

"WIVES AND HUSBANDS"

Eph. 5:21-30

We have just concluded with the matter of being full and being filled with the Spirit which issues joy. In a variety of ways, and this is contrasted by intoxication for wine. This matter of being full and filled with the Spirit, is something that is constant. It is unto God, and it is in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we voluntarily do this - and so if we are spirit-filled, our lives will be expressing three things. Singing - V. 19. Thanksgiving - V. 20. Submitting - V. 21.

So Paul leaves the idea of the filling of the Spirit to blend it in with a new relationship. And he takes the relationship of the church to do this. He is going to speak to wives and to husbands. And he is going to give a pattern of the same through the church.

Now you must remember that the pattern that Paul spoke of here is one that we need to take heed too. It was the kind of church that Jesus died for. And often we speak of the church, the state, the home, and the school. And there is the idea in the Bible - Matt. 16:18, of building the church upon the rock - as an institution. Now generally speaking, Jesus spoke about the church - and Paul talked about it in terms of the local congregation. This is the only thing that we know really, that Jesus gave himself for the local church. In life, when we have anything to do with the church, it is the local assembly of Christ. Sometimes, in the Bible, it talks in the plural - the churches. The seven churches of Asia, etc. But when Jesus ascended to Heaven, the church was left to His ministry. Now, the church has this ministry to go and to carry on. At Pentecost the gift of the Holy Spirit came, and

it came down upon that local church. It was poured out upon. And now that has moved out into all directions. So the only church that we know much about is the local assembly. The local church - when I was a boy, I went to church in a small white building. Located by the side of the road. There, I was baptized. Now today, I preach in this church - located on this street. This is my life and my heart. I love this church. The walls, and the way it looks. And someday, there may come a day that these walls and this interior maybe changed. I do not know. They may have to be replaced. It is as the (song) writer wrote --

I love Thy kingdom Lord
The church of Thine abode
The church, our blessed Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.

I love Thy church, oh God
Her walls before Thee stand
Dear as the apple of Thine eye
And graven on Thy hand.

In 1950 Dr. Duke McCall went on a preaching mission in the dark places and jungles. He said that people poured out - and they would find a little church dedicated by a missionary, and a little flock made out of mud and thatched. But these dedicated people brought joy and gladness.

Now today, if you want somebody who will go and start a school, start a hospital, and work with people in cultures such as that - where will you find them. You'll have to go to the local church. Christ loved his church and gave himself for

it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it. Now in this passage, Paul is talking about this church. And he is going to say three or four things about it. But he is going to do so in the light of wives and husbands. Let us take about four words - now we may not really complete all of these. The word submission, V.21-24. The word substitute, V. 25. The word sanctifier, V. 26. And the word satisfier, V. 29.

I. SUBMISSION - V. 21-24

We begin with the passage where we left off. (Submitting yourselves one to another. In the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands. As unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife - even as Christ, the head of the church, he is Saviour of the body.) Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ - (so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.) Now in those verses which I have read, we have something of the submission that is taking place. Christ has submitted himself. Now he talked of wives and husbands - and he uses these terms here for this.

If you were asked to name three or four things which constitute the gravest threats to family life - what would you list, what would you include. The worldly concepts of marriage. Godlessness in the home. Or the changing views of morality. Or television.

Elton Trueblood said, of all of the factors, destroying the meaning of the family, he says - our basic failure is really not to live up to the standard - but he says it is our failure to keep the standard clear. We do not keep before us what the household should be doing - and what the family should be doing. So, we discover here - what the role of the wife today is. What is her duty. It is a matter

of submission. What is the principle of compatibility for husbands and wives. Expressed in V. (21). Each one is left responsible. One is not to lord it over the other. Be a ruler with an iron rod. But there is to be submission. Now the submission comes from the others unselfish love. So the submission become voluntary. It is prompted by the husband's unselfish love. So the wife's submission is not something forced upon her by the demands of the husbands - but it is in reference to the love that she receives and is conscious of in that home. And she gladly chose this to the husband who is the leader.

The big question is - who should receive priority in the home. What is the Christian duty. What is actually meant by the word submit. It is possible to fit the woman of today into this pattern. As the Lord, who says, private, peculiar, unique, as Jesus Christ. Now would this submission ruin the democracy of the home. No, there is a difference. Where the leadership of Christ is expressed - V. 23. For you see Christ, and his submission, is not only the head of the church, but he is better than that. He is the Saviour of the church. And that is something that no husband can do for his wife.

Now Paul is speaking here in a day about something that is ideal. Because the Jews had a very low view of women. The Jewish form of prayer in the morning was - the man would pray every morning. He thanked God that he was not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.

