

Sermon Series: “Biblical Family Portraits” – Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN – 2/7/2010

Title: “Love and Marriage”

Text: Ephesians 5: 21-33

Theme: When a marriage is begun and lived out in relationship to Jesus’ redeeming power, couples are transformed from individuals who choose to live together to those which choose to lovingly serve each other for Jesus’ sake.

Intro.: *Illus.: All in the Family Who Would You Die For?*

Understanding your relationship to Jesus makes all the difference in your marriage (vs. 21)

- Dying to your old, sinful self changes everything
 1. *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Galatians 2:20*
 2. As you and I submit to Christ — put ourselves under his Kingship, his direction, and his grace
 3. As we submit to God’s rule and order in our lives through the blessings of those given responsibility for us
 - a. Not just in marriage relationship but also in **parent/child (6:1)**; **worker/boss (6:5)**; **boss/God (6:9)**
 - b. Jesus modeled how **grace redeemed hierarchy is horizontal not vertical** and is **about love and not obedience**
 - c. *But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:3*
 - d. Fear of Christ is about respect not terror – *“Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.” 1 John 4: 18*
- Applying the **SERVE AND SAVE PRINCIPLE** in our lives
 1. Jesus modeled what submitting ourselves out of love to the Father’s will means in our other relationships
 - a. *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28*
 - b. *Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:4-5*
 2. Willingly setting aside agendas and plans to love the other unconditionally—making it your goal this week
 - a. **Illus.: If at first you don’t succeed . . .**

Imitating Christ’s love in our marriages

- Wife, seeing and lifting up Christ in your husband/father (**Ephesians 5:22-24**)
 1. Headship is not a description of position but of relationship (**as you place yourself to the Lord Jesus**)
 - a. Resisting the sinful human natures reaction of rejection to any authority God places in our life
 - b. **Praying for** your humanly fallible husband in overwhelming task of representing Christ to your home/marriage
 - c. **Illus.: Lucky for him that one of the ten**
 2. The goal is the salvation of your husband and family, not the pleasantness and happiness of your circumstance
 - a. That means even with a husband who may not be a believer
 - b. Paul makes an extraordinary promise, *“Actually, the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and an unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. . . How do you as a wife know whether you will save your husband? How do you as a husband know whether you will save your wife? 1 Corinthians 7:14-16*
- Husband, seeing your wife through Jesus eyes and heart (**Ephesians 5:25-29**)
 1. One for whom you would die (vs. 25)
 - a. Moving beyond physical love (eros) and companionship love (philos) to sacrificial love (agape)
 - b. It is not all about **what you do** but rather **who you become** – unselfishly setting aside plans, showing deference for opinion, setting down the paper, turning off the T.V. – listening not just hearing
 - c. *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:13-14*
 2. Caring for wife on every level (physical, emotional, spiritual, mental) for her good, not necessarily yours(vs26-29)
 - a. **Illus.: Husband retrieves wife for 50th**
 - b. Jesus’ goal with us His Church is to do a complete make-over without spot or wrinkle of sin’s impact
 - c. Making it your goal to revitalize your wife’s life and existence so that she shines with glory God created for her
- The picture of Christ, the groom, and the Church, the bride, serves as our inspiration in marriage (**Ephesians 5:30-33**)
 1. The mysterious/supernatural love affair which Jesus has with us his body is what he wants to duplicate in marriage
 2. Jesus’ intent in your marriage is to renew the joy you experienced on your wedding day into every day remaining
 3. **Illus.: Nearsighted love**

All in the Family episode of “Who Would You Die For?”

DVD, Season 5, Disc 2 (episode entitled “Mike’s Friend”); elapsed time 3: 38-5: 50

If at first your don’t succeed . . .

A man accompanied his friend home for dinner and was impressed by the way he entered his house, asked his wife how her day went, and told her she looked pretty. Then, after they embraced, she served dinner. After they ate, the husband complimented his wife on the meal and thanked her for it. When the two fellows were alone, the visitor asked, “Why do you treat your wife so well?”

“Because she deserves it, and it makes our marriage happier,” replied the host. Impressed, the visitor decided to adopt the idea.

Arriving home, he embraced his wife and said, “You look wonderful!” For good measure he added, “Sweetheart, I’m the luckiest guy in the world.” His wife burst into tears. Bewildered, he asked her, “What in the world’s the matter?” She wept, “What a day!

Billy fought at school. The refrigerator quit and spoiled the groceries. And now you’ve come home drunk!” **Robert Leslie Holmes, God’s Man (Kregel, 1998)**

Husband Retrieves Wife for 50th

Ralph and Janice were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, and Pastor Jones decided to take advantage of their longevity by using their story as a sermon illustration. He asked Ralph to come on stage and share some insight into how he managed to live with the same woman all those years.

Ralph turned to the congregation and said, “Well, I treated her with respect and spent money on her—but mostly I took her traveling on special occasions.” The pastor asked, “Trips to where?” “For our 25th anniversary,” Ralph answered, “I took her to Beijing, China.”

The crowd nodded and murmured in appreciation. When things quieted down, the pastor winked and said: “What a terrific example you are to husbands, Ralph. So, tell us where you’re going now for your 50th anniversary?”

Ralph replied, “I’m going to go back and get her.” **Brett Kays, Flat Rock, Michigan**

Nearsighted love

Soon after our last child left home for college, my husband was resting next to me on the couch with his head in my lap. I carefully removed his glasses. “You know, honey,” I said sweetly, “without your glasses you look like the same handsome young man I married.” “Honey,” he replied with a grin, “without my glasses, you still look pretty good too!” **Valerie L. Runyan, in Reader’s Digest, December, 1992**

Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹Place yourselves under each other's authority out of respect for Christ.

²²Wives, place yourselves under your husbands' authority as you have placed yourselves under the Lord's authority. ²³The husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. It is his body, and he is its Savior. ²⁴As the church is under Christ's authority, so wives are under their husbands' authority in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶He did this to make the church holy by cleansing it, washing it using water along with spoken words. ²⁷Then he could present it to himself as a glorious church, without any kind of stain or wrinkle—holy and without faults. ²⁸So husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹No one ever hated his own body. Instead, he feeds and takes care of it, as Christ takes care of the church.

³⁰We are parts of his body. ³¹That's why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will be one. ³²This is a great mystery. (I'm talking about Christ's relationship to the church.) ³³But every husband must love his wife as he loves himself, and wives should respect their husbands. [GW]