

11-6-94

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE A PICTURE OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

Text

Ephesians 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

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.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.

According to Paul one of the earliest mentions of the church is found in Genesis 2:24. After God made Eve and brought her to Adam we read this commentary of this event.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Who said this? I do not think it was Adam, nor Moses... it seems to be God himself who created man and created the woman and created marriage. He now says, for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh. And then Paul by the inspiration of the spirit says this is speaking about Christ and his Church. This being a great mystery, before unknown but now known! Genesis 2:24 is a mysterious prophecy of the ultimate marriage that takes place between Christ and his church.

Let me suggest to you that when God made Adam and Eve he had in mind that someday he would send his Son Jesus Christ into this world to purchase to himself a bride. That bride would be his church.

These are spiritual patterns, sacred patterns. Pictures of a spiritual reality. The spiritual union that is between Christ and those who receive him is the real purpose for God making a physical marriage.

The spiritual union that Adam and God had was illustrated physically when God made Eve and brought her to Adam.

I Corinthians 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

I Corinthians 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Now what is true about what makes a good marriage physical, is based on our spiritual relationship with Christ himself. This is what Ephesians Chapter 5 is all about. Now this morning I want to talk to you about The Mystery of how Marriage Pictures Christ and His Church.

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF MARRAIGE A PICTURE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Eph 5:21-33 Is the passage that is opened to more often than any other in the Bible, to help people who are having marital problems. It is the blue print on how to have a great marriage. This blue print has long ago been abandoned.

Though this passage is talking to husbands and wives about their relationship one to another, at the end of the chapter Paul makes this amazing statement:

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Paul says it is a mystery but what I am writing to you about is not only the marriage but also the Church.

THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY BUT I SPEAK TO YOU NOT ONLY AS TO WHAT GOD'S DESIGN IS FOR THE FAMILY BUT ALSO FOR GOD'S DESIGN FOR HIS CHURCH!

If we take the admonition Paul gives here concerning the marriage and apply these truths to the Church we will have a great Church!

If you take these principles and apply them to a marriage you will have a great marriage.

The Mystery of having a great Church is wrapped up in the same ingredients that we need to make a great marriage. Now is it any wonder that Churches are struggling in this nation of ours. We struggle in the church because we struggle in our marriages. Most people don't know how to make their marriages work and so we don't know how to make the church work. However, more important than having a happy marriage is your spiritual marriage with Christ. Spiritual marriage is eternal, physical marriage is till death do you part.

LET ME GIVE YOU THE GREATEST VIRTUES NECESSARY TO MAKE A MARRIAGE WORK, AND THEN APPLY THESE TO THE CHURCH

I. THIS GREAT MYSTERY INVOLVES SUBMISSION EPH. 5:21-24, READ:

SUBMISSION

Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:23 For 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.

Ephesians 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing.

THE FIRST INGREDIENT NECESSARY TO HAVING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IS THAT OF BIBLICAL SUBMISSION

1. SUBMISSION IN THE MARRIAGE

A. Submitting yourselves one to another:

Everyone should have someone they need to submit to, and everyone has someone that needs to submit to them: Submitting one to another:

Notice, it says, submitting yourselves ONE TO ANOTHER..

A person who did not submit to their God ordained authority will be a person that will lament when they find that those placed under them also will not submit! A rebel does not make a good leader.

These verses talk about wives submitting to their husbands but.... follow all the way through and the first place that submission takes place is in the home:

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

Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

Ephesians 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Everyone has at one time had to be under submission .. as a child..

Everyone will at one time have people who will be under them.. Parent..

Submit one to another in the fear of God Eph 5:21

B. If both the husband and the wife have learned to submit to the authorities God has placed over them, a great marriage will be in the making:

We talk about the wife submitting to the husband, and yes she should, but let me just say that it is as important that the husband submit to his authorities just as the wife is to submit to him. Our text does not just speak to wives when it says submitting yourselves one to another. Notice it says one to another! Submission involves everyone in one way or the other.

Since I am addressing both husbands and wives,
It is not the job of the wife to condemn the husband..

Nor the husband to preach it to the woman in this case each should examine their own lives and applies the principles of submission.

Many times it is the husbands rebellious attitude at work that keeps him from being promoted and excelling as he should, which in turn brings financial pressures, and makes him irritable, grumpy towards his wife, etc.. So his in submission may be the cause of turmoil in the home.

