

Marriage: A Portrait of Christ

****FOR KEYNOTE****

Ephesians 5:31-33

Ephesians 5:31-32— 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...

What a mystery!!

I would guess that few among us experience substantial joy and intimacy in marriage.

Funeral last year: amazing husband and father...

I look at that marriage and see a picture of Jesus.

We're all working together!!

We strive after this and by the power of the Spirit we seek to be more like Christ.

Ephesians 5:25-33

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, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. 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. ³³ 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.

Many Christians pursue happiness in marriage because they believe God designed marriage to make them happy

- Preoccupation with following Christ to achieve:
 - Abundant life of pleasant, satisfying emotions
 - Fulfilling and enriching opportunities.

Results:

****Christian “joy and peace” confused with worldly goal of “fulfillment”**

****Seeking “fulfillment” rather than the Joy and peace that comes from submitting to Christ in loving obedience.**

This creates an ethic that says that whatever seems to bring happiness is right.

Ephesians 5:21-32

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.

There is a tendency to skip through vs

- It's easy to go to Eph 5 in counseling
- Eph 5 is go-to passage for weddings
- Relationship conferences focus on this passage

- quick details, to-do's and some "don't-do's"
- beautiful reminder and connection to Genesis and God's roles for men & women
- amazingly concise picture of this profoundly complex and important relationship.

Our error is in handling verse 32.

We MUST get this!!

If we miss verse 32 then we miss the point of the whole passage!

We often miss this profound mystery!

We often think the mystery is 2 sinful people becoming one flesh.

Paul says, "I'm talking about Christ and the Church"

The mystery is:

- **The coming together of husband & wife as one is POINTING TO SOMETHING GREATER**
- **Marriage points to Christ coming together with the Church as "One flesh".**
- **We somehow become ONE with God through Christ—marriage is a picture of this!**

Paul is explaining that marriage is a picture of something greater.

We **MUST** get this.

Hebrews 9

Reading the OT...the building of the temple...

- Bore you to DEATH!!
 - Precise measurements...
- Chapter after chapter of details
- Chapter after chapter of specifications

Hebrews 9:23-24

it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²

In talking about the temple, he explains that it's a COPY of something in heaven.

- Why was God so particular about dimensions and materials??
 - Because it is a COPY of something greater!
 - It POINTS TO something greater in heaven!
 - **This is all just a picture—a copy—of something much greater in heaven.**

OT sacrifices...

- Details and Specifics for chapters!

In Hebrews 10:1-4

For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

God's saying, "remember how I had you bring animals to sacrifice?"

It was a PICTURE!!

- **It was a picture of something that was to come.**
- **It was a picture of something GREATER**
- **Sacrificial system was a picture of a GREAT MYSTERY**

All of this pointed to the coming of a PERFECT SACRIFICE

Hundreds of years of blood sacrifices all pointed to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus!

The ONE, FINAL PERFECT sacrifice that would actually TAKE AWAY the guilt of their sin!

The point today is:

- Just like the temple is a little model of something greater in heaven
- Just like the sacrifices which all pointed to a greater sacrifice which is Christ on the cross.

Paul explains that YOUR MARRIAGE...

- This union of a man and woman coming together and becoming one flesh...

...is a picture of something FAR GREATER—God and I will become one!

That Christ and His Church would have this profound unity and become ONE FLESH just like a husband and wife.

We MUST understand that this passage is not just about your marriage...

- It's not about "Happiness in marriage..."
- It's not about "your best life now"
- It's not about "finding Joy" or learning a "love language"

It's about experiencing and displaying a unity that reveals the unity Christ desires with His Church

- 1. This is a profound call to intimacy with each other,**
- 2. A profound call to intimacy with Christ**
- 3. A profound call to expose this intimacy, which is the Gospel, to the world.**

That's why God was so particular about PERFECTION in these things... they imaged greater things!

God demanded SPOTLESS animals for sacrifice.

- Young, healthy, perfect, VALUABLE sacrifices.

WHY??

They pointed to the nature of Christ's sacrifice—IT IS COSTLY!

It was COSTLY to have your sins taken care of

...so God made it a REAL sacrifice for the people.

There came a time when people started bringing crummy animals... 3 legged, 1 eyed sheep...

Malachi 1:10-11¹⁰ "How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "and I will not accept your offerings. ¹¹ But my name is honored by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world they offer sweet incense and pure offerings in

honor of my name. For my name is great among the nations,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

- God says, “don’t bring that into my sanctuary...”
- “Just shut the doors!”

- **WHY DID GOD CARE???**
- **DIDN’T HE SEE HOW HARD LIFE WAS FOR THEM??**
- **WHY??**

Because it was a picture of the COST paid by Jesus Christ on the cross.
Jesus embodied the fullness of a perfect sacrifice!