But she was looked on as a thing. She had no legal rights. In other words, her husband possessed her. And he could do what he willed. The theory was that the Rabbi's have a saying that marriage was high. And said that every Jew must render his life rather than commit adultery, murder, or idolatry.

Deut. 24:1 - When a man takes a wife and marries her - and if it comes to pass that she find no favor in his sight, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then he could give her a written notice and send her out of (his house) as unclean. Well, the time moved on - they could do more than that. Because when she spoiled a dinner, put too much salt in the food, she walked around with her head uncovered, talked to another man on the street, or was quarrellsome.

But see, the fact was, that the woman had no rights. Unless her husband became a leper. For any cause, and so the man could correctly write this down before a couple of witnesses and the Rabbi. And it was all over.

In the Greek world, the (situation) of prostitution was worse, yet. As one great speaker said, we have concubines for the sake of daily co-habitation. We have wives for the purpose of having children. And to be guardians of the household affairs. So Socrates and some of the others - had a wife just to run his house. Care for his legal children. And he found his pleasure elsewhere in his companionship. So the family unit was really non-existent as that stood.

Still worse, in Roman Republic - it disintegrated to the point that one historian dated the years by the names of their husbands. She told about a woman who had ten husbands. One who had eight husbands in five years. One wrote one time about a woman who was married to her 23rd husband. And she, herself, was his 21st wife. So there is no such thing as fidelity - the matter of submission. And submitting was unknown. So Paul's writing here, - this most readily passes. And he is calling on men and women to a new fidelity. A new purity. A new fellowship in the marriage life. It is a simple fact of history that no one in all the world owes

more to Christ than women. And Paul had some thoughts on marriage. Sometimes we are puzzled at what he wrote. As he wrote in I Cor. 7 - about the matter of avoiding fornication. He was writing to a situation that was alive in that church. Now, we find that Paul here talks about the matter of submission. In this text.

I guess sometimes this text would be hard to apply. I read the other day about a taxi driver in Portsmouth who has his own car and cab and he drives. And he has various experiences. One day he said to a lady, why - he says you look beautiful today. He complimented her. He said the woman promptly gave him a \$5.00 tip. And said, I really needed that. Because when I left home this morning, my husband told me that I looked like a dog.

Story Baby Mink - Man hitched to a Wagon drove to Stockpans - Started leave - Mull Balhed - Not Move Step - " Worked - Ask advice crowd - Build Fire - Took seriously, got wood pile middle - put match to it - Fire reached stomach - get going - inft - Mard for enough get away flames - & the Wagon burned down! Still man

Now even in this modern time - we need to come back once again to the matter of submission. And one day Roland Hill was informed by a friend, about the sudden death of the wife of a minister. And the friend remarked - "I am afraid our dear minister loved his dear wife too much". And the Lord in his wisdom has removed her. What sir, replied Mr. Hill, with his deepest feeling. Can a man love a good wife too much. Impossible sir. Unless he can love her better than Christ loves the church. Husbands love your wives. Even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. This is a pattern that Paul is talking about. Christ was in subjection to the church. And so the wife submits because of the love. Let all things be done in love. If all of our actions toward others - then much more of thy concern toward thy wife. Shall be done in love - thy thoughts should be thoughts of love. Thy looks, should be looks of love. Thy lips like the honeycomb. Should drop nothing but sweetness and love. Thy instructions should be edged with love. Thy - even thy requests should be sweetened with love. The carriage of your life, the conversation towards her, should be but the fruit and demonstration of love.

Oh how did Christ, who was our pattern, love the church. His birth, his life, and his death were but it were a stage. Whereon the hottest love imaginable. From first to last acted its part to the life. It was a known and unknown love.

So, how wonderful it is that we find Paul talking here about a wonderful pattern, of submission. Jesus submitted and was subject to all of these things. So we as believers, willingly submit and subject ourselves. In everything it is clearly pointed out that everything that is in your home relationship is limited to this, submission and love.

II. SUBSTITUTE - V. (25)

Paul says husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

Now here is the husband's (responsibility) brought into this contrast. In the ancient world - among the Jews the wife was little more than a thing - as I have pointed out. And the Greeks confined the women to the household to their own quarters. And did not permit them to eat meals with men. Now Paul is instructed here - a striking contrast. Of all that should take place as a sacrificial substitute. It should be recognized.

What is the role of the husband in the home. Discipline and duty. The supreme duty is to love his wife. The word employed here is more than affection. And just

romance - here it speaks of a higher form of love. A deliberate attitude of the mind. Self-devotion and self-satisfaction. It is in short - the love that makes it a delight. To subject herself to such a husband. Can a husband or wife rightly seek anything for self. Proper consideration for the companion. What changes have taken place in the role of the husband since the writing of Ephesians.

