

I. Intro

A. Text: **Eph. 5:15-33**

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Eph. 5:15-33)

B. Series Recap

C. Cultural Setting: Ephesus was a port city on the West Coast of Asia Minor. It was considered to be the center of commerce for Rome and the entire international trading market of that day. The gateway of Asia, Ephesus housed an affluent, ... advanced population who had a knack for self-indulgence and self-pleasure.

1. The city was beautiful, but the moral character was downright ugly.

- a. Prostitution, idolatry, polygamy, promiscuity, ... you name it.

D. Scriptural Background/ Context

1. In the middle of that cultural climate, Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Ephesus that reminded them that they were called to a place much higher than their environment around them... Much higher than what they may have settled for in the past.

- a. That the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened (**Eph. 1:19**)...
- b. That they would understand the exceeding greatness of God's power toward them (**Eph. 1:20**)

2. Paul was exhorting in a very similar way to Jesus in His sermon on the mount. **Matt. 5:13-16**

- a. You are the salt of the earth.

- i. A little salt helps make bland food palatable, makes good food tastier, produces an irresistible thirst.
- ii. There's something about your life, your walk that just looks good, tastes good, and makes others thirsty.
- iii. Dr. Warren Haynes: "Stay salty my friends"
- iv. You and I are in this world for a very short, strategic mission.
- v. And the world needs salt... That they may develop an unquenchable thirst that can only be satisfied in Jesus.

- b. Much of what God has planned to do in the earth, He has purposed to do it in and through his church.

- i. On a macro level, the church is not only salt , but the vehicle by which Jesus lives moves and

breathes in the earth. God has decided to move and demonstrate His glory throughout the earth in the church.

- c. And on a micro level, the family is the unit that God has ordained to display the relationship between Himself and the church.
 - i. Remember.. God is a relationship God. And He set out to build his kingdom... relationally.
 - ii. The relationship of marriage... The covenant of marriage is one of our greatest opportunities to display the grace and love of Christ to a world that may not understand the gospel message otherwise.
 - iii. The covenant of marriage is one of the greatest opportunities to sprinkle salt onto an otherwise bland culture, generating an unmistakable thirst that can only be quenched by the Living Water: Jesus Himself.

E. Chapter Context

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. (Eph. 5:1)

- 1. Imitate God as children who take on their parents' tendencies and habits (**Eph. 5:1**)

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Eph. 5:2)

- 2. Walk in a love that is mind-boggling, selfless and sacrificial (**Eph. 5:2**)
 - a. What God is asking of you, will absolutely cost you.
 - b. It'll be a sho noough sacrifice.
 - c. God is declaring war on sin, the flesh, etc.
 - i. You just might lose "you" in the process.
 - ii. Losing self in the midst of a selfish society is downright salty.

iii. Self-dying: How is your dying coming along today?

II. Here We Go With This

1. Wives' Challenge (**Eph. 5:22-24**)

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (Eph. 5:22-24)

2. Wives, love him like he's Jesus.

- i. Problem: He's not Jesus (Sisters).
- ii. And it's obvious.
- iii. He's got control issues.
- iv. He's manipulative.
- v. He's got secret habits that I'd rather not share about.
- vi. He doesn't deserve my submission
- vii. Besides, we are no longer living in a male chauvinist world.

b. Destiny's Child: *"All the women who are independent, throw your hands up at me"*

B. Husband's Challenge (**Eph. 5:25-27**)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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. (Eph. 5:25-27)

- 1. Husbands, love her like you're Jesus
 - a. Problem: You're not Jesus (Brothers).
 - i. And it's obvious.

- ii. The distance between who you are and who He called us to be can cause you to feel the weight of the world.
- iii. Weight of unreasonable expectations
- iv. Got to take care of everything!
- v. Got to provide in every way, when money don't grow on trees.
- vi. Got to nurture her in every way when she's not always nurturable!

