

# Marriage: God's Holy Sacrament 3

## *The Secret to Loving Your Wife*

(preached 9/25/22)

Please turn to *Ephesians 5:22*.

### **Sermon #1: God's Holy Sacrament**

- Marriage is a holy Sacrament that was created by God in Eden.
- It was the first act God performed after Adam & Eve were both created.
- The first words out of Adam's mouth confirmed his marriage.
- Marriage is a living testament to the Gospel, with Christ as the Husband and the Church as His wife.
- Let's not allow Satan, bad personal experience, and our flesh devalue marriage to "just a piece of paper," "a mere formality," or "a ball and chain."
- For the Christian desiring to follow and live out God's will, it's freedom and fulfillment!
- In sermon #1 I called upon any who make this mistake to repent and see marriage as God does: beautiful, wonderful, exalted, and His will!

### **Sermon #2: What is a Godly Husband?**

- The first commandment ever given to men was "go to work."
- When we're married we're promoted from single hypocritical male to husband: a mighty champion and righteous steward.
- God's command transforms from "go to work" to "work FOR you wife and family."
- CHAMPION means protect her! Stand between her and anything that would harm her.
- STEWARD means we don't own her, Jesus has lent her to us for our time here on earth. When He comes to take her back, He expects that she will be well taken care of!
- While the command work for, provide, and protect our wives is from God, our flesh twisted and perverted it.
- Instead of looking to God to empower us to do this, we look to ourselves.
- Instead of thanking and praising God for blessing and success, we exalt ourselves and take the credit.
- Over and over in the OT whenever Israel worships the work of their own hands, they "forget" God.
- Pride is an emotion that's a cheap substitute for what earthly dad, Adam, lost when he got booted from Eden.
- Pride drives us to work, work, work because it tells us our only value is in our ability to produce and succeed.
- When we're no longer able to, the same voice stab us in the back and tells us we're worthless and no good to anyone.
- When a man allows this to go on for too long, depression begins and he turns inward to the passions of the flesh to fill the absence of the false joy pride brings.

- Before his fall, the earth didn't resist him and his efforts tilling the garden were marvelously successful. He would have fallen to his knees, thanking and praising God, for this success!
- Therefore he would have been filled with the Fruit of the Spirit and had plenty of love and joy to express to his wife Eve.
- After the fall when sin entered in pride replaced worship of the Lord and Adam would have bore the fruit of the flesh: anger, lust, impatience, contention, temper flares, etc. and his wife would then be the brunt of the same.
- Men: we're no longer under the curse of Adam because Jesus freed us.
- Our worth is no longer in our ability to produce, our success, our achievements, and the work of our hands.
- We are the workmanship of Jesus! Our worth is in what HE's made us to be!
- I called upon all of us men to leave behind Adam's curse and embrace our new Christ selves!
- The Lord can and will continue to work through us. Let's give HIM all the glory, honor, and credit for the good things He accomplishes through us!
- If our value is in the work of Christ instead of our own, we'll have the HS' fruit and be much easier for our wives to live with!

PRIDE. Let me name a few things to you and tell me whether you believe they're Godly virtues or not. And, if you did some research in the Bible, you could find verses that confirmed the same:

- GENEROSITY...is it a virtue?
- PATIENCE
- LOVE

HOLY QUALITIES. In every case these 3 concepts appear in Scripture, God exalts them as holy qualities that we need to walk in, because they are part of Who He is.

***PRIDE isn't one them.*** Every mention of pride in the Bible is bad, gentlemen. Both human and angel have indulged in pride and, every time they do, the Lord promises to "bring them down." I say this because us men have been deceived on this issue. Pride doesn't make us more manly and humility doesn't make us more feminine. Giving credit and glory to God is strong, whereas taking it for ourselves is the mistake beings like Lucifer made.

HUMBLED/EXALTED. Jesus said anyone choosing to exalt themselves would be humbled, brought low, whereas anyone who humbles themselves, God will exalt. Quoting from the OT, the Apostle James speaks his famous line:

#### **James 4:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

***Jesus is our example, guys.*** I pointed out how He worked ALL the time and succeeded at everything He set out to do. Yet He never once “bore witness to Himself” but gave all the glory to His Father God. He didn’t puff out His chest, brag about His accomplishments, or condescend to others at their lack.

TRAPS ARE BAITED. Remember something: traps are baited with something the prey likes and wants. Pride is a bear-trap and its bait are the feelings of false joy, faux confidence, and self-exaltation. Let the most successful Man in history, Jesus Christ, accomplish things through us guys and then let’s fall on our knees and thank Him!

TODAY.

