

16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
September 16<sup>th</sup> 2018  
Pastor Matthew Ude

**Ephesians 5:22-33** <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought to love their own 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 the Lord *does* the church. <sup>30</sup> For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. <sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> 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.

### The Mystery of Christ Revealed in Your Marriage

#### Review from last week:

**Eph 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.** Each one of us no matter what position we hold is to submit to each other, putting others first. Paul continues to explain how this is done in marriage. The Wife is to put the husband first by honoring him. The husband is to put the wife first by loving her.

Marriage is NOT two people who love each other. Instead it is an earthly sacrament, in which God gives earthly blessings.

The ideal of marriage is a revealing of the truth of Christ and the Church. Our rather pitiful sin filled marriages are unfortunately seldom a reflection of Christ and His love for us. But we would all like to have a spouse who forgives every time we mess up, as Christ daily forgives us. We would all like a spouse who loves us enough that they would be willing to die for us, as Christ loved us and died for us.

#### Further exploration of Verse 31:

The essence of marriage is not two people who love each other. Instead the essence of marriage is this that it is an earthly sacrament in which God gives us earthly blessings. And the essence of that sacrament is found in verse 31. Here we find four main points

A man and his wife, that is one one man, one woman. You can't substitute any two or more people you like. Just like you can't substitute coke for wine and expect that you will still have the sacrament of communion. So you can't substitute here and expect that you will still have God's blessing. We talked about this extensively last week.

**LEAVE** – The first step in the sacrament of marriage is that we leave behind the old family and dedicate ourselves to the new.

Notice how right away this is a reflection of Christ, who left his father in heaven for us.

Also note that the implication here is that prior to marriage you are dedicated to your parents. But that's a discussion for when we get to chapter 6 of Ephesians.

When God says leave he means that we should recognize a new priority in our life. The old family tie is not entirely broken but it is superseded. The spouse and the new family now comes first. This may seem like a small thing but it can be a very hard thing to do. Up until the time of our marriage, our family especially our parents have been the one and only family we have ever known. They have been our support, even our identity. Now we are supposed to let that go and trust this relatively new relationship and person.

As always there are two dangers here.

**One that we run away.** We are eager to get away from our parents. We are eager to begin our adult life. We might see marriage as a way to accomplish that and rush into it before we are ready.

**Two that we keep running back.** If we have a problem our first reaction should be to share it with our spouse. Unfortunately all too often our first reaction is often to share it with anybody but our spouse. Sometimes we do this because we want our spouse to think of us as perfect. But we are not perfect, and it is often in the sharing of our imperfections, our failures, our problems that we are able to grow together. Spouses who do not share their problems miss some of the best opportunities to grow together.

In this we not only have to warn the couple but the parents as well. Parents who are constantly interfering in their children's marriages can cause big problems. So it's not only the children who have to let go but the parents as well.

**JOINED** – The second step in the sacrament of marriage is a commitment to one another unto death under God and before one another.

This is a point that gave me unlimited headaches in Africa, because the African's assumed that what I meant was that they had to do it in a church with a pastor or it wasn't a real marriage. They would insist that they couldn't do it because they didn't have enough money for a church

wedding. I don't care if you do it under a tree in the wilderness and your father is the officiate and no one else is there. What's important is that you make the pledge out loud to one another, recognizing that and asking God to be present as a witness to your pledge. And at least one witness. In other words a public oath before God and man.

Be joined to one another begins with your public oath before God and one another but continues when you daily commit yourselves to one another and no one else. In this also Christ is revealed in our marriage.

For when we daily commit ourselves to one another we are providing our spouse with everything they need emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually, and by so doing we are allowing them to remain pure and undefiled by the world. When we fail to be the spouse that we should be we are opening the door to temptation. Instead of sanctifying our spouse by our actions as Christ sanctified us, we are leading them into temptation.

This is a great responsibility, and so we pray forgive us Lord for we have not done this.

Again there are two dangers. One that we demand more than our spouse is able to give, or that we fail to give of our time and energy to our spouse.

**BECOME ONE FLESH** – The third step of the sacrament of marriage is that God will bless and join together these two as one. This is not something that we can do, but a promise that the Lord has given to us, that he will accomplish by his good great will. This work of His is begun on the day of your wedding and continues as he daily blesses you and causes you to grow ever more and more together, and through all the blessings that he gives to your marriage including children if that is His will for you.

### **The Roles**

This oneness grows as each of the two sacrifice for each other, showing the mystery of Christ in their life.

The sacrifice of the wife is primarily that she honors her husband. This does not mean blind obedience to everything he says and does. The wife is a helper comparable that means being honest with your husband about your needs, desires, feelings, problems etc. It even means telling your husband I think this is the best way of doing such and such a thing. Giving your advice and thoughts is part of honoring your husband.

The sacrifice of the husband is primarily in loving your wife. This means using your authority as head of the house to do what is best for your wife and children, putting their needs ahead of yours. As Christ put our needs ahead of his comfort and came down from earth "to serve and not to be served."

In this way we are to sanctify one another, yet this sanctification is incomplete. Thus we turn to Christ who did what we could not do and sanctified us by the washing of water in baptism and by His blood.

**Amen**