

Series: Ephesians

Title: Husbands Love Your Wives

Text: Ephesians 5: 25-33

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Ephesians 5: 25: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28: So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29: For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33: Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

As we see from verse 32, the focus of the things spoken here is concerning Christ and the church. The husband and wife is patterned after Christ, and his bride, the church—"For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." (Isa 54:5) God made husband and wife after the pattern of Christ and his bride, the church.

In our text, each member of Christ's bride, the church, learn how Christ loves us. Also, by seeing how Christ loves his church, husbands learn our responsibility to love our wives—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

CHRIST LOVES HIS BRIDE

First, Christ loves his bride. In verses 23-24, we see, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." There have been husbands who use this to demand their wife be in subjection to them. Yet, when the husband is taught how to be head of his bride, even as Christ is Head of the church, it is not as a tyrant, making harsh demands of his bride, but it is in love, even as Christ loved the church.

Christ loves his bride for she is his own body. From before the foundation of the world, Christ's bride, every member of his church in particular, has been mysteriously one with Christ as members of Christ's own body—"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph 5: 28-30) Every member of Christ's church—every individual believer—is one with Christ as members of Christ's own body, of his flesh and of his bones. We are "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph 1: 22)

Romans 12: 4: For as we have many members in one body,...5: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Therefore, Christ loves each member, each individual believer, nourishing and cherishing his church, as an extension of himself, of his own body, his own flesh and his own bones. When God made a wife for the first man, and ordained the office of husband and wife, God patterned their union after Christ and his bride.

In fact, God gave us a great spiritual lesson in the first creation. He made every beast, even the first man, out of the ground—"And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air..." (Gen 2: 19) So it is that by our first birth every sinner is of Adam, of the earth, of the cursed ground. But typifying that Christ's bride is made by Christ, God made the first woman out of the first man.

Genesis 2: 21: And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22: And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23: 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. 24: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

In our text, the Holy Spirit declares this was typical of Christ. He declares that the reason why a husband shall leave father and mother and be joined with his wife is patterned after Christ and his bride. He quotes from Genesis, applying it to Christ and the church—"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband." (Eph 5: 30-33)

Truly, it is Christ and his bride who are one flesh—far more than a husband and wife—"I speak concerning Christ and the church." "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband." So we see the way in which Christ rules his bride, as head over her, is by loving her as his own body. So a husband is to be head over his wife by loving her "even as himself."

CHRIST LOVES HIS BRIDE ONLY

Secondly, Christ loves his bride only, exclusively—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church..."(Eph 5: 25) Does the text say, "Husbands, love your wives and also love all wives?" No. it says, "Husbands, love YOUR wives." The husband is to love his one wife only. This, too, was patterned after Christ to glorify Christ—"Husbands, love YOUR wives, even as Christ also loved THE church, and gave himself FOR IT." (Eph 5: 25)

If Christ love was not particular for his bride alone, but instead Christ love was divided between the false church and his true bride, between all sinners and those chosen of God, then to tell a husband "love your wife, even as Christ loved the church" would be to teach a husband to be unfaithful to his wife. But following the pattern of Christ and his bride, we are told, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." (1 Cor 6: 15) Then he says, "*to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." (1 Cor 7: 2) It is because Christ only has one bride and only loves his one bride, which is "the church", which is each individual person who God chose in Christ.

Ephesians 1: 1: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:...3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Christ's bride is his body—who dwells in Christ and in whom he dwells in Spirit.

Ephesians 2: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Christ's bride are those whose names were written in the book of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world—the book of life. (Rev 13: 8; 21: 27) His bride is the church that Paul prayed might know his love for her.

Ephesians 3: 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19:

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

It is this one bride, the church, made up of each elect member in particular, given to him of the Father, that Christ loved and gave himself for.

What about John 3: 16? Does our text contradict that verse? Our text says, “Christ loved the church” and John 3: 16 says, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The world God loved and the church God’s Son loved are the same. Christ was speaking to a Jew who thought Christ’s elect bride was made up only of Abraham’s natural descendants in political Israel so Christ was declaring that God’s elect are his church scattered throughout the world. But Christ loved and gave himself for his church, not for every sinner in the world, else every sinner in the world would be justified and called to faith in Christ because justification and faith is of Christ and Christ does not fail. We will see that in our text. In John 17, Christ interceded for the church he loves in the world, but as we see, it is not every sinner in the world.

John 17: 1: These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him...6: I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word...9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine...20: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

We preach this truth, not to be offensive, but because the word of God declares it. We want Christ to have the glory which goes to him for successfully accomplishing redemption and regeneration for all those for whom he died. When Christ walked this earth, Christ’s love was not toward the Pharisee’s or Sadducee’s or Nicolatains who were not his elect church. Christ’s love was manifest toward his people by calling them out of the world, out from the harlot of religion. Those he loved, he made willing to believe on him and unite with him and his true bride, the church. But concerning the harlot of self-righteous Pharisees, Christ commanded his church, “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Mt 15: 14)

The love of God is only in Christ Jesus and Christ’s love is only to his bride, the church, chosen and given him of the Father. So first, Christ rules his bride by loving her. Secondly, Christ loves only his one bride, the church. Believer, get this most sure and comforting word: Christ only has eyes for you. His love is to his one bride and only to his bride. Therefore, husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church.

CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF FOR HIS BRIDE

Thirdly, Christ loved his bride by giving himself for her—“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” (Eph 5: 25-26)

Perhaps some husband will say, “My wife is not a believer. Neither of us were believers when we married. Since then the Lord gave me faith but not her. Does this exempt me from loving my bride?” Look to Christ. Christ loved his bride, not because there was something in her to love. In herself she was unrighteous, unholy, and unclean.

Every one of us, each elect child of God who make up Christ’s bride, played the harlot in Adam. Before the law we all were unrighteous. “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom 3: 10) In our flesh, we were unholy. This is why “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor 2: 14) But Christ loved his bride and gave himself for her—“that”—he might make her altogether lovely.

First, Christ gave himself for his bride to justify us and make us righteous before the law of God. Christ gave himself for his bride by leaving his Father and coming down to join himself with his bride in our flesh, being made under the law. He left his father and mother on this earth to be about his Father's business, to take the form of a servant before God his Father, to be joined to his bride. He gave himself to fulfill the law on behalf of his bride, each elect member in particular. Christ gave his body to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. He gave his soul making it an offering for sin for his church. Christ gave his fleshly members to bear all the punishment each spiritual member of his body deserved. He gave his whole self to the teeth of divine justice just for his bride. By giving the law everything it demanded of each of his elect people, Christ made his bride to be dead to our first husband (the law) and our first husband, the law, to be dead unto us. So then now we may be lawfully married unto Christ our eternal Husband.

Romans 7: 1: Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2: For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3: So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5: For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Brethren, this is amazing love! "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" or as our text says, "for his church", his bride. (Jn 15:13) It was not because there was something lovely in his bride.

Romans 5: 8: God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 3: 16: Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Husbands, as we perceive the love of Christ in giving himself for his bride, we ought to lay down our lives for our bride. We ought to do what we can to provide for our house and to manage the affairs of our house. Here is the reason why.

CHRIST SANCTIFIES AND CLEANSSES HIS BRIDE

Next, our text adds something of utmost importance. Christ gave himself for the church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,..." (Eph 5: 26) Our Husband gave himself for his bride, not only to sanctify us by justifying us before the law, but that he might sanctify and cleanse his bride with the gospel by regeneration.

Some have created a false doctrine, teaching that a sinner can be God's elect and redeemed by Christ but never have to hear the gospel or believe on Christ and still they will be saved. Our text abolishes that false doctrine.

Remember, in Christ's high priestly prayer, he said, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (Jn 17: 19) When our text says Christ gave himself for his bride that is when Christ sanctified himself. It does not mean he made himself holy. The spotless Lamb of God did not need to do that. It means he set himself apart to be the spotless Lamb of God. By giving himself on the cross for his bride he accomplished our perfection before the law of God, "For by his one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb 10: 14) He finished that work, that he might finish another work--"that they might also be

sanctified through the truth” or as our text puts it, “That he might sanctify and cleanse [each member of his church] by the washing of water by the word.

Therefore, being satisfied by the glory Christ gave unto him on the cross in justifying his people from our sins, God also highly exalted Christ and gave Christ the glory for which he asked. He raised Christ and made him Head over all things to the church that Christ might have the glory of filling all in all his people. Therefore, it is Christ he might bring to pass in each of his people this washing, through the gospel, for which he prayed. So Christ nourishes and cherishes us by sending us his preacher with his gospel. We saw it in Ephesians 4. As we hear the gospel, Christ prays the Father who sends forth the Holy Spirit who washes us in regeneration.

So by these three things—redemption accomplished by his blood, his high priestly intercession and his glorious power as our resurrected Head—each member of his body is perfected on the cross and shall be sanctified and cleansed through the preaching of the gospel in truth.

Husbands, the number one reason we give ourselves for our bride in our lawful occupations and proper management of our home is to see to it our bride always sits under the sound of Christ’s gospel, hearing these three things: redemption accomplished by his blood, that we have Advocate with the Father, our great High Priest, our Righteousness, who receives his petition, and that all power belongs to our resurrected Head, who shall not fail to set judgment in the heart of his bride even as he settled judgment for her on the cross. That is what our text says, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word.”

CHRIST LOVES HIS BRIDE UNTO THE END

Lastly, Christ loves his bride by loving her unto the end. He did and does all this work of grace, “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph 5: 27)

When Christ quoted our text, he added something, saying, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Mt 19:6) The Holy Spirit assures us no one or no thing shall separate the believer from this union we have in Christ our Husband. It is because Christ gave himself on the cross and Christ cleansed us with the word for this end purpose, “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Will he love us to the end? Will he accomplish this? He accomplished our eternal redemption; he accomplished our cleansing by the word; and he shall accomplish this as well!

Romans 8: 35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36: As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 13: 1:...having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Husbands, may it be so of us and our brides.

Amen!