- Husbands are commanded to love our wives, but how?
- Does the Lord define what this means?
- Is there some secret to it that we’ve been missing?

Let’s read Ephesians 5 and find out:

### **Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

PREP VERSE. The marriage verses don’t begin until verse 22 of this chapter, but Paul is preparing us for them. The first 21 verses are directed at the church in general and we’ll cover these two, then jump to verse 22. ***Again, husbands, the sermon is for us and its intent is for us to have a revelation on how to love our wives and obey God.***

**Verse 1:** we imitate Jesus because we are sons of our Father just as He is. So we must ask: “how did Jesus love the church?”

**Verse 2** begins to tell us and uses the phrase “gave himself up for us.” **Now we need to know what that means, because it’s our command from God.** Paul is going to reveal the wider and deeper meaning of our original command to work for and keep our wives.

AGAIN: our obedience to this command **is more than** working long hours and days, making sure they have food, shelter, and clothing.

“GAVE. ”The meaning of the word “gave” is in this case is fascinating: to put oneself in prison to free someone else. To surrender to the authorities, to take the rap, so that the guilty party doesn’t have to.

OLDER KIDS TAKING ONE. I've heard the stories of grown children of physically abusive parents say they took beatings on behalf of their younger siblings. Imagine an innocent person taking the prison sentence for the guilty one—think Jesus and Barabbas.

JESUS OUR SUB. Christianity 101 is that even though you and I were guilty of sin, deserving both death and Hell, wonderful Jesus went to the Cross for us and took all the penalty upon Himself, giving us righteousness and eternal life.

With this in mind, let's jump to **verse 22:**

**Ephesians 5:22-24 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

<sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

*“Hey Scott, I thought you said this week’s sermon was still about the husbands?”* It is, ladies, don’t fear! Marriage is a copy of the New Covenant which is why we cannot dilute, devalue, or change its definition in any way. Christ plays the part of the Husband and the Church plays the role of His wife. We *\*will\** get to submission in this sermon series, but not today.

**Ephesians 5:25-33 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

<sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

<sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

<sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

<sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

<sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

<sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

**Verse 25** is a copy of verse 2, but now it’s applied to marriage and specifically us husbands. Paul begins to unveil the great secret to how a husband is to love His wife.

COMMAND. Before I continue, men, let's ground ourselves on this: this is commandment of God.

- It's not our wives nagging or complaining, so therefore it's not about obedience to or giving into her.
- It's not about her being right or getting to say "I told you so."
- It's not about whether she deserves it, is loving us in the way we need, or anything like that.

## **IT'S COMING FROM GOD, IT'S ABOUT HIM**

- it's about us living lives that exalt Him,
- it's about how we are treating his purchased possession (our wife), and
- it's about us imitating Him.
- [No offense ladies]: we obey the voice of God and He's the boss—not our wives.

**Verse 22:** we "give" ourselves up for our wives, just like Jesus did for the Church. Does this mean that if she commits a crime, we confess to it instead and go to jail for her? No.

GO TO JAIL. God is commanding us to give part of us up—to make it go to jail, to surrender it to something. What part of us? What does this look like? What does this mean? Keep it on the burner.

**Verse 26-27:** Jesus gives the Church a bath but notice it's not in His cleansing Blood, but in "the water of the Word" whatever that means. What's the difference?

FROM JUDGE TO DAD. The cleansing of His blood paid our debt of sin to Father, tearing up the divine rap sheet we had on us that listed all our sins. We then inherited the eternal righteousness of Jesus and the status of being a son or daughter of God. God is no longer our Judge, weighing our sins and then passing sentence, but He's our Dad. Dad still maintains all the same moral standards He did as Judge, but now He applies those standards to the refining of our character and not to satisfy justice.

FROM JUSTICE TO CHARACTER. Justice was satisfied by the blood of Jesus forever. The washing of the water of the Word is Father using the Holy Spirit and Scripture to deal with sin we commit after our Salvation. If sin is like dirt, the Lord bathes us in His Word to wash it off us. When we listen to Him and repent, we've been given a bath.

BRIDE PREPS FOR WEDDING CEREMONY. These are wedding ceremony verses from ancient times when, right before she walked down the aisle, the bride-to-be bathed...sometimes for days. In Revelation 19 when speaking of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb it says "the bride hath made herself ready" meaning she's been bathing in God's Word.

**Verse 28** continues our revelation guys, showing us the "how" of loving our wives the way Jesus did:

## **Ephesians 5:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

<sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

<sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.

HANG ON FRIDGE. Gentlemen, I recommend going home today, printing these verses out, and hanging them up somewhere you can see them every day.

