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[0:00] Well, we've reached a spot in the book of Ephesians where the Apostle Paul is turning his attention to marriage. And so we're going to be turning our attention to marriage for the next couple Sundays here.

But before we go there, I just want to give you a big picture of marriage. When we talk about salvation, we're talking about a big sweep of time.

So you can summarize kind of the history of salvation with just three words. Creation, fall, and redemption.

And those three words provide a very helpful way to think about certain things. One of which is marriage. And so what I'd like to do for you is just give you a crash course on marriage in light of creation, fall, and redemption.

And that will set us up for what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 5. You ready? Marriage in the light of creation.

[1:05] In Genesis 1 and 2, God created man and woman, Adam and Eve, and he created each of them in his own image. And he's very, very specific about that.

We read Genesis 1 and we walk away saying both Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. So a man is not more valuable in God's eyes because he's a man.

And a woman is not less valuable in God's eyes because she's a woman. What this means is when God looks at a man and a woman, he sees two image bearers of same worth.

They both are image bearers of God. And so God is clear on that in Genesis chapter 1, 26 and 27 where he says both man and woman were made in his image.

But what we also learn from Genesis chapter 2 is that God gave distinct roles to Adam because he was a man. And he gave a distinct role to Eve because she was a woman in this thing called marriage.

[2:12] Adam was given charge of the garden. Adam, he named all the animals. Eve came out of him and he eventually named Eve. And so what the Bible describes there, how it summarizes up Adam's role is the word headship.

We see that in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 3. And we'll see that played out a little later on in Ephesians chapter 5. What he did with Eve was he created Eve out of Adam for her to be Adam's helpmate. To help him. To help him tend the garden. To help him fulfill his role. And so what I want to help you to see though is both of them have the same value in God's eyes.

But each of them were given distinct roles. And the reason why God gave them distinct roles to be played out together was for them to experience harmony in marriage.

And so God's goal was unity. And not by kind of being able to swap out the roles, but by giving specific roles that complement each other.

[3:22] And what I also want to see is this. God assigned these roles before the fall. And so the fall didn't result in roles.

The fall actually distorted the roles. So we talked about creation of Adam and Eve. Equal in value, different in roles.

And now we turn to talking about the fall. And what we see in the fall is the distortion of the roles. So they both are image bearers of God. But with the fall comes consequences.

And so in Genesis chapter 3, God walks into the garden. And he says, hey Adam, what happened? And you know the story. Adam punts to Eve. And Eve punts to the serpent. But in Genesis chapter 3 verse 16, God specifically says to Eve, there's some consequences here.

You will desire your husband. You will long to be in power over him. That's the Hebrew meaning of that particular word.

[4:32] Your desire shall be for your husband. And then he says to Eve, and he, Adam, shall rule over you. And that word rule is talking about a kind of leadership.

It's not a loving leadership. It's a harsh leadership. A tyrannical kind of leadership. And so what you see as the consequence, the fallout of the fall in Genesis 3 verse 16 is the distortion of the roles. But praise be to God, it doesn't end there. Because God all along had a plan. And we see that plan spoken of in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 9 and 10.

That God's plan for all time was to unite all things in Christ. And so what Christ is seeking to do in us is to redeem our marriages.

And to redeem the roles by restoring the roles as God had originally designed them. So what happens for us in Christ is God reverses, is seeking to reverse the distortion of sin on our roles as husbands and wives.

[5:58] And what sin does is it distorts things by making it about me. You know what I'm talking about? This is about me. And so marriage isn't about me. What God does in Christ is make marriage about Christ.

It's about Him. And we're going to see that played out all throughout Ephesians chapter 5 and 6. In Christ, God is seeking to re-image Himself in us.

Christ-likeness. And He's seeking to retool our roles to function the way that He originally designed them to function. So in Christ, God is seeking to restore His God-given roles.

So the reason why Ephesians 5, 22-33 is in your Bible is to help you experience the unity that God intends for you out of obedience to Jesus.

Unity in your marriage. Fulfilling of your roles. God is calling us to live out our designated roles out of obedience to Christ for the glory of His name.

[7:13] Because here's the deal. When we live according to God's plan in our marriages, you know what happens? Our marriages end up spotlighting Jesus.

Our marriages become a little living parable between Christ's relationship to the church. It has a redemptive impact.

So, this morning, wives, what I want you to see is this. Your relationship to Christ informs and directs your relationship to your husband.

Your relationship to Christ informs and directs your relationship to your husband. And so, I'm going to show you by making five points this morning.

But let me read Ephesians 5, 22-24. We read this. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

[8:23] For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Wives, your relationship to Christ informs and directs your relationship to your husband. Just to let you know, next week, we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of what God says to husbands.

