**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**God’s Vision of Marriage**

**Ephesians 5:31-33**

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David Taylor

 If have your bible turn to Ephesians 5:22-33. We are continuing our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together. As we have said, Ephesians has two sections, chapters one through three describes what *God has done in us* through Christ while chapters four through six call us to *live out what God has done in us*. We begin a new section today on Spirit filled relationships including, marriage, family, and business (5:22-6:9). As we begin looking at the marriage relationship, I felt led to start with the foundation of marriage (5:31-3) which describes God’s vision for marriage so we see the beauty of marriage. My hope and prayer is that by seeing God’s vision as true and beautiful we are motivated by the Spirit to live out the picture of marriage he paints for us in 5:22-33. My big idea is that God created marriage to display to the world Christ’s relationship with the church.

**Passage Overview**

 I want to walk us through 5:22-33 before we focus on 5:31-33. Paul gives three instructions to husbands and wives in the form of commands, each one followed by an analogy that gives us a vision of Christian marriage. The first instruction is to wives (22-24) who are commanded to submit to their husbands *as* the church submits to Christ as their leader. Next, husbands are commanded to love their wives (25), then Paul gives three analogies. First, husbands are to love their wives *as* Christ loves the church (25). Second, husbands are to loves their wives *as* their own bodies (28-30). This leads Paul to his third analogy that I want to focus on today (31-32). God created the marriage relationship, between a husband and a wife as an illustration of Christs’ relationship with the church. Specifically, the one flesh union between husband and wife was created to illustrate the union between Christ and his body, the church. Then sums up his teaching by repeating what God calls spouses to do, husbands love your wives and wives respect your husbands (33). Paul is lifting our eyes from seeing marriage as just about me and us to all about Christ and his church. Marriage is the stage meant to display the epic story of the eternal purpose of God in loving and saving and securing his bride, the church. My desire is that you see this vision as true and best and beautiful and seek God’s grace and his Spirit to live that vision out.

**The Creation of Marriage (31)**

 At the end of his instruction to husbands and wives, Paul draws a conclusion, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh (Eph 5:31). When talking about God’s vision for marriage, Paul goes back to creation. In Genesis God created Eve and gave her to Adam, and then it says, ‘for this reason a man shall leave and cleave.’ The man leaves because he is the leader, the initiator of marriage. Men are the primary leaders for making marriage a stage that displays the gospel to the world and women are to support their husbands in that vision. Husband and wife are created equal but have different roles and the wife’s role does not make her any less significant. In marriage, husband and wife become a union of one flesh. Paul compares this one flesh union to the union of Christ with his body, the church. Christ loves the church because it is his body. In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own body because they are one flesh. This one flesh union is the melding of two lives becoming one flesh, one body. This does not mean that either spouse loses their own identity, themselves in marriage. In marriage, Paul sees a parallel with Christ and the church, husband and wife become one flesh and Christian become one body united to Christ (2 Cor 11:2).

**The Mystery of Marriage (32)**

 This union is then described as a great mystery (32). But he is not talking about the one flesh union in marriage but the union of Christ and the church. The union of Christ with his body is reflected in marriage. When you come to faith, you are united to Christ and become united to his body. And marriage is the stage for the world to see this epic story of Christ united to his his church acted out. Marriage, your marriage, is about the gospel, what Christ did to save his church (5:25). Marriage is meant to reflect the love Christ has for his church by dying to save his church, to sanctify work his church, and to ultimately glorify his church. When God created marriage, he did so with Christ’s relationship to church in mind. So when Christian marriages are divided, devoid of love, respect, etc, it is not only painful and tragic on a human level but it is far more tragic on divine level because it undermines God’s vision for marriage.

**The Responsibilities in Marriage (33)**

 Then he sums up his point (33). However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband (Eph 5:33). Because God’s vision for marriage is to display Christ’s relationship with his church, husbands love your wives; wives respect your husbands leadership.

Response:

* Are you seeking to be filled with the Spirit?
* Is God’s view of marriage beautiful to you?
* Husbands are you loving?
* Wives, are you respecting?
* How is God speaking to you?

**Life Group Questions:**

1. Do you feel desperate for the fullness of the Spirit in your life?
2. How are you seeking to be filled with the Spirit?
3. Is your seeking consistent with your desperation?
4. What is the foundation or vision for Christian marriage?
5. Do you have a struggle with god’s vision for marriage?
6. How are husbands to lead and love their wives?
7. How are wives to respect and submit to their husbands?
8. How is God speaking to you in this message?
9. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
10. How does this message help you in making disciples