Then the wife finds it difficult to submit to him.....

ANSWER; Everyone needs to learn to submit and have a spirit of submission in the fear of God.

But particularly Paul addressed the wives: because this is the role of the wife in the context of marriage.

In the great Mystery of Christ and His church the wife takes on the role of the church which should completely submit to Christ.

The Church is the bride of Christ and we as Church members need to be submissive to the headship of Christ:

2. SUBMISSION IN THE CHURCH:

The key to a strong Church is wrapped up in a group of people who are willing to submit to the headship of Christ.....

Yet where is Christ? Have you seen him lately:
How do we know what he wants?
How can we submit to an unseen head?

Christ left under shepherds to declare his will
He also left us his Word to know his will..

Jesus told Peter Feed my sheep!
That is what I do, each Saturday night & Wed. I prepare a meal for the Church Christ's sheep.....

The key to a great Marriage is individuals that will submit....

Husband at work.... A Husband who is a rebel he will not excel
Wife in the home... A Wife that is a rebel will strain their marriage
Children to parents... Children that rebel will grieve their parents

CHURCH: The key to a great Church is having members that will submit:
SUBMIT TO THE WORD OF CHRIST:

HOW CAN YOU SUBMIT WHEN YOU ARE NOT THERE TO HEAR THE WORD:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The word Church means assembly, and the greatest form of disrespect to Christ is failure to show up for assembly times:

In fact to fail to assemble is to fail to submit to Christ.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Acts 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

Acts 2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need.

Acts 2:46 **And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,**

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The greatest strain in a marriage is when people don't see each other enough, work schedules and conflicts etc.

Better to have hamburger with a happy family than a steak with a splintered home:

What good is a beautiful building and good preaching, and all the rest if our schedules will not allow for us to assemble together:

If I had a job that was destroying my family I would get a new job.

If I had a job that made it impossible for me to get to church it would be time for me to pray for a new job!

What makes a submissive wife:

- a. She cooks meals and doesn't complain
- b. She waits on her husband
- c. She is there for him and arranges her schedule accordingly
- d. She helps him be successful and sees that as her success

- e. She is willing to be a keeper of the home
- f. She doesn't do these things grudgingly,

WHAT MAKES A SUBMISSIVE CHURCH MEMBER?

- a. They are present at spiritual meal times and don't complain
- b. They serve in a ministry as unto the Lord and not to men
- c. They arrange their schedules around the church not church around their schedules..
- e. They desire to see the cause of Christ prosper through their local Church
- f. They do these things un-grudgingly

Clean the Church unto the Lord

Usher

Sunday School

Bible School

Fellowship dinners

Ministries etc...

SUBMISSION IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE AND A HEALTHY CHURCH..

II. THIS MYSTERY INVOLVES A SACRIFICIAL LOVE READ Eph. 5:25-29

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

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

Ephesians 5:27 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.

Ephesians 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Ephesians 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

1. THE HUSBAND NEEDS TO BE THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF HIS HOME..

Jesus sanctified the church through his teaching .. leading, spiritual perfecting.. guidance..

What is lacking in our homes are spiritual leaders and men who guide their homes according to the teaching of Scripture..

What is lacking these same spiritual men to lead the church..

Every man should emulate Jesus Christ.

2. EVERY MARRIAGE NEEDS A LOVING SACRIFICIAL HUSBAND:

Love as Christ loved:

I 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.

I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus sacrificially gave and sacrificed himself for his church. No greater love can any man have than this.. "That he would lay down his life for his friends... " Jesus gave his life for us.

I had a fellow come to me one time who was having marital problems. His wife despised him because he was cheap. She saw that he put money before his family. So he came to me with a wad of money and wanted to know if I would hold it for him. He was going to take some dollar bills and stuff paper between the bills and make a show to his wife. He was going to go here and say he loved her so much he was willing to burn his money for her. Then he would come back and get his stash from me.

You know your family can see through your hypocrisy! Jesus did not just put on a show for his wife. His love was evident. He gave his all for the church.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Every marriage needs a leader that will sacrifice for the family as well as others,

I Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Your giving and sacrifices should naturally start with your own.

There are some who seem to care more for others than their own.

I had a friend one time who seemed to have such a heart for people and yet he neglected his own family. He cared for others but not his own.. He neglected his wife and did for others but did not do for his own and his own marriage suffered for it and, in time, he lost his wife because of it.

