

Title: The Family of God
Text: Ephesians 5: 21-33; 6: 1-4
Date: August 7, 2011
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

We have in our text God's word to each member of the family: to husbands and wives, parents and children. Now, imagine if our text only said this:

Ephesians 5: 22: Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands...25: Husbands, love your wives...6: 1: Children, obey your parents...4: And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath.

You and I know these things are right whether or not we even know or believe God. Natural love could move us to do these things to some degree whether or not we even know or believe God.

Marriage, parenthood and childhood, are like religion, we can have the form, even get some measure of happiness in it. Yet, without the Spirit, without the glory for which it was made, it is only in the letter and we have missed the true joy.

A young couple falls in love. In time he asks her to marry him. Then, they have children. But why? Why does the institution of marriage exist in the earth? Why is there such thing as husbands and wives? Parents and children?

Proposition: God made the institution of marriage—and the family—for the purpose of glorifying CHRIST the Husband in the salvation of his bride, the Church. Christ and his church—his bride—are one. Christ is the Head, his church is his body.

Now, let's read our text again, this time, we will leave out everything and focus only on Christ the Husband and what he has done for his bride

Ephesians 5: 23:...Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24:...the church is subject unto Christ,...25:...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...30: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones...32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Divisions: 1: How does Christ love his bride? 2. How did Christ manifest his love for his bride? 3. A word about these various relationships in the family.

I. HOW DOES CHRIST LOVE HIS BRIDE?

Christ's love for his bride is from everlasting

Genesis 2: 18: And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him....

In old eternity, the LORD God said of Christ--*it is not good that he should be alone*: not good in the promotion of Jehovah's purpose of glorifying his great name in the sovereign salvation of his people, not

good in declaring God's glory in the face of the GodMan, Christ Jesus. Therefore, before the world was made, the LORD God in electing grace gave to his Son a Bride.

Illustration: Us married folks like it when we are asked how long we have been married.

Well, under the personification of wisdom, Christ says, *Proverbs 8: 23: I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was....31: [Then] my delights were with the sons of men.*

Oh, think of that, you who are his dearly beloved bride, our Husband delighted in us from everlasting. We have been married to our Husband from everlasting.

Isaiah 54: 5: 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.

Christ's love for his bride is particular, special, to her alone!

Ephesians 5: 25: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved THE CHURCH...

There would be no parallel between the husband's love to his wife and Christ's love to his bride were it not particular love. Else the passage would be immoral.

Illustration: You wives wouldn't think to highly--if your husband came home saying "I love you, but I love many other wives, too?" No, your husband may be kind to others, but he loves you particularly, especially, preeminently. It is the same with Christ our Husband. He loves the Church—those given him of the Father—particularly.

Christ's love for his bride is unchangeable

When God the Father gave Christ his bride she was holy and without blame before him in love. She was as the *King's daughter all glorious within*. PSALM 45:13. But we played the harlot. By Adam's one transgression we committed adultery. Like Gomer we went after our lovers (Hosea 3). Now we are talking about the sovereign, unchangeable love of God.

Illustration: Think of that kind of betrayal. Adultery is unfaithfulness almost always impossible for us to get over. It ends marriages, usually turns very bitter.

But behold the sovereign, unchangeable love of God in Christ for his bride. When the fullness of time was come...

Hosea 3: 1: Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

II. HOW DID CHRIST MANIFEST HIS LOVE FOR HIS BRIDE?

Ephesians 5: 25: Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;

What will it take to put away her sin?

Christ left his Father and cleaved unto his bride. Christ joined himself with her flesh. Christ took her sin in his own body on the tree being made a curse for us. Christ stood in her place bearing the justice of God for

her. The hell of Satan's fury was unleashed upon him on the cross. All to pay all the debt for the bride he loved--this one who played the harlot

Ephesians 5: 25:...Christ gave himself for [her].

The only payment righteous God would accept—*Christ gave himself—for his bride, his church* (in her place, as her substitute)

Ephesians 5: 26: That HE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

By his one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Christ is the Sacrifice, the Offering, the Firstborn, the Lamb slain. His offering cleansed of all sin, of all defilement, purged from all sin. *By the Word--through truth--*in righteousness, in perfect harmony with holy justice

Ephesians 5: 27: 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.

Do you see how Christ loves his bride? Every child given him of the Father is his own body—his own flesh. He loved his bride as his own flesh, his own body

Ephesians 5: 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 body, of his flesh, and of his bones...32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

You who are born anew by the Spirit of God. You are no more two—but one Spirit. Christ has linked his destiny, his honor, his life, his happiness with yours. You must be in heaven, or else his body will not be complete. This union is so inseparable that we may say with assurance--“Who shall separate us?” What a marriage!

III. NOW A WORD ABOUT THESE EARTHLY RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 5: 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.

Oh, what depth of love and meaning—these relationships take on for the believing wife, the believing husband, the believing parents, the believing sons and daughters.

The wife who has this love of Christ in her heart—who has Christ for her husband—who is a member of Christ's body, his church now knows that Ephesians 5: 22 is not a tiresome duty...“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands” but it is double love—your own husbands, [and] as unto the Lord

Her greatest desire is to submit to Christ in everything. And to her husband who loves her, her chief desire is to honor her Lord by honoring him. Her desire is to—*reverence her husband*—to speak highly of him before his children—*for the Lord's sake*.

The husband who has the love of Christ in his heart—Oh, how far short I fall in loving my bride as Christ loved me! Christ gave himself for me--of his body, of his flesh, of his bones. Christ our Husband has adorned his bride in perfect righteousness--the beauties of holiness._Oh Lord, help me to give myself to lay down my life for your bride—and for this my own—above all else to adorn both with the word of life—the unsearchable riches of Christ. Teach me to lead my house so as to let nothing even appear as if it is more important, much less let anything of this world come between my bride and Christ

For that child who is born of the Spirit of God so as to behold our Everlasting Father, now Ephesian 6: 1 becomes all right:

Ephesians 6: 1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Know this—there may be times when you think your father is provoking you to anger. But to stand with Christ, and not give in to what you want—is great love—is nurturing and dealing merciful with you in the Lord—that you might know the love of Christ—that it might be well with you, that you might have everlasting life!

And when a believer, treats one of Christ's own as we ought not—how it grieves us to the heart—because it is not only dishonoring this one on earth who loves me so much—it is dishonoring to Christ who has done all for me.

How sad *to have any of these earthly ties* yet not have the very one for whose glory they were created! And how sad to be distracted *by these earthly ties* so that we neglect our first Love who alone can settle us and unite us in love.

Illustration: We husbands have to take trips sometimes. Nothing the home changes while we are gone. He is still the Husband and Head, still the Father and for the house to stand it cannot be divided against itself in his absence.

So it is Christ is on a far journey. But nothing has changed. He still, the Husband and Head, still the Father and by his grace working, by his Spirit his house will stand united honoring him until he returns.

And one day Christ our husband shall return to present his bride to himself, and all the children whom the Father has given him. He shall not fail. He shall receive all the glory.

For he shall present his church to himself—*a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy, and without blemish.*

Amen!