But let me give you these five points in order to bring this out, to help us see what God is saying right here. The first thing that I want you to see is this.

It's the relationship between this text, verses 22-24, and what we just read before it. And so, Paul has been telling these Christians in Ephesus, starting in Ephesians 4-1, walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.

And then in chapter 5, he says, walk in love. And then he says, walk as children of light. And then he says, walk in wisdom. Don't be a fool. Make the most of the time. Know God's will.

[9:38] Walk by the power of the Spirit. And then he says, when he's talking about the power of the Spirit, one of the ways that the Spirit's filling shows up is when Christians submit to one another out of fear of Christ.

Do you see that in verse 21? And so here's what Paul is doing in 22. He's taking this idea of submission, and he's making a transition.

He's pivoting. He's moving from submission in the context of a local church, submit to one another, and he's calling for submission, what that looks like, concrete examples in marriage.

That's 522 through 33. And then he points to parenting in 6.1 through 6.4. And then he points to the workplace in 6.5 through 6.9.

And so what he's doing is helping Christians understand what submission looks like in very concrete relationships. Now the thing that you need to know about each of these relationships is there's very clear lines of God-given authority in these relationships.

[10:47] And so what Paul is going to help us to see is how submission functions in these God-given lines of authority in these particular relationships.

And so that's why he turns to marriage, and specifically to wives in chapter 5, verse 22. The second thing I want to point out.

Headship. Headship. When I say headship, does that make you cringe? How do we think about headship?

How should we think about that? How should we think about authority? My guess is that most of us think about headship or authority in terms of power and control.

If you were to ask me, hey, give me a cultural example of authority, of submission, do you know where my mind goes to? Mixed martial arts battles.

[11:55] Seriously. People having to tap out in submission because they can't bear it anymore. I think many of us come to this word kind of authority and submission with this thought of power play.

Dominance. And what I want to help you to see is that's not the primary intent here of headship or submission. I don't know about you.

When I hear about headship and authority and think about in terms of power, I get suspicious. I get guarded. A little defensive.

Because I tend to think that whoever's the head of something has the right to make people do what they want them to do. Whoever's the head, whoever's in charge gets to do whatever they'd like to do.

So when we think about headship in terms of authority and power, we can easily start moving and thinking in terms of abuse. Authority exercised sinfully.

[12:59] And what I want to help you to think through is a better way of thinking about headship. Here it is.

We must think about headship in authority primarily as responsibility. Would you look at Ephesians 5.23?

For the husband is the head of the wife. Even as Christ is head of the church, his body.

What I want both husbands and wives, men and women, to be thinking about primarily when you hear this word headship, I want you thinking in terms of responsibility.

Headship is responsibility. John Stott in his commentary on Ephesians says it this way. In a word, the biblical concept of authority spells not tyranny, but responsibility.

[14:06] What kind of responsibility? Headship is a delegated responsibility. God giving responsibility to a husband.

And so when we see that word headship, what we need to realize is behind that giving of responsibility is God himself. That is a responsibility entrusted to a husband because God chose it to give him that responsibility.

By the way, that also means with that delegated responsibility, there is an accountability. Let me state it this way. I will have to give an account for my marriage to Jesus in a way my wife Jenny will not have to.

God's going to hold me responsible for something of our marriage that he won't hold my wife responsible for. This headship responsibility is a representative responsibility.

I have a responsibility for my wife. Do you remember in Genesis 3 what happens? In Genesis we read about how it was Eve who was tempted, took the fruit, ate the fruit, and gave it to her husband.

[15:30] Do you remember that? Remember in Genesis 3 who God comes to seek out? Do you recall? He seeks out Adam. It is a representative responsibility.

It is a picture of headship. Brothers, it's pretty sobering, isn't it? It's a purposed responsibility.

This is probably one of my burdens this morning. It's the aim of this responsibility. God has entrusted this to husbands for a purpose.

The responsibility that we've been entrusted for, given, is the welfare of our wives. The good of our wives. The good of our children.

Which means this. Brothers, we are not to exercise this God-given responsibility for our own sake, but for the sake of our own wives and our own children.

[16:43] That's the original intent. Sin distorted it, though. We've all experienced the sinful exercise of this kind of responsibility.

But Christ is redeeming it. And we're given an example. So, I'm going to come back to this next week, but we just look at Ephesians 4.25.

Excuse me, 5.25. Husbands, love your wives as Christ, the head of the church, loved the church, and gave himself up for her.

Jesus is the ultimate head. He exercised the ultimate responsibility, the welfare of our souls, and he made the ultimate sacrifice.

And what we see in Ephesians 5.25 is the exercise of responsibility. So, before we talk about submission, what I wanted to make sure we're clear on is this sense idea of headship.