Think about this.. there are a lot of other families out there.. but God gave you one family that you are responsible for. Men, God did not make you responsible for all these other women who are hurting. God made you responsible for your wife and kids first. Then if you can from your surplus help others as God enables you that is good.

In fact if you live right and live godly, God will give you a surplus so you can not only take care of your own family and needs, but you will be able to be a blessing to others.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

This is called natural affection. It is only natural that you care for your own. You should have a special love for your own.

God gives a man one wife.. a man would not be wise to compare his wife with other men's wives he would be a fool to do this. Men don't be surprised if your wife hits you over the head with a frying pan if you say to her why don't you cook like so and so's wife.. or how come you don't look like this lady or that lady. You're an idiot if you do that.

You should not do that with your wife,
You should not do that with your kids..

Christ does not do that with his churches... he never said to the churches in the book of Revelation to be like the other churches.. they were each individual churches with their own strengths and unique set of challenges.

Now this is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and his church.

Look there are many families out there.. God knows them all but you are uniquely part of only one. You cannot neglect your personal family and be of any help to any other. As the family so the church.. as the church so is the family.
That is lesson of Ephesians 5

3. EVERY LOCAL CHURCH IS A UNIQUE BODY OF CHRIST

So it is with the church.

God places you in his church into a body and you are a unique piece of that body.

I Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Just as God made Adam and then brought Eve to him, he said,

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Then Paul thousands of years latter writes of this verse:

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

So marriage is a picture of the church and the church is a picture of marriage what makes one strong or weak is true of either.

Let me say this, God did not bring two or three woman to Adam and say here try them out and see which want suits you best. The Bible says,

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Jesus confirmed this when he said,

Matthew 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female,

Matthew 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Matthew 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Look, God did not give Adam a choice .. it was not a beauty contest..

God made the decision.. The best marriage is the marriage that God makes and it is his decision not yours.

The greatest problems with marriages today are that people choose based on enticements and their eyes and lust. This is exactly what happened in the days of Noah..

This is how the world become corrupt in the days of Noah ..

Genesis 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they [were] fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare [children] to them, the same [became] mighty men which [were] of old, men of renown.

Genesis 6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.

Now just as God gave you one family that should come first..
One marriage not two or three..

So too let me suggest that God gives you one local church.
Remember when Paul said this is a great mystery. He was saying the pattern of the church and the spiritual marriage we have with Christ is pictured in the physical marriage. Let me suggest it is also pictured in the local church.

A. The tithe goes to the local church:

There are many families, good and bad, strong and weak.. but God gave you a unique family..

What if your wife found out you sent a birthday card out to some other woman but forgot her birthday?

What if your wife found out that you sent a Christmas gift to another man's wife but you forgot to get her a Christmas gift?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN?

There are many families out there but God gave you one unique family..
There are many children out there but God gave you some unique children..
There are many churches out there but God gave you one unique local church..

There is nothing wrong with being concerned for these as long as it does not hurt your responsibility to your own..

I Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

In the context of that verse it is talking about taking care of your parents when they are old but logically I think it could be applied to your personal home and family and children.

NOW LET ME SAY THIS SHOULD APPLY TO YOUR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST..

THIS INVOLVES THE LOCAL CHURCH..

There are a lot of churches out there, some good some not so good..
Some weak some strong..

But God places you in his body as he chooses not as you choose.
If the local church goes then God's light goes out in that area..

It is just as foolish to look at other churches and compare your church with those churches as it would be for a husband or wife to compare their spouse with some other spouse.

The Lord had to rebuke Peter about looking at anyone else but Christ..

John 21:21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what [shall] this man [do]?
John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? follow thou me.

This is a mystery.. As the marriage so the church..
What it takes to have a good marriage so it takes to have a good church..
What it takes to have a good church so it takes to have a good marriage..
One is a reflection of the other.

God does not give you two or three local churches .. he gives you one.
God does not want you to have two or three wives he wants you to have one..

But you may be saying preacher is not the church made up of many churches universal.
Yeah just like mankind is made up of many families. But your responsibility is to function in the family he gave you. Leave the universal church to God .. you are not God. God alone is everywhere present you are not. God alone can know all and see all. You focus in on where he has placed you.

Recently we have a challenge to get involved in faith promise giving. You will notice on the commitment form we said you should not give to missions until you have established a pattern of faithfully giving your tithe to your local church. God does not call you to support others outside your church to the hurt of your local church.

