**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**A Husband’s Love**

**Ephesians 5:28-33**

September 20, 2020

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We are finishing up chapter five of Ephesians in our series, Brought to Life; Brought Together. We started this section by looking at God’s vision of marriage, to display Christ’s relationship with his church (5:31-32). Then we looked at Paul’s instruction to wives to respect and follow their husband’s leadership in the same way the church submits to Christ’ leadership (5:22-24). And then we looked at Pauls’ instruction to husbands to love their wives in the same way Christ loves the church (5:25-27). Today we look at how the marriage union is designed to reflect/display the church’s union with Christ (5:28-33).

Let me outline the passage before we read it. First, Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as their own bodies and gives an analogy, just as Christ loves the church as his own body (28-30). Then Paul connects his instruction to creation, God’s purpose for marriage, the union of a man and a woman, from the start, was to display God’s purpose in his new creation, the union of Christ and the church (31-32). Finally, he summarizes his teaching on marriage (22-33) with an exhortation that sums everything up, husbands are to love their wives as they love themselves and wives are to respect their husband’s leadership (33) and in this way, their marriage will witness to Christ’s sacrificial love to save and enjoy his bride, the church, for all eternity. Above all, Paul wants to lift our view of marriage from ourselves and view it through the lens of Christ and his church.

Big Idea: God created the marriage union to display Christ’s union with his church.

**A Love that Reflects One Flesh Union (28)**

Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as their own bodies because he who loves his wife loves himself (28). A husband’s example of love is Christ. He gave his life for the good of the church (25-27). Thus, a husband loves by humbly sacrificing to serve his wife for her good. Generalized for all of us, love is humbling ourselves to serve others for their good (see John 13:34-35). Paul strengthens this command with the word should, better translated as ought. Husbands are obligated to love their wives in the way God has determined, not the way they want. Then he gives an analogy, husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies. Paul grounds his instruction in the husband’s self-interest, because he who loves his wife loves himself. He is saying that marriage is a one flesh union and loving your wife is looking out for your own good. When you humble yourself to serve your wife, sacrificially loving her, you are loving yourself because of the one flesh union. That union is so real and vital and close that when a husband loves his wife he loves himself. Spouses are extensions of each other, not that they lose themselves in the other but in a real sense they are spiritually and organically one, united by the covenant of marriage.

**A Union that Reflects Union with Christ (29-30)**

The basis of Paul’s analogy is that we naturally love our own bodies and take care of ourselves (29). God has instilled in us this instinct for self-preservation. Healthy people naturally protect and preserve themselves. When we are hurt, seek to comfort ourselves. When we are injured, we nurture ourselves back to health. And when we are hungry, we feed ourselves.

Then Paul gives another analogy. A husband’s love is now compared to Christ’s love for the church because we are members of his body (29-30). Do you know or remember the account of the apostle Paul’s conversion to Christ (Acts 9:1-19)? Paul was the number one enemy and persecutor of the church. When Jesus confronted him on the road to Damascus, what he say to Paul? Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? The union between Christ and his church is so vital and organic that what you do to the church, you do to him. Union in marriage is rooted in and points to the union between Christ and his church. Your marriage and your desire to be married is to be understood and lived out in light of this union Christ has with his church. If you are married, your marriage is a barometer, a litmus test of your faith in Christ and your following Christ in discipleship. Christ loves the church precisely because she is his body, in union with Him, and so too a husband is to love his wife because she is in union with him.

**From Creation to New Creation (31-33)**

Then Paul grounds his whole argument that the marriage union points to the union of Christ to his church even more deeply to God’s eternal plan in Christ, from God’s original creation to God’s new creation. God created marriage originally to be the blending of two lives into a one flesh union (31) and this is a mystery. But the mystery is not the one flesh union of marriage, though that is a mystery, the mystery is that is the marriage union points to Christ’s union with his church. From the very beginning, God designed the marriage union to reflect the union of Christ and the church. The one flesh union created by the marriage covenant displays the union of Christ to his church, by the new covenant. It is this union with Christ that fuels our spiritual lives. The new covenant is also called an eternal covenant (Heb 13:2) that secures an eternal redemption (Heb 9:12) for us in the consummated new creation.

And finally, Paul concludes with an exhortation which summarizes his teaching on marriage here. Husbands, love your wives as you love yourself and wives, respect your husband’s leadership (33). This love and respect in the context of Christian marriage, is the means by which your marriage will display God’s vision for marriage, to reflect Christ’s love for his church to save her, sanctify her, and glorify her and enjoy her for all eternity.

Response:

* Husbands, how is your love for your wife?
* Wives, respect for husband?
* Are you cultivating your union with Christ?
* How is God speaking to you?

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What does Paul mean when he tells husbands to love their wives as their own bodies?
2. Define a husband love for his wife and generalize definition that for all Christians?
3. How does this command to love call us to rely on Christ?
4. What does marriage as one flesh union mean?
5. What does union with Christ mean?
6. Why does Paul connect marriage to creation and new creation and consummation?
7. What is your biggest struggle in living out this teaching on marriage?
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?