[17:58] Headship is a God-given responsibility to husbands for the welfare, for the good of their wives, not the exploitation of their wives.

not the abuse of their wives, for the good of their wives. And so, sisters, as we move now to this command to submit, I just want to help you to see something here.

God isn't calling you to a degrading, mindless, tap-out kind of submission. God's calling you to a kind of a dance with your husband.

His role is to lead for your good. And what we'll see here is your role is to let him lead you, even help him to lead you, because God intends for your husband to be a means of goodness to you. So, let's now, point three, turn to this command. The command to submit. Wives, submit to your own husbands.

[19:11] Remember, sisters, your relationship with Christ will inform and direct your relationship with your husband. And the other piece I just want to remind you of is, I know this.

As soon as you hear the word submit, there's some things that can come into your mind. And so, let me just remind you of something. This command to submit that's aimed at wives, this is not a command to diminish your worth.

This is not a diminishing of your value in God's eyes. This isn't God saying you're of lesser importance.

This is God calling you to a particular role in marriage. A particular responsibility. And He's going to bring definition to that role.

The word submit means to actually to line up in order. It means to come under authority.

[20:14] And what we've talked about before when we were talking about headship is that what God is calling a wife to is to come under your husband's God-given responsibility to care for you.

That's what God is calling you to hear. Come under His care. Come under His seeking of your welfare. Your husband is to be attentive to and caring about your spiritual welfare, your physical welfare, your emotional welfare, even your financial welfare.

He's to provide for you and protect you. And if that's in place, that will make your submission to Him coming under His care a joy and a privilege.

I know the question's in your head right now. What if my husband doesn't care? We'll come back to that.

But what I want you to see here is that this call to submit is a call to entrust yourself to the care of your husband. And what we see in verse 24, it's you to do that in everything.

[21:32] Everything. And the meaning of that is every area of your life. Your husband, because of what God has called him to for your good, he needs to know what's going on in your life so he can care for you, not exploit you.

Now, a couple other clarifications on this word submission. This call to submit is not a call to a forced submission.

God's not saying, do this or else. This is a voluntary submission. Think of it this way. God's saying, oh, dear daughter, you of your own volition, trusting in me, entrust yourself fully to your husband. This is your role in the dance, sister. Let your husband lead you. And might I add this, this is not a call for all women to submit to all men.

wives, submit to your own husbands. There's two mistakes in this dance. In order to demonstrate this to you, I'm going to actually use some dancing.

[22:52] There's two mistakes that both men and women can make in terms of roles, their roles. One's a mistake on one side of passivity, the other's a mistake of aggressiveness.

And so, think about this. your husband wants to lead you in a dance called marriage. Okay? And so, here's what the mistake of passivity looks like.

Your husband's seeking to lead you, doing his best, and he keeps on stepping on your toes. And that hurts. Passivity is like this.

I'm not going to say anything. I don't want to hurt his feelings. You know, blah, blah, blah. It's kind of, this is going to say it coarsely, but it's kind of a put up and shut up mentality. That's not submission.

The other mistake is this. Same thing. Husband leading his wife, dancing, steps on her toes, and the wife is like, swat!

[23:53] Swat! I'm taking over. I'm leading this dance. Yes, honey, I will dance the way that you want to dance.

Two mistakes. What God is calling wives to is a joyful, voluntary following of her husband's lead. It's sweet.

Dancing's fun. And so, here's how it works out. This is an example of what it looks like. Alright? You're dancing with your wife.

And she says, honey, your breath stinks. Sweetheart, I am so glad to know that because I don't want to have cursed breath. I want to have blessing breath.

And so, let me put a mint in. We keep on dancing. Okay? Dance, dance, dance. Sweetheart, you're stepping on my toes and it really hurts. Oh, I'm so sorry, honey. I don't want to hurt you.

[24:54] I want you to enjoy the dance. Can you help me get these footwork down? Kind of a thing. And then, maybe your wife says something like this. You know, honey, I'm seeing that punch bowl over there and I'm really thirsty.

Okay, honey, let's go over there. Gotcha. Keep on dancing. Your wife says, honey, I need to use the bathroom.

I got you, honey. Let's go this way. Out of the way. Out of the way. Out of the way. Sweetheart, I'm feeling tired. I will scoop you up. Put you in this chair.

Thank you for letting me know. See? See? Wives, would you like that?

Marriage is a dance. Husbands were called to lead. Collaboratively.

[26:04] Welcome your wife's input. In order for her to care for her welfare, you need to know how she's doing. in order to lead her well, she needs to feel comfortable and safe to be able to say, you're stepping on my toes again.

