

HUSBANDS PICTURE CHRIST

Ephesians 5.25-33: A Theology of Christ Portrayed in the Husband

Theme: Husbands, love your wives in a way that reflects a proper and biblical theology of Christ's love for His Bride, the Church.

This will be our final message about the marriage relationship.

- We started out by looking at the context and overall theme of the passage, Ephesians 5...
 - ✓ (v18, 21) We are studying one of the results of the filling of the Spirit in our lives: Mutual submission..
 - ✓ (v32) And the passage we are studying is primarily theological: It teaches us about the relationship between Christ and the Church (it's not a "self-help, fix-my-marriage" seminar).
- (v24) With that in mind, we studied a little about the theology of the Church's relationship to Christ as His Bride.
 - ✓ The wife is to reflect this proper and biblical theology, and we saw this aspect in three different marriages in the Old Testament: Adam and Eve; Isaac and Rebekah; and Joseph and Asenath.
 - ✓ Then we looked at how this theology applies to the Church as a whole when we contrasted the Bride of Christ (the true Church) to the strange woman of Proverbs (a picture of today's apostate churches).

The point of this study is found in v32:

- Theology (a proper and biblical understanding of God and His relationship to us) is of primary importance because this theology must inform our marriages so that our marriages reflect the same theology.
- You can read all the self-help books you want, and they may help a bit... But you will not see a true transformation in your marriage (or any other relationship you have with other people) without theology (sound doctrine) being the foundation.
- (2Tim 3.15-17) God uses Scripture (a physical copy of His words you can hold in your hand) to perfect you (transform you), and that perfection process starts (and continues: 2Tim 4.2) with sound doctrine.

So, let's take a look at the sound doctrine found in the theology behind a husband's relationship with his wife...

I. (v25a) The Exhortation for the Husband: Love!

A. Love is a Command

1. The first thing we need to observe in this passage is that love is commanded by God.
2. Therefore, biblical love (the love we see in Christ) is a choice, not an emotion.
 - a) And the choice is a self-sacrificing choice (if we understand how Christ loved us).
 - b) The one who chooses to love the other in this way, does so in spite of how he feels—in spite of the discomfort it will cause him.

B. A Biblical Definition of Love: Luke 10.25-37

1. The parable of the "good" Samaritan provides a definition of love that is easy to understand.
2. The Samaritan "loved" his neighbor by giving of what he had to meet the need of the man left for dead.
 - a) He chose to give of himself: He gave his time and his care.
 - b) He chose to give of what he had: He gave of his wine, his oil, and his money.

- c) And he did so in spite of the animosity that existed between Samaritans and Jews (they hated each other), and in spite of the fact that he wasn't going to gain anything for himself by doing it (quite the opposite: he lost time, wine, oil, and money).
 - d) But, after the Samaritan loved that Jew, I wonder if the Jew "felt" differently toward the Samaritan...
 - And I wonder if men would *choose* to love their wives in this way... if their wives would view them a little bit differently...
3. (1Cor 13.4-7) Charity (love in action) is a choice we make to esteem others better than ourselves, and to sacrifice our comforts for their good.

C. The Biblical Measuring Stick for Love: John 3.16

1. God measures love by sacrifice: How much is given to meet the true needs of others.
2. It's not about feelings ("I just don't *feel* the same love for my wife as I did before...").
3. (Rom 5.6-8) Biblical love sacrifices self to meet the true needs of others.
 - a) The greatest of needs is where love is manifest most: Salvation.
 - b) But God's great love continues to care for us even after that: Sanctification.
 - c) And this is exactly what we see in the theology Paul teaches us in the context of the husband being a picture of Christ: (Eph 5.25-26) The husband is to obey God by choosing to love his wife *as* Christ...

II. (Eph 5.25b-27) The Example for the Husband: Christ

A. The Typology in Marriage: Designed to Picture Christ

1. God has so designed marriage to reflect (picture, illustrate) theology, that you can find picture of Christ in even the most unlikely of marriages...
 - a) Samson, as a husband, is a picture of Christ.
 - b) I bring out this example on purpose: Samson is a fleshly, carnal *mess*... but God has so designed marriage to reflect His relationship to His people that even in Samson we can see elements of a proper and biblical theology of Christ's relationship to His Bride, the Church.
2. Samson is a great picture of Christ in his determination to take a Gentile bride.
 - a) (Jdg 14.1-3) His parents did not understand that determination, but Samson had set his affection on a Gentile.
 - b) (Jdg 14.5-7) As Samson goes to take his Gentile bride, he has to first defeat a roaring lion that opposed him, seeking to destroy and devour him.
 - (1) Notice, too, the reference to the Holy Spirit. There are more references to the Holy Spirit in the story of Samson than of all the other Judges combined.
 - (2) Samson pictures Christ's taking of a Gentile Bride, the Church; and the Church Age is characterized by the Holy Spirit of God (we are unique in that we are the only ones born of the Spirit).
 - (3) Samson, of course, defeated the lion just as Christ defeated Satan.
 - c) (Jdg 14.8-15.2) Samson's Gentile bride proves unworthy of him, which only adds to the picture of the Church, Christ's Bride that God is calling out from among the Gentiles.
 - (1) Samson's Gentile bride allowed the fear of others (Jdg 14.15) and her family (Jdg 15.1-2) to turn her away from him.