So when priests brought in 3 legged, diseased creatures, GOD WAS DISGUSTED WITH THEM!! WHY??

Because that paints a HORRIBLE picture of Jesus!

Kids’ Drawings...

SHOW RACE CAR PICTURE

Race cars are expensive, purpose-built equipment!

SHOW FIRE TRUCK PICTURE

Fire trucks—expensive, purpose-built equipment.

- Well-maintained, often inspected, constantly cleaned.

My son’s drawing of a Fire Truck

These images created do not communicate the value and worth of what they represent.

In the same way, if our marriages are supposed to paint a picture of Chris & His church...

- **We can’t afford to have crummy marriages!**
- **We can’t afford to have misshapen wheels and hairy lights.**

Our distorted, disobedient, self-focused, unhealthy marriages paint a DISTORTED picture of Jesus and His love of His people.

- **God isn’t calling you to have a happy marriage so you can have happiness on earth...**
- **God isn’t simply calling you to change some things and create a happy family...**
- **We’re involved in something much bigger here.**

I am supposed to show the world a picture of Jesus Christ by the way that I love my wife.

This is why Paul says in Ephesians 5:25:

“Husbands, love your wives, **just as** Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”

- Literally, “...love your wives EXACTLLY as Christ loves the church...”

As Christians we KNOW how Christ gave Himself and His life up for us.

- That's why we are Christians!
- That's why we worship!
- That's why we know what true love is!

...and that's why we love our wives in this way—to MODEL this love for others.

women complain about this passage:

- I have to submit?!?

Yeah, all men have to do is be Jesus...

But that's what LEADERSHIP looks like.

- Men are told to lead, and then told HOW TO LEAD.
- LEAD LIKE JESUS!
 - Serve, Serve, Serve, Surrender, Listen, Wait, Serve...

Jesus said, "I didn't come to be served but to serve—AND to give my life as a ransom for many."

- Jesus gets on his knees and washes the feet of those He created.
- Jesus fed His people
- Jesus patiently listened to their quarreling and jockeying for position...

**And as He is serving there was NO QUESTION about who was leading.
Jesus was CLEARLY the leader!**

And THIS is how husbands are to lead in their families—as Jesus lead.

This is how ALL CHRISTIANS are to live.

- When you became a believer and were baptized, you declared and demonstrated that YOU DIED TO YOURSELF!
- You died and were risen again in Jesus!
- BAPTISM

This is what Paul is saying of my marriage in Ephesians 5:

- **When I was married I was no longer BILLY**
- **I DIED when I was married.**
- **I became ONE FLESH with Jorai.**
- **I became SUBMITTED to her in action and intention.**

This is what Jesus did!

- He didn't come down from heaven and boss the Church around.
- Jesus came to earth and SERVED the Church!
- Jesus gave Himself up for the church.
- He DIED for the Church.

So husbands work to purify their wives—loving them as Christ loved His bride.

- We are consumed with her holiness!
- My wife's holiness is my life's priority!

Wives submit to and respect their husbands

“What works for US is for her to be the leader.”

- She’s been a believer longer
- Better Christian
- Studies the Bible more...

And it works for US!

This is NOT ABOUT MAKING THINGS WORK!

- **This is about painting a picture of Christ and the Church!**

If life was about making things “work” then OT priests could have chucked the ARK in a barn.
NO!!

They built the temple as a PICTURE of SOMETHING GREATER!!

You don’t have the right to have your wife lead or NO LEADER!!

Paul’s not trying to “make things work!”

Your marriage is supposed to PAINT A PICTURE to the world!!

It’s a picture OF SOMETHING GREATER—A PROFOUND MYSTERY!

This profound mystery is that the CREATOR of the world comes down to earth...

- This Creator LOVES His creation...
- He comes down and SERVES His creation.
- This CREATOR is a SERVANT!!

This is a mystery!

It’s an amazing picture!

A STUNNING picture!

How could the SON OF GOD go through the CROSS FOR ME??

The point of marriage is to display this to the world.

- So if your married, YOU DON’T GET TO PICK YOUR ROLES AT HOME
- God has given you a role in exposing His radical sacrificial love to a lost world.

Men God has given you a leadership role—to love and purify your wife!

You show the world “I lead my family, but I lead like Christ!!”

WHY??

Because you want to paint a picture of Christ to the world!!

This is something bigger than just “getting along” and “keeping peace”

- This is our life’s purpose!
- This is why we exist!

You are alive and married TO PUT JESUS ON DISPLAY FOR THE WORLD TO SEE!

“Wow, he is SO IN LOVE with her!” “He is SO ENAMORED with her!”

- “Does God love ME like that?”
- “Does God love me the way he loves his wife??”

THAT’S the way people should be talking about us.

THAT’S the picture we paint.