

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on March 24, 2019:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 13 (Ephesians 5:21-33)
Husbands, Wives, and the Church"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that Paul places much more emphasis on the loving behavior of a husband than he does the submission of the wife.]

Notes

Introduction:

- So, today, we're going to address the topic of husbands and wives and the church.
- Many have taken this passage, we're going to read today, out of context.
- But hopefully, by the end of this message, we will have set the right tone and understanding of Paul was saying here.
- But, first let's recap what we looked at in last week's message.

Recapping Transforming Life Lessons from last week (Ephesians 5:6-21):

1. Believers shouldn't associate with those who knowingly wish to cause deception.
2. Believers are to walk in the Light as children of Light, and reflect fruits of the Light.
3. Believers are to continually learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
4. Believers aren't to participate in or speak of unfruitful deeds of darkness.
5. Believers are to continually let the light of Jesus shine on them.
6. Believers are to carefully walk as wise and make the most of their time.
7. Believers aren't to be foolish but seek to understand the will of the Lord.
8. Believers aren't to be drunk with wine but filled with the Holy Spirit.
9. Believers are to speak in uplifting ways to each other through psalms and song.
10. Believers are to continually show gratitude by giving thanks to God.
11. Believers are to be subject to one another.

Beginning our Time In Rhyme:

*Husbands and wives
are to live their lives in Love,*

*Just as Jesus does his Church –
a metaphor from Above.
Then, two shall become One,
just as the Father, Spirit, and Son.*

Pattern of Father, Son and Spirit:

- Now as we put these thoughts into the forefront of our mind while we read this passage, there's no way we will have negative thoughts about women that others have portrayed with these verses.
- When Paul took this passage, that "two shall become one" out of Genesis, he was saying that this was a reflection of the Father, Son and Spirit.
- And the Greeks call this relationship a perichoretic relationship where the Father, Son and Spirit have this interdependent love for each other and have this interdependent submission to each other out of love, have set the tone and the standard for the church today.
- And Paul tells us that marriage is simply a reflection of that same love.
- The reason people got so far off with this passage is because it was taken out of context.
- Now Paul uses only 3 verses telling wives to submit to their husbands.
- But he uses 9 verses instructing husbands how to love their wives.
- So there are 3 times as much instruction to the men as husbands as there is to the women as wives.
- That, at least, should cause us to pause and rethink what we might have thought about this passage in the past.
- Paul was not limiting women and wives, but, in fact, he was actually freeing them because in the culture of that day, it had become a de-humanized state of affairs.

The culture in Paul's day:

- William Barclay, in his commentary on Ephesians, gives us some context about what the culture was like at that time.

The Jews had a low view of women. In the Jewish form of morning prayer there was a sentence in which a Jewish man gave thanks that God had not made him "a Gentile, a slave or a woman."

In Jewish law a woman was not a person, but a thing. She had no legal rights whatsoever; she was absolutely in her husband's possession to do with as he willed.

The situation was worse in the Greek world. The whole Greek way of life made companionship between man and wife next to impossible. The Greek expected his wife to run his home, to care of his legitimate children, but he found his pleasure and his companionship elsewhere.

In Greece, home and family life were near to being extinct and fidelity was completely non-existent.

In Rome, the matter was still worse. The degeneracy of Rome was tragic. But it is not too much to say that the whole atmosphere was adulterous. The marriage bond was on the way to complete breakdown.

- So, when you place this passage in that context, it's truly amazing.
- We need to remember that in the first 3 chapters of Ephesians, Paul lays out the doctrinal position that now Jesus has created a new mankind, which was represented by His church.
- Then in chapters 4 and 5, Paul shows that the church was to live out of the context and reflect both unity and purity.
- And out of this relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit, Paul then goes on to tell us and give us some practical advice for households.
- The typical household of that day consisted of husbands, wives, children and sometime even slaves.
- Paul shows how husbands, wives and children are to act as this "new humanity" and to act out of that loving perichoretic relationship that the Father, Son and Spirit has.
- So, by virtue of the context of this letter itself and understanding the culture of that day, it should set us on the right path and the right tone of what we are to learn from these verses.

Authority and Submission (Verse 21):

- So when Paul says, "Wives are to submit to their husbands", it's not a matter of subjectivity, it's not a matter of blind obedience, because the authority given to husbands comes from God.
- But if the husband, who has this God-given authority, is not living out this love and this appreciation and respect for his wife, then there's no authority given in Scripture that the wife has to "submit to that."
- So, this is not a formula for guys to have their way in this world without proper attitude.
- Paul is not giving license for husbands to misuse their authority.

Ephesians 5:21 (NASB), and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

- This is not only about husbands and wives, but this is also about the church.
- Now the word "submission", while not being very popular today, is a spiritual discipline.
- And in God's economy, there is nothing wrong with submission when done properly.
- In fact, Paul encourages the church, through its unity and purity, to be subject to one another.
- We should be yielded to one another out of respect and out of concern for one another.

Ephesians 5:21 (Mirror), Inspired by the selfless consideration you witnessed in Christ, show perfect courtesy to one another.

- That is such a beautiful way of stating this verse.
- Here's your definition of submission.
- So, how should the church be acting towards one another? Nice!

The duty of wives (Verses 22-24):

- Creation
- Redemption in the context of marriage.