Does v. 25 need to be altered. How the husband is to love his wife is set forth in some significant statements here. Love your wives - go on loving. This is what marriage ought to be. Paul says.

Now as a substitute, he says - Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church. The husband in the same fashion is to do that. Well, the mention of Christ in the church, Paul digresses somewhat, his discussion of marriage. But I think his point is well taken. Because he moves on into which the church is cleansed - and suggests the removal of sin, by the washing of the water of the word which will become our next idea and our next thought.

But the husband must love his wife, as Christ loved his church, and gave himself for that church. Now Christ should not love the church that the church might do things for him. But that he might do things for the church. And that is a wonderful passage. Here, also, is the measure of love. You see, if the wife should submit - the idea is that Christ gave himself. And the husband will do the same in sacrifice. So the submission, the substitute, the sacrificer all has a part.

III. THE SANCTIFIER - V. 26

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word. Now this has to say something about the purifying love - that Christ cleansed and consecrated the church by the washing of water. On the day when each member of the church made his or her confession of faith. Now all of this is tied up in the illustration of marriage. The marriage customs was the Greek bride. Was taken to her marriage. She was bathed in water of a stream which was supposed to be sacred to some God or Goddess. She was cleansed from impurity by the sacred water.

The same idea of baptism - washing with a confession of faith.

Now any love that drags a person down is a false love. Anybody comes to you and loves - like the woman who shows a great deal of affection etc. for a man. Because she wants to get her hand in his pocketbook. Now that love is cheap. Instead of refining character - it is deceit. And it is a love which weakens the moral fiber. And is not the love that he is talking about here.

Paul is talking about a love that is a great cleanser and a purifier of all of life. He says, we ought to be washed in the water of the Word. Now the general reference here has two or three meanings. And I'd like for us to think about these for just a moment. I think it will be good for us. Paul is talking about marriage and he is using the church here. Sanctifying and the cleansing. And the washing. Now, in the Old Testament - there was the big laver in the Tabernacle in the Temple. It was found that here - at this place the priest washed before he entered the sanctuary of God. That is the word that Paul uses here - the laver of the Word. Our Lord washes his church with the laver of the word.

v.27

Take for illustration - the church ordinances. The church ought to be teaching to you, studying them, learning them - and that is to be washed in the laver of the word. Now it is sad that we do not learn what the Bible has to say. And often, some little girl will come along and say Preacher, I would like to have this baby baptized. When he is just a few days old. They do not understand what the Bible teaches. Now thousands of people who do not know what the word of God says, and this is why we ought to bathe in the laver of the Word. The ordinances belong to the church. Matt. 28: 19-20. It says first, go and make Disciples. That is the first thing. The second thing is baptize men. Let them be buried with Christ in the likeness of his death. And the third thing is, to teach them to observe what I command. And that brings in The Lord's Supper.

Another thing, the church needs to be washed in the laver concerning the church support - offering, gifts, money.

In this day and age, there is so much that is carried on in the name of offerings for the Lord's work. And people are made to feel guilty because of this, or that, or the other. It is really astonishing how people try to get support for this cause or that cause.

Now you listen to the radio or T. V. that goes out - and this man will say to you - this vile of oil I have blessed. I have seen it heal the sick. I have known that one leg shorter than the other and is as long as it ought to be. I have seen withered hands straightened out. I have watched cancers, I have seen blind men see. You send me \$12.00 - and I will send you a bottle of the holy ointment. And you put it on wherever you ache. And wherever you hurt - and it will heal you.

Can you imagine raising money for God's work like that.

You listen to another who is trying to raise money for God's work. I'll tell you what I am going to do. I am going to send you a Bible - you send me \$50 and this will be, I guarantee, one of the most beautiful that you ever receive. And that is advertised. You are helping God's work if you'll do this. And do you know what that Bible sells for - about \$9.50. I got one of them in my study. You can get as many as you want for about \$9.50. This Bible has a picture of Jesus on the front of it. And a whole lot of other fancy stuff inside.

~~Ammonia~~ - ~~Metal~~ - ~~yes~~ -

Have you ever heard this one - I have a little prayer cloth. Over which I have prayed. Put it wherever it hurts - it will heal. All you need to do is send me a gift. I'll send you a prayer cloth. And it will make you well.

Now when I hear these things coming over the airways, I just about have to ask God to forgive me for the thoughts that go through my brain. Are we going to bless a vile of oil or a little piece of cloth. Or a thousand other things to finance God's church. Why, no. Christ, also loved the church - gave himself, and washed it in the laver of the Word.