## **WE LOVE OUR WIVES LIKE WE LOVE OUR OWN BODY, OUR FLESH.**

“ONLY THINK OF YOURSELF.” Last week I brought up what might be a touchy subject to some married couples. *Men: has your wife accused you of primarily thinking about yourself?*

- Of taking care of your own needs before hers or the kids?
- Of remembering things that benefit you personally, but forgetting what she asked you to do or her birthday?
- Of being nice only when you want something from her?
- Of being willing to take the time and spend the money on what you want, but not what she wants?

STUCK UP FOR US. I stuck up for us last week on this one. I pointed out that we wrestle with big questions like “will my family be taken care of if something happens to me?” and that we desire to make sure they’re secure and protected no matter what. I pointed out that the long hours we toiled away in the factory, shop, farm, or office were our way of showing our love to them. All of these prove we don’t ALWAYS think about ourselves, but them too.

That being said, if our wives are continually complaining that we put ourselves first then here is the reality we must face instead of fight: ***our body is crying out.***

HEAD OF HOME. We are the head of our households, true. Our wives are supposed to be submitting it us, because the Lord said so.

## **With this authority God has given us, the role of Jesus in our marriage, also comes the responsibility to treat our wives just like we do our bodies.**

VERSE THAT FOLLOWS. Remember the amazing and beautiful revelation that immediately follows Adam’s declaration of his own marriage, which is also the very next verse in this chapter, verse 31:

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

**We are one with our wives gentlemen.** She’s not our roommate and if we’re Christians following Jesus, she’s not our live-in “girlfriend.” *The moment we said “I do” the Lord formed us into a brand new being, created in His image.* What have I been telling you this entire time? Marriage is the process and journey of Salvation. When you and I were Saved, we were engaged to be married to Jesus and He gave us the Holy Spirit as our engagement ring. We became one.

**Your wife is your body.** When you’re working in the hot sun, do you get thirsty? How do you know you’re thirsty? Because your body tells you it is. Even if you’re very driven to work and finish the task, what do you do? *You stop everything and get something to drink.*

ANGRY WITH BODY? When was the last time you got angry with your body for telling you its thirsty?

- Argued with it, raised your voice, and told it to stop complaining and be more appreciative for the water you’ve been giving it?
- Did you tell your body that it’s need for water really isn’t that important?
- Or that you just don’t have any more to give and won’t seek it out?

KIND OF FLUIDS? What kind of fluids do you seek out for your body after working for hours in the sun and sweating profusely? Muddy water? Hot, stagnant water from a swamp? Of course not...using any of those to hydrate would be foolish and make us sick. How about a glass of cool water that refreshes and replenishes?

STOP AND DRINK. I’ve worked for hours in the hot sun and when my body says its time to drink, I stop everything to give it cool, healthy water. If I don’t have any on me, I do whatever I can to seek it out.

**NO MATTER HOW DRIVEN I AM TO FINISH MY WORK PROJECT, MY #1 PRIORITY IS TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF MY BODY WHEN IT SPEAKS.**

BODY’S NEEDS. My body submits to my authority, yes. When I command it to work on the tree farm or preach, I expect it to obey. When it cries out with the need to eat, drink, rest, sleep, or whatever...then I submit to its need.

Remember this saying: **Wives submit to their husband's authority, and the husband submits to his wife's needs.**

NOT IMPORANT. I don't tell it that its needs aren't important or that it's taking up too much of my time.

- I don't tell it to be content with a sip when it really needs a mouthful.
- If it gets injured and tells me it needs to go to the hospital, I don't put a band-aid over the gushing wound and go back to work.
- Let those who have earns hear.

**Our wives are our bodies, guys.** If they're complaining a lot, telling us their needs aren't being met, and consistently accusing us of being self-serving we need to listen.

*No, that doesn't mean she's always right.* The reason we're all in this predicament is because Adam obeyed Eve's voice instead of God's. The reason the Middle East continues to explode in violence is because Abraham obeyed Sarah instead of the Lord. ***The only Person Whose always right is God.***

ICE CREAM, ETC. My body sometimes wants too much chocolate, ice cream, soda, and cake. At some point I need to draw a line and walk in moderation.

- Yet when my body is saying it can't handle the 12 hour shifts, the weekend projects & side jobs that keep it away from home, then I need to start listening.
- When it consistently tells me that I'm putting the needs and goals of the head above it, neglecting it, I need to hear and make a change.

BODY BREAKS DOWN. Because even the strongest body eventually has enough and gets sick, injured, and breaks down. Even if it has the most amazing house to live in, a new car, fancy clothes, and a great 401K it can wither away.

*Speaking as Scott: I can't stand it when my wife accuses me of being self-serving.* I get instantly angry and defensive. The first thing I think is that **SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW GOOD SHE'S GOT IT**...and I've heard lots of other men say the same thing.

