

“JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH”

Ephesians 5:21-33 *“Submitting to one another in the fear of God. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 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.”*

I. THE GROOM PAID THE DOWRY

- A. **Genesis 29:18** *“Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, ‘**I will serve you seven years for Rachel** your younger daughter.’”*

Jacob negotiated with Laban to work 7 years in order to marry Rachel.

Genesis 29:27, 30 *“Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years.’ ...And he served with Laban still **another seven years.**”*

After Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Rachel’s sister Leah, a new bargain was struck to work another 7 years, so he paid a dowry of 14 years labor herding sheep.

- B. **1st Samuel 17:23-25** *“As he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the*

*Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. So the men of Israel said, 'Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that **the man who kills him the king** will enrich with great riches, **will give him his daughter**, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel.'*"

King Saul had offered lavish rewards to the Israelite who would slay Goliath including, among other benefits, his own daughter's hand in marriage. In one of the most exhilarating scenes of the Old Testament, the young cheese delivery boy, wearing no armor, slew the champion of Gath with a single stone from his sling.

1st Samuel 18:25-27 *"The king does not desire **any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines**, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.' But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife."*

After David performed his mighty deed, killing Goliath, King Saul had the audacity to alter the arrangement, demanding trophies from the bodies of 100 men. David was so enthused to marry Michal, though, that he not only followed through but also doubled the bounty and returned with 200!

C. Ephesians 5:25 *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself for her.**"*

If working 14 years to have Rachel's hand or killing 201 Philistines to have Michal's seem like high-priced dowries, then how much greater is Christ's love for His bride that He gave **Himself** for her?

D. **Acts 20:28** *“The church of God... He purchased with His own blood.”*

There is no higher bride-price than the blood of the bridegroom and He gave His, not in drops, but in overflow.

E. **Romans 5:6-10** *“When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”*

Jesus died for enemies who did not deserve it.

F. **Isaiah 59:1-2** *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you.”*

Sin is so hideous that God will not even look at it.

Habakkuk 1:13 *“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.”*

The phrases “punching above your weight” and “she’s out of your league” are used to suggest a woman is so fine that the man does not deserve her.

Scripturally speaking, Christ is Beautiful and His bride, the church, we who are saved, were ugly with sin, but nonetheless were blessed with His love.

II. THE BRIDE IS ADORNED

A. **Jeremiah 2:32** *“Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?”*

A bridal gown is a garment a bride will spend months shopping for and spend hundreds, even thousands of dollars to wear it one day. Or, she may make it herself or her mother or grandmother may do so. There is a reality TV show that has aired for decades and hundreds of episodes which is devoted entirely

to choosing a wedding dress. After wearing it once, she will keep it for decades and may pass it down to her daughters or granddaughters.

- B. Revelation 21:2** *“I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

When John beheld in His vision God presenting the bride of Christ, she was adorned for the groom.

- C. Ephesians 5:26-27** *“That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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.”*

It is Jesus Christ who has made the bride presentable, and He has done so through “the washing of water by the word”. This means baptism according to the Scripture. There is no marriage to Christ without this cleansing.

- 1. Acts 22:16** *“Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

Baptism washes sins away!

- 2. 1st Peter 3:21** *“In the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

Baptism is how the cleansing water is applied. Baptism saves us!

- D. 1st Peter 3:3-4** *“Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”*

Just as Christ’s bride, the church, is spiritually adorned, so the godly wife ought to be spiritually adorned, presenting herself gently and quietly, rather than making sure all can see her hairstyle, jewelry, and clothes.

III. THE HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE

- A. **Genesis 2:21-24** *“Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which Jehovah God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*

In the first marriage, God literally made Adam one flesh with Eve. He continues to join husband to wife. Man must perceive his woman as his own flesh and treat her accordingly.

- B. **Ephesians 5:28-31** *“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’”*

The church being Christ’s wife, He sees us who are in the church as His flesh and bones. He is highly protective of His wife, caring for in, surprisingly, a parental way.

1. **Ephesians 6:4** *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but **bring them up** in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

The Greek word for how Christ “nourishes” the church is the same for how fathers are commanded to bring up their children.

2. **1st Thessalonians 2:7** *“We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother **cherishes** her own children.”*

The Greek for how Jesus “cherishes” the church is the same for how mothers care for their children.

3. Christ has parental love for the church, His bride. It is not condescending to women for their husbands to have this tender concern for them.

C. **Colossians 3:19** *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”*

The husband’s love for his wife must be free from hatred and from bitterness, but loving another is more than the absence of malice. There must be selfless devotion.

D. **1st Peter 3:7** *“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

A wife wants to be understood, which is a serious challenge in view of the vast differences between men and women. She also needs to be honored with awareness of her fragility.

IV. THE WIFE SUBMITS TO HER HUSBAND

A. **Ephesians 5:22-24** *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”*

Wives must submit to their husbands, not because the husbands say so, but because Christ says so.

B. **1st Timothy 2:11-14** *“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”*

Women in general are to conduct themselves submissively for two reasons relative to Eve.

1. **Genesis 2:18** *“Jehovah God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a **helper** comparable to him.’”*

First, the order of creation was intentional. The woman was created after the man in order to help him.

2. **Genesis 3:6** *“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. **She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.**”*

Second, the first time woman took the decision-making lead, it brought sin into the world.

3. **1st Corinthians 15:21-22** *“For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”*

Notice that, although it was Eve’s decision-making which brought about the fall, Adam still takes the blame. Men must lead since we are ultimately responsible.

- C. **Ephesians 5:33** *“Let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she **respects** her husband.”*

While it is love, more than anything else, which a man owes his woman, what she owes him is respect. She also owes him love, but that is only mentioned once in the New Testament (**Titus 2:4**). Far more emphasis is placed on the fact that she must obey him (**Titus 2:5**) and she must submit to him (**Colossians 3:18**; **1st Peter 3:5**).

- D. **Colossians 1:18** *“He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the **preeminence.**”*

When the bride submits to her husband, when the body submits to the head, when the church lets Christ be preeminent, then the church will quit changing

things about salvation, about worship, about the mission of the church and simply yield.

V. SUBMISSION IS MUTUAL

A. **Ephesians 5:21** *“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”*

While submission is enjoined upon the wife, and women in general, throughout Scripture, men are not exempt from submission.

B. **Mark 10:42-45** *“You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

In giving Himself for His bride, Jesus practiced submission. He has all authority in heaven and on earth, He is King of kings, He is Lord of lords, He is Prince, He is the only Potentate, He possesses preeminence; yet, He came to serve. Men must learn to lead their wives as servants!

CONCLUSION

A. **2nd Corinthians 11:2** *“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*

If you are part of the bride of Christ, give no reason to arouse jealousy. Be spiritually chaste for Him.

B. **Acts 2:41, 47** *“Those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*

If you are not yet in the church, why do you delay?