describe a source.
 - **In this context:** The word "subject" shows that the sense is describing an authority structure.
 - **Interpretation:** The Church is under Christ's authority.
 - **Aspect 2: He is the Savior:** "He is the savior of the body..."
 - **The Church is a body that once was in great danger.**
 - **Dead: 2:1** "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."
 - **Misguided: 2:2** "In time past ye walked according to the course of this world..."
 - **Enslaved: 2:3** "We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh..."
 - **Under wrath: 2:3** "Were by nature the children of wrath..."
 - **He took decisive action to rescue the Church from that danger: 2:4-5** "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved..."
- **Four common pitfalls to this glorying:**
 - Allowing identity to become rooted in ourselves.
 - Allowing identity to become rooted in our church culture.
 - Allowing identity to become rooted in our leadership.
 - Disconnecting identity from sinners saved by grace alone.

Truth 2: We are the object of His affection: 5:25 "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it..."

- **God's love for His people is a core doctrine in Ephesians:**
 - **His love made our salvation a complete salvation:**
Ephesians 1:4-5 "In love, Having predestinated us unto the

adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..."

- **His love pursued us in our spiritual deadness: Ephesians 2:4-5** "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ..."
- **His love is infinitely rich and gives us stability: Ephesians 3:17-19** "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge..."
- **His sacrificial love should shape every aspect of our lives: Ephesians 5:1-2** "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour..."
- **This love is practical and sacrificial: Ephesians 5:2** "And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour..."
 - He promised on the day Adam sinned.
 - He was forbearing with mankind despite his constant rebellion
 - He preserved His plan against unprecedented odds.
 - Christ willingly took on the humiliation of humanity.
 - He willingly went to the cross and laid down His life for us.
 - He lovingly drew us to Himself through the gospel.
 - He keeps us until we receive all that was promised.

Truth 3: We are the object of His labor: 5:26-27 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish..."

- **Earlier: Ephesians 2:8-10** "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."
 - **Each Person of the Godhead plays a distinct role in our salvation: Ephesians 1:3-14**
 - The Father determined the plan.
 - The Son submitted to His Father's plan to secure it.
 - He is the source of life, and we are united to Him.
 - The Spirit seals us as God's possession, is the foretaste of our future blessings, and indwells us.
 - He shapes us into Christ's image through the Word.
 - The Father disciplines us as His children.

- **Highlighted in Ephesians 5:26-27**

- **Christ's past action on the cross was designed to sanctify, cleanse, and ultimately present the Church faultless in glory.**
 - **It sets us apart to Him:** "Sanctify..."
 - **It cleanses us from our defilement, making us fit to be joined to Him:** "Cleanse..."
 - **It will be fully realized in glory:** "Present to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle..."
- **We see three aspects of His saving work:**
 - **When we believed, we were immediately set apart to Him.**
 - **Now that we have been united with Him, He is purifying us through the preached word.**
 - **Ephesians 5:26** "Cleanse it with the washing of water by the word..."
 - **Psalms 119:9** "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word..."
 - **Hebrews 12:10-11** "He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness...it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby..."
 - **In glory, we will experience completion.**

Truth 4: We are united to Him: 5:30 "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones..."

- **Mystery:** A spiritual reality not fully articulated earlier in Scripture:
 - **Israel was called to be a Kingdom of priests: Exodus 19:5-6** "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me...And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation..."
 - **Gentiles are now fellow heirs with Jewish believers: 1 Peter 2:9-10** "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy..."
 - **We are all members of His one body 5:30** "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones..."
- **Mystery in Ephesians:**
 - **All creation will participate in this redemption 1:10** "That he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him..."

- **All peoples will participate in this redemption 3:6** "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel..."
- **We are literally united to Him as members of His body: 5:30** "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones..."
- **Believers have the wonderful privilege of communicating this glorious message to the nations: 6:19-20** "That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak..."
- **A glorious reality to delight in:** He literally has planted us in Himself, communes with us, and lives through us.
 - **Ephesians 1:3** "Blessed be the God...who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..."
 - **Ephesians 2:22** "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit..."
 - **Ephesians 3:19** "To know the love of Christ...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God..."
 - **Ephesians 4:13** "Till we all come in the unity of the faith...unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..."
 - **Ephesians 4:20-24** "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind...that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness..."

Application:

- **Reflect on these truths:**
 - We belong to Him.
 - We are the objects of His affection.
 - We are the objects of His work.
 - We are united to Him.
- **Delight in these truths:**
 - We have been united to Him, and our position is secure.
 - He lives in us and is working through us.
 - His love for us is so vast we will never fully grasp it.
 - His sacrifice has been accepted and through it we are accepted.
 - He is diligently and patiently working to shape us into His image.
- **Mirror these truths:**
 - Husbands sacrificially love your wives as He loves the Church.
 - Wives, voluntarily put yourselves under your husband's care as Christ commands.
 - Let's exercise patience in our relationships like He patiently works to shape our lives.

- Let's submit to what He is doing in our lives as we put spiritual growth before our personal comforts.
- Let's strive to make our homes places of sweet fellowship that reflect what He desires to share with His people.