- (2) We see much the same thing in Christendom today:
 - (a) Many are ashamed of Christ because of the fear of man.
 - (b) Others refuse to follow Christ because of family (many refuse to leave dead or apostate churches because of family; many refuse to go to the mission field because of family; many refuse to "sell out" for Jesus Christ because their family will think they're weird).
 - d) (Jdg 15.3-5) Samson's fiery vengeance on those who interfered with his calling out of a Gentile bride reflects Christ's fiery vengeance in 2Thessalonians 1.6-8.
- 3. God has so intricately designed marriage to reflect theology (His relationship with His people) that we can see that theology even in the most unlikely of marriages.
 - a) If Samson can picture Christ... why can't we? Well... we can!
 - b) And that is what Paul is teaching us in Ephesians 5.25-27...

B. (v25b) Christ's Sacrificial Love for Our Salvation

- 1. Notice the conjugation of the verbs: "loved" and "gave" (past tense, at one specific point in time).
- 2. The greatest love is manifested in the greatest sacrifice to meet the greatest need: Christ's sacrificing of Himself (all that He was and all that He had—He gave it all) to save us.
- 3. (Luke 22.41-44) Christ died to Himself and His desires (He desired that the cup of God's wrath would pass from Him); He sacrificed His life, His "aspirations," His desires... to submit to the Father and meet our greatest need (God's glory, our good).
 - a) (Php 2.5-8) That is why we can know that love is a choice: Christ chose to obey the Father. He chose to love us.
 - b) (Php 2.3-4) And that is why a husband's choice to love his wife is really a choice to serve her in mutual submission—to esteem her (her good, her welfare, her needs) greater than his desires.
- 4. But, Christ's love for us did not stop with a one-time act (as great as that act was!)

C. (v26-27) Christ's Sanctifying Love for Our Holiness

- 1. Christ's love for us does not stop with our salvation.
 - a) His love is continual as He works, actively and patiently, in our lives making us (His Bride) beautiful and holy.
 - b) Side Note:
 - (1) This is a very good example of why evangelism divorced from edification is not biblical.
 - (2) Biblical discipleship (making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ) involves evangelizing the lost for their salvation and then edifying the saved for their sanctification.
 - (3) That is Christ's desire, and that must be our desire also (if we want to labor with Christ).
 - (4) Those who would evangelize divorced from the local church are not laboring according to God's plan. They chose a path that seems best to them.
- 2. Notice that Christ will not stop working in us until His perfecting work is done: Until we are holy, as He is holy—without spot, wrinkle, or blemish.
 - a) This ought to encourage each and every one of us! Don't doubt the Lord's commitment to you!
 - b) He started the good work in you and He will finish it. Though men fail us (fathers, husbands, pastors, friends), Christ will never leave us or forsake us! He is loving, kind, patient, and longsuffering with His Bride.
 - c) Christ's love for His Bride is unconditional. There is nothing we can do to cause Him to "divorce" us or turn us away. That is His promise. It is not a license for us to just go and sin; rather it should create a profound desire in us to love Him, submit to Him, and follow Him!