THIS IS A MYSTERY.. AS THE FAMILY SO THE CHURCH..

Years ago when my kids started to become teens I had to separate them from some of the neighbor kids... at first we thought it was good maybe they were reaching out to them. However, what good would it be to try and win others for the Lord and lose your own family?

Look we can visit other churches, just like we can get together with other families for dinner, but let us never forget God gave us our unique family and we need to support our own first.

What if you went out to dinner with another couple, and when you came home all your husband talked about was that other man's wife.. or your wife the other woman's husband. I think there would be problems.

So it is with the local Church.

Years ago I used to go to a big church for a conference every year. They had an impressive ministry. But God convicted me that when I tried to implement some things in our church that I saw there, I realized God was not pleased. God wants us to follow him and not others. God rebuked Peter when he got his eyes on John. He said what is that to thee.. Follow thou me.

To have a great Church we need people who follow the example of Christ and are willing to show their love through their sacrifices for Christ:

Some people will send funds to TV preachers while the local Church suffers
Some people support missionaries but do not tithe to the church this is wrong.

B. *Your church attendance:*

God said

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

I see people who skip their own church to go to other things and other church activities. This is not right. Again this would be like sending a birthday card to another man or woman and neglecting your own husband or wife.

This is not good. A local church cannot be strengthened this way just as a marriage could not be strengthened this way.

Do you know there is something special going on all the time somewhere.. we cannot possibly support everything that is going on.

The Bible says these things are like honey but we need to be careful how much honey we eat..

Proverbs 25:16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

C. *GIVING OF YOU TIME IN MINISTRIES:*

D. GIVING OF YOUR TALENTS AND SERVICE:

Choir
Clean up
Workdays
Nursery
Sunday School

III. THIS GREAT MYSTERY INVOLVES UNITY READ

Ephesians 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Ephesians 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

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.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.

1. IN THE MARRAGE THERE NEEDS TO BE A TENDER CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER UNITY: MAN AND HIS WIFE ARE ONE FLESH..

A MARRIAGE NEEDS A UNITY OF FLESH:

Keith Rose give her a ping every now and then:

Many a marriage has been destroyed because of a cold shoulder that the wife gives to the husband:

I knew of one man who his wife came behind him and clubbed him with a crow bar from behind. It knocked out his eye..

Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

It should be a natural tendency for the wife to have a desire for her husband:

Look forward to him coming home, desire to be with him:

Want to have a special dinner date

Want to get away for a day without the kids

Desire to spend intimate time together

A frigid marriage will destroy a marriage;

THE TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH AND THAT IS WHAT A MARRAIGE IS ALL ABOUT
THIS CLOSENESS PRODUCES INTERESTING THINGS:

BABIES: THE FRUIT OF BEING CLOSE IN A MARRIAGE IS THE BLESSING OF
CHILDREN

2. IN THE CHURCH THERE NEEDS TO BE A UNITY IN SPIRIT:

WE NEED A UNITY OF SPIRIT:

The members of the body need also to be close but in a spiritual way

Greatest evidence of closeness is spiritual conversation:

Spiritual conversation, prayer, deep intimate, times with God as an assembly will
produce fruit:

When we come together around the word of God, and the Church is enjoying these
times around the word:

We should learn to be excited about the word of God:

We should naturally desire to hear from Christ

OUR DESIRE SHOULD BE TOWARDS OUR SPIRITUAL HEAD EVEN JESUS

WHEN EVER WE GET TOGETHER AND A PREACHER STANDS IN THIS PULPIT
WE SHOULD WANT TO HEAR FROM JESUS:

WHY I HAVE GUEST SPEAKERS: SOME PREACHERS HAVE MORE OF JESUS TO
SHARE THIS IS WHY WE HAVE THE 4 GOSPELS... To GET A DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVE..

What is the flesh of Jesus:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word
was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his
glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

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.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

When we become one around the word of God, God produces the fruit of souls:

What is the Mystery behind a great Church: This Mystery involves..

- I. SUBMISSION
- II. SACRIFICIAL LOVE
- III. UNITY IN FLESH AND SPIRIT

***** PRAY *****

INVITATION:

Are you part of the Church:
Are you identified with Christ:
Are you a member:

SALVATION:

Baptism:
Membership:

Submission;
Sacrificial love;
Unity:

Church attendance?
Though Sacrificial giving.. Faith promise slip?
Do you love his word?