- b. **Subproblem**: Only Jesus would put up with some of the...

- i. Moody
- ii. Don't cook or clean
- iii. I've given her my name, my kids, my money, my fidelity.
- iv. What do you give when you've given your best... and it good enough?
- v. Many of us realize that we ain't got nothing else to give.
- vi. Besides, when Jesus loves, he gave his very life... I ain't gonna be able to do it.

C. Hopeless Responses.

- 1. **Hopeless Response**: "We're incompatible".
 - a. Revelation: If you do get married, you are going to marry someone that you are completely incompatible to!
- 2. **Hopeless Response**: "He/she isn't who I thought he was."
 - a. **Revelation**: If you do get married, you are going to marry someone who (upon further investigation) are not who you thought they were on the front end.
- 3. **Church's Part**: Folks get saved... come to church and hear God's standard for marriage repeatedly: Wives love him like He's Jesus. Husbands, love her like your Jesus.

- a. Because we promote the standard without giving the means to reach the standard, it causes frustration.
 - i. Couples just about get upset when that scripture is read in church.
- b. Clear difference between what we read about in church and what we actually do in the home.
 - i. Instead of providing healing, the church often ends up providing a sense of condemnation.
 - ii. Paul's verbiage: The thing that I thought would bring life (the standard), I found to bring death (**Rom. 7:10**)

4. **The Point of Transformation**: There is a place where we not only come to the realization that our spouses are incapable of meeting God's standard for marriage, but we come face to face with the fact that we too are completely incapable of meeting the standard.

- i. That realization is either crippling or liberating (which is the point I want to rest on).

III. Opportunity for Astronomical Growth and Healing

A. The Wisdom of God

- 1. God knows our inability to meet His standard all too well. Yet He refuses to lower His standards.
 - a. *"Wives submit like he's Jesus. Husbands love like she's Jesus."*
 - b. Irrevocable, unchangeable, non-negotiable instruction.
- 2. **Question**: If God knows the depths of my weakness, yet proclaims that His will for me is to meet this standard that is far too high for me (and won't relent), then how can I get there?
 - a. **Possible Answer**: Only God could do that.
 - b. Now we're starting to get it.
 - i. Only God could do that.
 - ii. God wants to do that for us AND in us.

- iii. God said that he would do that in us.
- B. Foolishness of Man: Tendency is to set goals and standards for our marriages based on **Eph. 5:22-33** without considering the means to reach the goal (especially **verse 18**).
 - 1. Be filled with the Spirit... that's the how; the great enabler!
 - a. No wonder there's disappointment, resentment, and frustration.
 - b. Anything (even the fruit of the spirit) can become a wait that crushes us if it's not empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. So let's back up a bit.

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Eph. 5:15-16)

- C. Be careful. Be wise. Redeem the time (**Eph. 5:17-18**)
 - 1. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (Eph. 5:17-18)

- 2. Don't be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- 3. Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled!
 - a. What I want to do through you will cost your independence, your "Me" mentality, and "I" identity
 - i. It will require more power than you possess
 - ii. It will impact more people than you ever imagined.
 - b. Be filled, controlled, influenced by another acting upon you... acting within you
 - i. Cause you to do things that you'd never do.

- D. Be filled (always)

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to

God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Eph. 5:19-21)

1. Result of the Always being filled.
 - a. A new culture of worship and surrender to God in the home.
 - i. Together → Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
 - ii. Communicate words of grace so sweet that it sounds like a symphony.
 - iii. Operate in a culture of submission to one another.
2. Wives, Submit to Him Like He's Jesus: Opportunity to cling to the leadership of Jesus in faith.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (Eph. 5:22-24)

- a. Wives, this type of submission is more to Jesus than to your husband.
- b. God knows that your husband is a terrible leader.
 - i. He's inexperienced.
 - ii. He's insensitive.
 - iii. He's selfish.
- c. But God is a good, good father. He's a perfect leader.
 - i. Will you trust my leadership?
 - ii. Will you submit to him (even though he doesn't deserve it)?
 - iii. In following my leadership through faith, I'm working something out in you.
 - iv. In faith, I'm working something out in him.
 - v. Will you redeem this time?
 - vi. Will you walk in my will for your husband's life?