3. Christ will sanctify His Bride (He will make her holy for the Day she is to meet Him) through the "washing of water by the Word."
- a) We are saved and redeemed by His blood that He shed for us; and we are then washed continually by the "water" of His Word.
 - b) This should remind us of the Tabernacle and God's design in the Tabernacle to bring lost sinners near to Himself.
 - (1) The sinners were outside the Tabernacle, and God was in the Most Holy Place, separate from sinners.
 - (2) As the sinner approached God, he passed through the "doors" of the Tabernacle (curtains) and came face to face with the brazen altar.
 - (a) There on that altar an innocent sacrifice died in his place and was burnt in the fire.
 - (b) Today, the sinner who wants to draw near to Christ must pass through the narrow "door" of repentance and place his faith and trust in the innocent sacrifice of Christ who died for him on the altar of the cross (suffering there the eternal fires of the wrath of God that each sinner deserves).
 - (3) Then, as the sinner ("washed in the blood") drew closer to God, he came upon the laver of water just outside the "tent" of the Holy Place and Most Holy Place.
 - (a) (Exod 38.8) The laver was like a big bowl, and it was made from the brass mirrors of the women in the congregation.
 - (b) (Exod 30.18) The laver held water for the priest to wash in as he prepared to draw closer to God, going into His presence in the Holy Place or Most Holy Place.
 - (c) Today, as we walk through this world drawing closer to God in Jesus Christ, we get dirty—contact with the world leaves some of the world on us (just like the feet of the man walking from the brazen altar toward the laver of water got dirty from the dust).
 - i) We don't need another blood sacrifice; we just need to wash off the spots and dirt and defilement that gets on us from walking in the world.
 - ii) And that is what the laver of water is for:
 - It's made from brass mirrors, so you can see yourself in it—you can see the dirt that needs a wash.
 - It's full of water so you can wash that dirt off before you draw any closer to God.
 - c) Christ wants His Bride to be washed in the water of the Word.
 - (1) The washing of the water of the Word is what sanctifies us after we are saved by Christ's innocent sacrifice—it is what removes the spots, wrinkles, and blemishes... and perfects us.
 - (2) (Ps 119.9-11) It's through learning and taking heed to God's Word that a saved sinner cleanses his way in this filthy world.
 - (3) (2Cor 11.1-4, 13-15) And that is why (again) that sound doctrine is important! If you don't take doctrine seriously, you will find yourself either without water to wash in... or washing yourself in the filthy water of false teaching (worse off that you were before you washed!).
4. At this point, someone might say, "What does all this have to do with marriage and a husband's responsibility to love his wife?" I say: Everything!

D. The Example for the Husband to Follow is Christ!

1. Christ sacrificed Himself to save you and He continues to work (actively, intimately, and patiently) in your life, through His Word, to sanctify you and make you holy!
2. The way to be the husband you are supposed to be is to follow that theology: Be saved and grow closer to Christ by growing in holiness through Scripture!
 - a) As you do that, God will change you, making you more like Christ.
 - b) And as you become more and more like Christ, you'll love your wife more and more like Christ loves the Church.
 - c) The key to being a good husband is being a faithful and zealous follower of Jesus Christ!
3. But, still... if we need something a little more "down to earth" or "closer to home," God gives us just that...

III. (v28-31) The Easy Application: Do Yourself a Favor!

A. (Prov 21.9, 19) A contentious, nagging wife is very difficult to live with. Amen?

1. It's like a toothache. That nagging pain, though small, affects your whole body!
2. In marriage, husband and wife become one flesh (one body), and so the "toothache" of a strained relationship affects both them!

B. So, God gives us men some practical advice: Take care of your wife like you take care of yourself!

1. Meet her needs, like you meet then needs of your own body (and you do!).
2. Do things that please her, like you do things that please yourself (and you do!).
3. Protect her from harm and hurt, like you protect yourself from harm and hurt (and you do!).
4. Or, ignore her (her needs, her desires, her protection). And she will become that nagging toothache that makes you want to sleep on the roof!

C. The moral of the story is simple: You got a toothache because you didn't take care of your teeth.

1. Your wife nags you like a toothache because you have failed to take care of her like you should have. (Obviously you failed along the way somewhere because you would never have married a woman that nags you to the point of insanity. Right?)
2. Think back to the parable of the "good" Samaritan...
 - a) After that Samaritan loved on that Jew, meeting his needs and sacrificially caring for him (even to his own detriment), I doubt that Jew felt very much like nagging on him.
 - b) That Jew was probably pretty taken aback... quite grateful... and maybe even kind toward him.
 - c) Go thou and do likewise with your wife.

Conclusion: Ephesians 5.32-33

(v33) Yes, there are elements of "self-help" advice in this passage (practical advice we should follow).

(v32) However, there is a much higher calling in marriage.

- And the key to making a marriage "work" and "be successful" and maybe even enjoyable... is to set your affection on that higher calling and strive toward it.
- And that means, that they key to marriage is faith (biblical faith, based in Scripture).
- We need to draw close to God and learn Christ so that we can follow Him.
 - ✓ As husbands do that, we will become more and more like Christ as He conforms us to His image.
 - ✓ As wives do that, they will become more and more like the Church in her relation to Christ.

The root of all our problems is sin... and the root of sin is selfishness.

- God calls us to repent of that—He calls us to mutual submission (v21). We are to have the mind of Christ and esteem others better than ourselves (place their needs before our comfort).
- That is only possible through the filling of the Spirit (v18)—His control and leading in our lives through Scripture.
 - ✓ We need to learn Christ by learning Scripture (theology).
 - ✓ That theology needs to inform our relationships (marriages).
 - ✓ Then we can choose to relate with one another biblically so that our relationships reflect proper and biblical theology (so they are Christ-like!).
- Right relationships (marriages), therefore, must begin with sound doctrine (right theology).
 - ✓ And then those relationships become godly when we willingly submit to that doctrine and obey the Lord so that we each "play the part" in the picture God wants to portray to the world: His Son!

Learn Scripture... Learn Christ... submit to Him and obey His Word...

In that we find God's glory, and in that we find our greatest joy!