

Sermon Notes & References
"The Wedding Walk"
Ephesians 5:21-33
November 9, 2008

- A. Introduction – connection of text to Genesis 2:15-25^A
- B. From ‘The Walk of Wisdom’ to ‘The Wedding Walk’ 5:21
 - 1. points back to ...
 - 2. points ahead to (introduces) ...
 - 3. those addressed in this passage are ...
- C. How Christian Subjection Applies to Wives 5:22-24
 - 1. Headship is defined by ...^B
 - 2. The Christian husband possesses ...^C
 - 3. The submission of the Christian wife is an act of ...
 - a. before God she is ...^D

- D. How Christian Subjection Applies to Husbands 5:25-29
 - 1. His model of submission is the love of ...
 - a. this love is S_____^E
 - b. this love is P_____^F
 - 2. The husband’s submission is expressed in terms of ...
 - a. how does the model apply?
 - b. how is the model made understandable to us?^G
- E. The Nature of Marriage 5:30-32
 - 1. where was marriage formulated? ... by whom?
 - 2. what does Christian marriage point forward to?
 - 3. what should Christian marriage be to the world?
- F. Paul’s Summation & Conclusion 5:33
 - 1. how does this apply to me?

^A Matthew 19:10
^B Ephesians 4:15-16
^C 1 Corinthians 11:3-12, 1 Timothy 2:11-13
^D Genesis 1:26-27, Galatians 3:28

^E John 8:36
^F 1 John 1:7
^G Ephesians 3:19

—{1}. **Ephesians 5:21-33** **The Wedding Walk**

A. Introduction

1. this morning I want to talk about what happens after the Wedding March is played and the couple dash joyfully down the aisle to the flashing of cameras and the hail of confetti
 - a. that is when married life begins in earnest
 - b. and this has been a subject of much humour, some of it quite grim and some very light-hearted
 - c. It was a Helen Rowland who said, "When a man makes a woman his wife, it's the highest compliment he can pay her, and it's usually the last."—{2}.
 - d. and the evangelist Dwight L. Moody said, "If I wanted to find out whether a man was a Christian, I wouldn't go to his minister. I would go and ask his wife. If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity. What is the use of his talking about salvation for the next life if he has no salvation for this? We want a Christianity that goes into our homes and everyday lives." —{3}.
 - e. so the responsibilities of marriage are weighty: at one point on hearing Jesus' teaching on marriage, 'The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."' (Matthew 19:10)
 - f. which possibly explains the Irish folk song
 - I never will marry
 - I'll take me no wife; (or, I'll be no man's wife)
 - I intend to stay single
 - For the rest of my life.

2. this feeling has led to what is sometimes termed, 'The Battle of the Sexes'—{4}.
 - a. Three guys were together having coffee. Two of them talked about the control they had over their wives; the third sat quietly, saying nothing.
 - b. After a while one of the first two turns to the third and says, "Well, what about you, what sort of control do you have over your wife?"
 - c. The third fellow says, "I'll tell you – just the other night my wife came to me on her hands and knees."
 - d. The first two guys were amazed. "Wow! What happened then?" they asked.

e. The third man took a healthy swallow, sighed and uttered, "She said, 'Get out from under the bed and fight like a man!'"

3. and there is the matter of the sharing of duties:—{5}.

a. A minister who often helped his wife with the housework finally protested when she demanded that he help wash the dishes. "This isn't a man's job," he said.

b. "Yes it is," she said. "Look up II Kings 21:13."

c. This is what he read, "... and I will wipe Jerusalem as a MAN wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down." – I hope Maureen wasn't listening too carefully to that!

4. well, today I want us to look at those duties, at the sharing of responsibility between a husband and a wife, as it is set forth in the inspired words of Scripture: « today we have two readings

a. Genesis 2:15-25

b. Ephesians 5:21-33 »

B. From 'The Walk of Wisdom' to 'The Wedding Walk' 5:21

1. "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

a. this is a transition verse,

(A) a common feature in Paul's letters to the churches

(B) its looks both back and forward

b. topic is being subject to each other, or mutual submission

(A) looking back, it concludes the section on how we are to walk in wisdom, by our mutual submission;

(B) looking forward, it introduces instructions on relationships, applying mutual submission to them;

2. these are

a. the husband -wife, or marriage, relationship

b. the parent-children, or family, relationship

c. the master-servant, or business, relationship

d. and each of these is based on mutual submission of those who hold the Lord Jesus Christ in respect and reverence

