

Ephesians: Good News of the Church

Ephesians 5:22-33

"Walk with God: Marriage" – November 20, 2022



Introduction

Imagine that on Thanksgiving Day you sit down for your feast and every platter that comes out is filled with only photos of delicious food. You would not be content. We need the real thing - the meal that those pictures point to.

Marriage, as it is portrayed in the Bible, is a picture of how your relationship with the Lord should be. It is not meant to bring complete happiness or satisfaction. If you go into marriage thinking that it will make you content, complete, and happy, you are misunderstanding the picture.

We have to keep the context of this scripture passage in mind here. After Paul lays out the beautiful picture of what it is like for the Christian to be "in Christ" in chapters 1 – 3, in chapters 4 - 6, Paul is calling us to walk in these truths. This makes us rely on God's Spirit. In verse 21, we see what submission looks like in the church. Here in verses 22-33, we see what submission looks like in marriage. To teach God's purpose and design for what submission looks like in marriage, Paul compares it to the church.

Sermon Outline

1. Spirit-filled wives are like the church. Vs. 22-24
2. Spirit-filled husbands are like Jesus. Vs. 25-29
3. Spirit-filled marriages display the Gospel. Vs. 30-33

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 22-24

Paul presents marriage as a breath-taking narrative form of redemption.

A wife is called to submit to her own husband. It isn't a patriarchal, cultural concept. It is part of God's good and beautiful design that He laid out in Genesis 2. For some, the call to submit will sound archaic and hard because we live in a fallen world. What do you think of when you hear the word "submission?" We need to lay aside **our** definition of "submission" and look at it biblically. Then, we will see how it works, how it is wise and good, and that it is beautiful.

Men and women are created equal. However, in Genesis 2, we see that there are different roles. The man is called to lead, and the woman is man's helper. This was to reflect the glory of God to the world. To submit means "to follow and support the worthy leadership of the husband." Submission is a voluntary, act of obedience by the wife. Biblical leadership for the husband means taking responsibility and providing initiative. Husbands are to strengthen the gifts of the wife.

A wife who supports her husband's leadership by lending her wisdom, encouragement and strength, makes her husband's leadership a joy. The opposite of the submissive spirit is a fault-finding resistance and a tired restlessness that robs the household of joy. ([Proverbs 21:9](#)) Submission doesn't mean agreeing with everything. A wife can help her husband see things from a different perspective. The key is communication. If you are married, how would you rate the communication between you and your spouse?

Wives should submit in everything but the husband's authority is not absolute. The Lord's authority is. If a husband forbids what God commands or commands what God forbids, the wife should disobey. The Lord limits submission, and He transforms submission. Your gracious submission to your husband's leadership is an act of worship. God will guard your submissive heart. ([1 Peter 3:4](#)) This can embolden a wife and set her free to follow her husband's leadership. If you are a wife, what do you think about submission after looking at it from God's perspective?

Additional reading: Genesis 1 and 2

2) Read vs. 25-29

If a Spirit-filled wife is like the church in that she submits, the husband is like Jesus in that he loves the wife. We need to lay aside **our** definition of "love" and look to God's word for the definition of love.

In the drama of redemption that marriage depicts, God has cast the husband as the role of Jesus. Men, if that makes your knees wobble, good! You are beginning to see what God has called you to as a husband. Jesus didn't come in barking orders to the church for His comfort. Jesus gave Himself up for the church. His love is defined by going to the cross, bearing its shame and willingly laying down His life for the church. Jesus died so His bride might live. Husbands are called to lay aside their lives for their wife.

The goal of Jesus' love for His bride was to present the church to Himself with splendor. This splendor is the same way we see a bride on her wedding day as she is presented to the groom. The husband's goal should be to create an environment where the wife will flourish and become everything that God made her to be. It should be for her good. Is that the environment you are creating as a husband? Is your goal for you to be comfortable or for your wife to be holy?

Love is a sacrificial giving of one's self for the good of another. How does the husband do this? Verse 29 - just as you nourish and cherish your own body, you nourish and cherish your wife. It's more than bringing home a paycheck. It is providing love to develop, cultivate or lift up the other person. Being married to a nourishing man is freeing. ([1 Thess. 2:7](#)) In a Spirit-filled marriage, the wife trusts her husband whose soul intent is to look out for her good. In a Spirit-filled marriage a husband loves a wife who is there to help him. This sticks out to the world as something that is different.

3) Read vs. 30-33

These verses depict a language of intimacy. Jesus is drawing you so close that you become one flesh or "in Christ." Because Christ came and pursued His people as a bride, there is hope. Christ died to bring us life and to be united to Him.

We fall in love and get married because of what Jesus did. Marriage is a picture of Jesus as the groom and the church as His bride. Marriage points to the real, satisfying relationship we can have with God. Marriage was never meant to satisfy the longing in your heart. Jesus was! God created you and put eternity in your heart. He created you to love and have a relationship with Him.

If you are single, this text has profound implications for you. Sex is out-of-bounds outside of marriage. If marital intimacy is a picture of how God relates to His people, you can refocus your energy in pursuing a relationship with God. What things do you need to do or change in your life to pursue a stronger relationship with God?

If you are married, we need to remember that since marriage is a picture of the Gospel, we shouldn't be surprised that the Enemy hates marriage. There will be attacks. We have to fight for one-flesh unity. How can you prepare yourselves for the attacks of the Enemy?

Here are two practical thoughts about marriage:

- You will love your spouse best by loving God most. Are you content with your relationship with God?
- Remember that the person you can control in your marriage is you. The place to start is to fix your eyes on Jesus and then strive, with His help, to do what God has called you to do. Are you willing to fulfill your role of loving your wife or trusting your husband?

Husbands love your wives. Wives respect your husband. Those things don't come easy to us. Husbands, what are some ways you can communicate love to your wife? Wives, what are some ways you can communicate respect to your husband.

Additional reading: Revelation 19

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Revelation 21:1-27 "The Church Made New"