***We do this, guys, because we feel unappreciated for the things we have done.***



It gets back to what I said in the last sermon: *the curse of Adam that results in pride*. We want to believe that WE'RE succeeding in our marriages, and a happy wife is a sign of that. Thus when she starts to complain and tell us we're being self-serving, we translate that to "you're worthless. You're a terrible husband, a bad provider, and a failure."

WORK, WORK. If our wives are complaining that all we do is work, work, work and are never home, then our bodies are telling us its needs aren't being met.

BREAK FROM KIDS. If they're telling us they need a break from the kids because they're feeling overwhelmed, then our bodies are overworked and need rest and we must respond.

DISTANT. If they're saying they we're emotionally distant from them and not connecting, then perhaps we're the ones who need to do an internal pivot and adjust...not them.

BOOZE. If they tell us that we drink too much booze and they don't like how we treat them after we're sauced up, then its time to put the bottle down and no: we can't handle it.

ONE ON ONE. If they say they desire more one on one time with us, without the kids or any distractions, then perhaps we need to put our cell phones down, find a sitter, and take her on a date.

BODY BREAKS DOWN FROM WORKING. After years of working on the factory floor, don't our bodies break down? Years sitting at a desk at the office, toiling away in some farm field, or under a car at the shop takes a toll on our youth and health, doesn't it guys? Our body goes through changes as it gets older and/or is exposed to harmful elements.

*Do we understand the changes our wives have had to go through, especially if they had our kids?* Not just the pregnancy or pain of childbirth, both of which are big things, but the physical and chemical changes they undergo afterwards that last a lifetime?

**They've given up a lot too. They've sacrificed right alongside us.**

"GAVE" In the beginning of this sermon, we translated the word "gave" in the context of Ephesians 5 where it says "Jesus gave Himself for her [the Church]" and it meant to "put oneself in prison/surrender on behalf of someone else." Now let's connect the dots.

**WE PLAY THE ROLE OF JESUS IN OUR MARRIAGES.** Just like Jesus, we must give ourselves for our wives. As the head, we have lots of goals, ambitions, things we want to get done, and accomplish. We're wanting that promotion at work, to see our small business flourish, to build that dream house, restore that classic car in our garage, go out on the lake with our poles, and head into the woods with our guns. There's nothing wrong with any of these things.

PERSONAL DESIRES. We also have personal desires and needs that we want fulfilled. We wish there was more action in the bedroom, we want our homes to be our peaceful castle, eat foods we like, and have a comfortable recliner we can fall asleep in. Again: nothing wrong there.

UNHAPPY? MUST SURRENDER. Yet if our wives are unhappy and telling us about it, then we need to surrender our personal goals and attend to our wives. Perhaps if we did this vs telling ourselves and her "how good she's got it" our marriages would be better.

**This isn't surrender to our wives, it's surrender to Christ—our Head.**

***We need to put our desires in prison if our wives are telling us that they feel like they're the ones in jail.***

- Perhaps if we did this vs. telling them to be thankful and content with what they have now, we'll be swimming vs sinking.

**Ephesians 5:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

<sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

<sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.

**HE WHO LOVES HIS WIFE THIS WAY LOVES HIMSELF. SHE IS PART OF US, GUYS.**

NOT ENOUGH? COMMAND. If that's not enough for you, and maybe it isn't, let's back to the foundation: ***the 3 verses I just reread to you are a commandment from God to husbands***. So even if you're thinking that she's a bear to live with and doesn't deserve this at all, your Lord has spoken.

**After all guys...we can't expect her to submit to us if we're not submitting to the One Being Who actually deserves and is worthy of it: Jesus?**

EARTHLY DAD WALKED DOWN AISLE. When her earthly father gave her away to us all those years ago, he was entrusting us with her care. Not just that we would love her the way he did, but to be as committed to her for life as he was.

**Our heavenly Father also gave her to us.** He was also walking her down the aisle that day and telling us that we were taking over from her earthly dad as her mighty champion and righteous steward.

COMING BACK FOR HER. In God's case, he reminded us that at some point in the future He would send His Son Jesus to retrieve her and whisk her off to Heaven. Until that wonderful day arrives, we needed to take care of her.

**HE WANTS HER BACK WASHED BY THE WATER OF THE WORD, RESPLENDENT WITHOUT SPOT OR WRINKLE, AND READY FOR THE GREAT WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB.**

Without condemnation, gentlemen, let's be asked: **how are we doing?**

If we're not doing so great, there's still time to for us to change and it doesn't matter if we've been married 5 months or 50 years.