- e. today we are looking only at the first of these relationships
- f. these verses are addressed to Christian couples.
 - (A) Without union with Christ, the union of husband and wife must be faulty, marred by sin.
 - (B) Without an understanding and agreement in that spiritual union, the understanding and application of these verses will be likewise marred
 - (1) he versus she; she versus he
 - (2) to the extent that the old nature still is alive and well and living in me, I will fail to realize fully God's plan in marriage for me.
- g. that is why men and women in general do not understand what is being taught here; why it will not, can not fall into the realm of today's popular political correctness

- 3. in 'The Wedding Walk,' we have laid out
 - a. how mutual submission applies to wives (verses 22-24)
 - b. how mutual submission applies to husbands (25-29)
 - c. the underlying nature of marriage (verses 30-32)
 - d. and a summation (verse 33)

C. How Christian Subjection Applies to Wives

5:22-24

- 1. ²² *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Saviour of the body.* ²⁴ *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.* – there are 3 major truths here
 - a. One: Headship is defined by Christ's headship of the church
 - b. Two: The husband possesses such a headship
 - c. Three: The submission of the wife to that headship is an act of spiritual service to the Lord Jesus Christ
- 2. One: Headship is defined by Christ's headship of the church
 - a. let us look back to Ephesians 4: 15-16 to discover what headship really means: ¹⁵ *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,* ¹⁶ *from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of*

each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.'

- b. the fact that Christ is its Head is central to what is taking place in the church
 - (A) the whole body is to grow up into Him – union
 - (B) from Him growth nourishment flows to the whole body
 - c. Christ's headship is authority, yes; it is directive, yes
 - (A) but it is care and nurture for the good of His church
 - (B) Jesus is the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, who has the ultimate oversight in protecting His church
 - d. that is what headship means
3. Two: The Christian husband possesses such a headship
- a. this is stated as a fact: [the husband is the head of the wife](#)
 - b. we will not read them, but note these references where we find this truth elaborated and applied: 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 and 1 Timothy 2:11-13; the teaching in both is based on God's creative act in forming mankind
 - c. we will return to this truth when we look at the nature of marriage in a later section of this passage
 - d. but, for now, it is important to recognize that the headship of the husband is
 - (A) spiritually based in God's creative act
 - (B) it reflects care rather than control
 - (C) it shows responsibility rather than rule
 - (D) its authority is not a tyranny, but a position entrusted by God to whom answer will have to be given
 - (E) and, while the husband cannot approach being the Saviour of the wife in the sense that Christ is of the church, yet the husband's headship is to be sacrificial rather than subjugating (but more on that in a minute)
4. Three: The submission of the wife to that headship is an act of spiritual service to the Lord Jesus Christ
- a. [Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord](#)
 - b. in the male dominated world of that day, where women generally had little or no rights, that this is not addressed to wives in terms of coercion, but as instruction, is that she may follow it of her own free will

- c. this, we read, is to be 'as to the Lord'
 - (A) not small 'I' lord, not the husband as lord and master
 - (B) not 'as', of like quality or intensity as that to Christ
 - (C) but 'as' being part of, her submission to Jesus Christ
- d. so the true submission here is to Jesus Christ but it is shown in the submission to the headship of the husband
- e. finally, submission is not inferiority because in Christ as at creation, man and woman stand as equal before God:
 - (A) as being in His image; ²⁶ ¶ Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)
 - (B) by union with Him: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

D. How Christian Submission Applies to Husbands 5:25-29

1. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does the church*, – in these verses we learn
 - a. One: Jesus Christ is the model for the Husband's submission
 - b. Two: The husband's submission is expressed in terms of love
 - c. Three: This love reflects the fundamental nature of marriage
2. One: Jesus Christ is the model for the Husband's submission
 - a. love is defined, just as headship is defined, by the love that Jesus Christ has for the church
 - (A) it is a sacrificial love – Jesus gave Himself up on behalf of the church – the redeemed people of God

- (1) our adult Bible class study is finding that one aspect of redemption is that there is a price that has to be paid, the ransom, to free the redeemed
 - (2) Jesus Christ paid the ransom for us on the cross so that we might be freed from the tyranny of sin
 - (3) **So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.** (John 8:36)
 - (4) thus, Christ's example of love is a liberating love, one that frees, gives liberty to, His church
- (B) it is a purposeful love – and verses 26 and trace that plan – which is the same for the church corporate as it is for each and every member of the church
- (1) it begins by His '**having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word**' – the washing of regeneration or the new birth
 - (2) it is the blood shed upon the cross that brings cleansing – '**... the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**' (1 John 1:7b)
 - (3) then comes His sanctifying purpose – the '**having**' indicates that the '**cleansing**' precedes but order of the words that the immediate purpose is that the church be sanctified: made holy, set apart as His own people, made special in union with Himself, that God may dwell in them
 - (4) and that the church – and thus its members – may be perfected in every aspect so that at Christ's return, He may present her to Himself as an object of special delight, as His Bride