We support the work of God according to the word of God. I Cor. 16:1. As I have given order to the churches of Galacia - even so to you. And the Apostle continues, upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him. On the first day of the week, a proportion of my money is set aside for God. It belongs to God. It does not belong to me. It is not mine. And some of us can give greater, some less, and some smaller.

And some of us are more able to give less - and if we do as God says in his word, we can all share our part in God's will, and God will bless us.

And he says, do this to your church - (through your church.) Now, if a man can give half of his income to the church - that is wonderful. If a man can give 90% and live on the rest. That is great. But, I will settle for God's truth - on the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him. Now that is the truth that I pointed out about Zeke Horton, one of our Deacon's who just passed away. He had such a simple plan - and yet, some people make it so complex. Some people can never understand that here is a man who started believing the Bible. And I imagine when he started out - he was not a tither. But as the years went on and he was convicted, that this was what he needed to do, the first thing when he got his retirement check. Now that check wasn't a whole lot of money. He would get it broken down into money - so that he could fill out for each week of the month, his tithe. And he put it in. And on the first day of the week, he brought that which belonged to God. And the Lord will make you able. And he will press it upon your heart - the purposes and the needs of the kingdom. And Paul said here that he might sanctify and cleanse, our method of giving.

And then, there is a final thing about this. I think this means that every church member is to be washed with the water of the Word.

You know, they were added to the church as they openly gave their hearts to the Lord. The Lord commanded us openly to be a part of the household of faith.

Now I have talked with someone the other day who said, I am a Christian.

But I have never united with any church - I just attend. Now, if I refused them the church - then the church ceases to live for me and for Christ. It does not live apart from my public, open acknowledgement. Oh, here is somebody who says, I can worship God anywhere I am. When I am down at the beach, or up in the mountains. I wouldn't argue with that - but what I would say to you is - that is not the Bible way. From the beginning - there is a public association with the assembly of God's people. It is never otherwise in the New Testament.

We can go to the Old Testament and talk about the Passover and there was openly displayed the blood - those who belonged to God were publicly set apart. And the same way in the New Testament. If you will confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father in Heaven, said Jesus. Matt. 10:32. That is, Rom. 10:9-10, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Lord Jesus, openly, publicly, shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man believed unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Now I do not understand the mysteries of this secret of God. But this is one of the things that is in God's purpose - that openly and publicly we associate ourselves with the house of faith. In Rev. 12 - when they overcame him, the great adversary, by the blood of the lamb. The word of their testimony in V. 11. When a man comes forward and stands before men and angels - something happens in his own heart. Something happens to those who see and hear his profession of faith. The man who publicly believes in Christ, he belongs to the church, and the church is able to grow.

Did you know that when a little child professes faith, in Christ, a lot of people are affected by it. The home is touched. The friends and the neighbors, and God blesses through that testimony.

v. 28 Satisfies

There were two lawyers - one was named Will and the other Tom. And in the town where they lived - there was a Tabernacle put up for a Revival Meeting. One night, down the aisle went the lawyer by the name of Will. He gave his hand to the preacher and his heart to God. And he accepted Christ. Now early the next morning, Will got up to go down to his office, to gether his personal belongings, and move out. And dissolve his partnership. He said in his heart, my partner Tom is bitter. He is a critic of the church. And I can't stand it. I can't stand all those bitter things that he will say about God. And so I am going to move my things out and dissolve. And so he got up early and he went on his way to the office. On his way in the street, he met the last man in the world that he wanted to see. His partner Tom. And Tom said, Will, why are you up so early. Where are you going? And he said this - Tom, last night I found God. I gave my heart to Christ. And Tom, I know how you feel about God and about Christ, and about the church. And about the Lord's people. And I just don't think I can live under your criticism. I got up early, I thought I would get my things out, and dissolve our partnership, this morning.

Tom replied, well, you did not know it - nor did anyone else know it - but I went to the meeting and I stood outside. And I heard the sermon, and I saw you go down the aisle and give your hand to the preacher. And profess your faith in God. And you and I have been partners all of these years. We have always stood side by side. We have been through many cases, trials, and difficulties. Will, when I saw you standing there by yourself last night - it just seemed to me that I ought to be standing by your side. The reason I have come early this morning is, that I thought

maybe you would teach me how to be a Christian. To believe in God and to be saved.
And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.

Now that is what Paul is trying to get across to us in this wonderful passage of Scripture - that here is one who is a great sanctifier. And he washes us with the water of his blood.