Ephesians 5:22 (NASB), Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

- In May of this year, pastor Craig has been married to his wife for 33 years.
- Now, when things weren't going exactly his way, he would jokingly tell Nan, "You are supposed to be subject to me."

23) (NASB), For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24) But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:22 (Mirror), Wives give yourselves fully to your husbands as you would to the Lord. 23) In the same way that Christ gives salvation, security and completeness to the church as the head does to the body, the husband is all of that to his wife.

- This really shows that the husband has the greater challenge.
- If the word for wives is "submission" then the word for husbands is "love."
- And if husbands are showing the kind of love that Christ showed for His church, then this submission or selfless consideration, or mutual respect will not be a hard thing to do.

24) (Mirror) The church enjoys the full advantage of the complete package of salvation by yielding themselves fully to Christ; even so the wife enjoys every benefit her husband represents in her abandonment to him.

- Can we see how God wanted their perichoretic relationship between Father, Son and Spirit extended to all of humanity?
- That's why God the Father put His plan of salvation in play, and the Son carried it out through the Incarnation, and then the Holy Spirit illuminates not-yet-believers to show them this kind of relationship that we are to have with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- And marriage, in this case, is what God uses as a way to illustrate that "the two shall become one" which reflects their love relationship.
- So, there's no room, whatsoever, for abuse or misuse of this relationship not just between husbands and wives, but between church members as well.

The duty of husbands (Verses 25-33):

- The husband is to love his wife as Jesus loves His church.
- The husband is to love his wife as his own body.

Ephesians 5:25 (NASB), 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,

- Is there any question about how husbands should treat wives, when we're talking about Christ, the head of the church, loves the church and sanctified her?
- And as part of the church, we'll see that we are stainless, spotless, forgiven, redeemed and reconciled.
- There is nothing through God's eyes, as He sees the church through Jesus, does He see anything improper, because of what Jesus has done for the church.
- Scripture tells us that Jesus, when He comes back, will marry His bride, the church. (Rev. 19:7)

27) (NASB), 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.

- Now, you – the church – do you considered yourself “holy and blameless”?
- God tells us that we, as the church, are holy and blameless, sanctified and cleansed, no matter what kind of issues are going on in our lives right now, or what kind of issues we've had in the past.
- Now God tells husbands that is how they are to love their wives by His example of how He loves us.
- We are loved, we are redeemed, we are holy, we are blameless, we are spotless, we are the beloved children of the Father, Son and Spirit and nothing will ever change that.

28) (NASB), 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.

- Yes, Christ “nourishes and cherishes,” or as the Mirror Bible says “pampers” the church, meaning us, as the body of Christ.

31) (NASB), 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.

- So here, Paul takes a verse out of Genesis and says this is a reflection of Jesus and the church.
- Likewise, Paul takes this marriage relationship to a new high.

33) (NASB), 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.

Ephesians 5:25 (Mirror), The husband loving his wife pictures the parallel of Christ loving the church completely, and his unreserved giving of himself to us. 26) Christ is the voice of God's language, immersed in this conversation, his love words bathe us and remove from us every stain of sin.

- Did we get that – “every stain of sin” has been removed by virtue of the fact that the Father loves us and has bathed us as Paul is making reference to both baptism and the bridal bath that was the custom of the day.

27) (Mirror), This intimate language represents the church to himself, to his delightful approval without any distraction or reminder of a blemished past; no wrinkle or scar of sin's abuse remains; she stands before him in immaculate innocence.

- That's the church; that's you; that's me; that's us in this relationship we have with God.

28) (Mirror), but the most valuable thing a man can do to himself is to love his wife. 29) Consider how abnormal it would be for a man to abhor and detest his own body; the opposite is true! You would much rather pamper and fuss over your bodies. Now get the message, you are the body of Christ; he does not merely tolerate you politely, he delights himself in you! He wants to pamper you and take good care of you!

- God doesn't merely tolerate us, but rather He delights in us – please let that sink in.
- The Father, Son and Spirit delight in every one of us.
- God cannot love us more; He cannot embrace us more; He cannot pamper us more.

30) (Mirror), We are his flesh and bone body; bearing his image and likeness. We give tangible expression of him. 31), Marriage reflects this union: a man would separate himself from his own parents to be glued to his wife; thus two separate people are now merged into one new identity.

32) (Mirror), The secret of a successful marriage is reflected in this inseparable union between Christ and the church, as God's redeemed image and likeness in mankind. 33), In conclusion then, no one has any excuse to love his wife less than what he loves himself; at the same time every wife is now free and fully empowered to honor her husband in the same context and devotion as the church would respond to the love initiative of Christ.

- Is there anything in that passage that isn't just beautiful?
- One of our members, Hazel, made a comment about how tough it was to a woman in our denomination in the past, but now things have so wonderfully changed.
- Now whether we're married or not married, it doesn't matter because this unity and submission that Paul is explaining applies to everyone in the church.

Conclusion:

- In his concluding remarks, pastor Craig told us what rhyming words he would like to have on his tombstone: "You know where I remain – can't wait to see you again."
- Pastor Craig is thinking about a project where he would take all the New Testament passages and turn their essence into rhymes.
- So, then he concluded today's message in rhyme asked everyone to say this together:

*Husbands and wives
are to live their lives in Love,
Just as Jesus does his Church –
a metaphor from Above.
Then, two shall become One,
just as the Father, Spirit, and Son.*

Closing prayer