3. Two: The husband's submission is expressed in terms of love

- a. the love here is the 'agapao' love like that of Jesus Christ; not simply physical love; not merely kinship love
- b. but a sacrificial love – a love that gives without thought of return or repayment – even to the point of death

(A) I am often interested by the length of life of the various writers of our favourite hymns. Fanny Crosby, e.g., lived to about 95. I long ago noted that Philip Bliss, the writer of 'Wonderful Words of Life' and many other hymns. He died at age 38 (our hymn book wrongly indicates 40). But what was the story behind that early death? Leaving his children at home, he and his wife were travelling from Buffalo, N.Y., through Ohio in 1876, when there was a train wreck at Ashtabula. Philp got out first, but went back into the flaming wreckage to attempt to rescue Lucy and never returned. In the wreckage, the evangelist D. W. Whittle found an unfinished hymn, beginning, 'I

know not what awaits me, God kindly veils my eyes.'

(B) but it was with eyes wide open Philip went back into the flames seeking in love to rescue his wife.
c. and a purposeful love

(A) Jean Calvin: 'Husbands ... should not be cruel towards their wives, or think all things they please to be permissible and lawful, for their authority should rather be to a companionship than a kingship'

(B) so we have a love is wife caring and wife nurturing, that she may be all that God would have her to be

(C) a love seeking her sanctification: There is an old Jewish custom in which, when the ring is given, the bridegroom says to the bride, 'Behold, thou art sanctified to me.'^{6} – set apart is a very special and treasured way

(D) a love that starts with chastity before marriage and that continues with fidelity throughout marriage

(E) this is the example given by Christ for His Bride

d. let me interject here a very practical consideration

(A) it's very easy to stereotype the particular abilities of a husband or a wife, like that minister washing dishes

(B) the wise husband will yield to the wife the oversight in those areas where she is the more capable

(C) the wise wife will accept that oversight only when it is given willingly rather usurping it; and, vice-versa

4. Thee: This love reflects the fundamental nature of marriage

a. yes, Christ is our example of love: but can we grasp this?

b. 'and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.' (Ephesians 3:19)

c. so the more practical comparison is given, like the Golden rule, 'love your wife as you love your own self'

d. and this brings us to the very nature of marriage:

E. The Nature of Marriage 5:30-32

1. ³⁰ because 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 shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery

is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

- a. the fundamental nature of marriage was defined at creation by God for the physical and spiritual union that takes place between the husband and the wife
 - (A) this was the passage which we have already read and commented upon; but let me repeat one principle again – this took place in the time of mankind’s innocency – this was God’s plan prior to sin’s entry into our midst; but sin spoiled it
 - (B) yet, Christ by His death has dealt with sin; the Edenic plan is the Christian blueprint of marriage, and,
 - (C) to us in the church, our marriage should mirror and anticipate our ultimate union with Christ as His Bride,
- b. thus the husband’s headship is not cultural as many argue today but foundational – those who deny it usually also deny the created nature of mankind
- c. and Christian marriage, is to be a testimony to the world of the Gospel, a living illustration of salvation, of the church, joyfully submitting and surrendering to its Head, who loves them and cares for them

F. Paul’s summation and conclusion 5:33

- 1. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.
- 2. we have but skirted the passage, yet Paul’s application is so simple, stated in these obvious terms for husband and wife
 - a. but I want to leave a few words for those not yet married
 - (A) young women – wait for that man to whom you willingly submit, not because of physical attraction or glamour, but due to a character of spiritual headship
 - (B) young men – seek to be that model of Jesus Christ in your relationship to women, in purity and gentleness.
 - b. this is the only acceptable basis for Christian marriage

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. Fredericksburg Bible Illustrator Supplements – Kerux illustrations #7759
3. Fredericksburg Bible Illustrator Supplements – Kerux illustration #14257
4. Adapted from Kerux illustrations #5932
5. Pendleton, Winston K., Ed. 'Handbook of Inspirational and Motivational Stories, Anecdotes and Humor' – Kerux illustrations #7761
6. Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11, Zondervan, under Ephesians 5:26