3. Husbands Love Like Jesus

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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. (Eph. 5:25-27)

- a. Husbands, this type of love is more a product of your love for Jesus than your love for her.
- b. Entrusting you with your wife gives God the opportunity to display His glory through grace.
- c. God knows that you are a terrible leader, yet he asked her to submit to your leadership anyway.
 - i. Responsibility is crazy!
- d. God knows that your love is weak and selfish, yet he told you to love her like Jesus.
 - i. Sacrificial in nature.
 - ii. Supplying need.
 - iii. Leads by serving.
 - iv. Her growth is the end goal.
 - v. I'm working some things out in her.
- e. The Complaint: She doesn't deserve that type of love. She's not squeaky clean like you think
 - i. Will you trust my leadership?
 - ii. Will you lead her even though she doesn't know how to follow yet?
 - iii. Will you lead her, even though you haven't read any books on leadership?
 - iv. In following my leadership through faith, I'm working something out in you.
 - v. In faith, I'm working something out in her.
 - vi. Will you redeem this time?
 - vii. Will you walk in my will for your wife's life?

4. Loving like Jesus, requires the super-natural filling of Holy Spirit.

- a. When we love, our motive is an immediate return on our investment.

- b. When God loves, His motive is eternal return on His investment.
 - i. We often love impatiently as a means to get others to make an immediate response that fits our liking.
 - ii. Jesus loves patiently, without manipulation or control. But with eyes on eternity.

E. Practical Advice (**Eph. 5:28-31**)

²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. (Eph. 5:28)

- 1. If you can't discern how to love her like Jesus, just love her like you love you.
 - a. Well I gotta learn how to love me first. Gotta do me first, and then.
 - i. That's a lie
 - ii. You know how to do you all too well.

²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Eph. 5:29)

- 2. Leave and Cleave
 - a. Be glued together.
 - b. Let go of other allegiance and become one (completely united).
 - c. Me and my wife are one.
 - i. If you can't stand her, you can't stand me (one flesh)
 - ii. If you mad at her, you mad at me (one flesh).
 - iii. If you put your hands on her, ... (one flesh).
 - d. Which is why it hurts so bad when I'm mad at her.

- i. When I can't stand her, then I can't stand me (one flesh)
- ii. When I'm mad at her, I'm mad at me (one flesh)
- iii. If I put my hands on her, I put my hands on me (one flesh).

IV. Conclusion

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:32)

- A. God is using the institution of marriage to further his story about Himself and His Bride: The Church.
 - 1. Humbling to think that God would use my marriage to help illustrate the story that He's been writing from eternity past: A story of forgiveness, love, grace, redemption and restoration.
 - a. The story that He's always wanted a people specifically for Himself to have intimate, inseparable relationship with forever.
 - b. And despite their faults, blemishes, and selfishness He instantly bought them back with His own life; then slowly washed them, and transformed them into a glorious Bride (without spot or wrinkle).
 - i. He's been working something out.
 - 2. Also humbling to think that God has been using my marriage (with all the bumps and bruises) to do some of the washing.
 - a. That my faith surrender to Jesus in my marriage is shaping my wife for eternity.
 - i. When my weak love is met with the power of the One who spoke the worlds into existence, something explosive begins to take place in her.
 - b. That her faith surrender to Jesus in our marriage is doing something to me (and in me) for eternity.
 - i. When her flawed submission is met with the power of Holy Spirit, things begin to shift in me.

B. Question in marriage: Not will you be happy forever?

- a. Are you willing to surrender to Jesus in ways that your spouse doesn't deserve, in order to allow Jesus to shape them for eternity?