I love this. Sisters, the way to steer clear of these mistakes is to keep your eyes on Jesus. look at Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4. 22. This is the motive of submission. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Will you say that with me, everybody? as to the Lord. You may submit to your husband, but you are submitting for Jesus.

Better yet, the aim of your entrusting yourself to your husband's care is obedience to Christ. You are to live out your role as a wife as to the Lord.

[27:28] Your relationship to Christ informs and directs your relationship to your husband. You will fulfill your role as a wife.

You must out of obedience to Jesus. Ultimately, it's about Jesus. So the way that you relate to your husband is a means by which you live for Christ.

So when Paul says in Ephesians 4.1, walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, that is specifically applied to a wife right here. Follow Jesus this way.

Be filled by the Spirit so that you can do this faithfully. So here's what it boils down to.

Sisters, married sisters, this morning I am calling you on the authority of this book to live out your role as a wife for the glory of Christ.

[28:35] It's all about Him. If Ephesians 1, 9, and 10 is true and God is in the process of uniting all things together in Christ, He's interested in uniting your marriage in Christ.

In order to get that done, He's calling you to a specific role in that. To experience unity. And to that end, point five, the grounds for the roles.

The grounds for a husband's role to be head, the grounds for a woman's role to be submissive. We can ask it this way.

On what basis does the Apostle Paul call wives to submit to their husbands and husbands to be head of their wives? On what grounds? Let me just read verses 23 and 24.

You will see the grounds. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body. And He is Himself its Savior.

[29:41] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to everything to their husbands. Did you know there's another dance going on? Between Christ and His church?

And we see those roles played out. Jesus is the head exercising His leadership for the welfare of His people and His people submissive, dependent upon, following Him.

These are the grounds and they also help us to see, model the distinct roles for a husband and wife. Our roles are grounded upon Christ and the church.

If we take our cues from something, it can't be our culture. we must take our cues from our Bibles. And what we're given here is the cue, a model of Christ and the church.

Check this out. What Adam and Eve distorted because of their sin, Christ has redeemed. And in relationship to His church, He has demonstrated what a restored marriage relationship looks like.

[31:07] He is the head. The church is His bride submitting to Him. What we also see in verses 23 and 24 is this. This example of Jesus in the church as the grounds and model for our roles in marriage, this is timeless.

This is unchanging. It's universally binding on not just Christians but on everybody.

This is making a claim on us. Husbands, verse 23, here's your role. You're to be Christ-like in your marriage, in your role.

The husband is the head of the wife just as Jesus is head of the church, His bride. Jesus is seeking to provide and protect for His bride. So we as husbands like to provide and protect for our brides. That word, head, carries the sense of authority and responsibility not tyranny. In verse 24, we see the wives rule.

[32:26] just as the church submits to Christ, so wives are to submit to their husbands. The church is actively entrusting herself to Christ. The church depends on Christ.

The church doesn't take matters into her own hands. Doesn't steal the show and lead the dance. There are examples.

A wife is to follow her husband's lead just as the church submits to Christ. Our roles in marriage are grounded and modeled after the roles of Christ and His bride, the church.

Isn't it good that God doesn't leave us guessing? Very clear. The goal, of course, is unity. Harmony. Just to draw out one implication of this, God's design for the roles in marriage, being that they're timeless and unchanging and universally binding, they're true whatever culture that you're in.

[33:31] We are not to redefine our roles in marriage because our roles in marriage aren't culture bound. they're grounded in a timeless truth, Christ and His bride.

This is God's design for us. Let me move to some conclusions and some application questions. When God created Adam and Eve, He created them both in His image. Men and women are of equal value in God's eyes. God's committed to that.

Men. Men in the room. Are you trusting in what God says about the worth of women?

Do you think that you're more valuable than a woman because you are a man? That's not what God thinks. be honest, humble yourself, and confess it.

[34:45] Women, are you trusting in what God says about your worth? Your worth is not found in your role.

Your worth is found in being an image bearer of God. Do you think you are less valuable than a man?

God does not think that of you. Trust in what He says is true of you. Another concluding point, headship is a God-given responsibility.

Husbands, in what ways have you been exercising this God-given responsibility for your own selfish ends instead of your wife's welfare?

Another way to ask it is this. How have you been using your role to put yourself first? God's going to call you to not do that anymore.

[35:58] to put your wife first. We'll see that next week. Wives, this is a hard question.

Have you been resentful of male headship because certain men in your life have sinfully abused it? could it be that the fault lies with the man not in the design?

I'm so sorry. I know women in this room who have been on the receiving end of abuse because a man misused his responsibility.

I'm so sorry. That's not God's will for this. It's wrong. God would have it different.

Let me just say this too. Not all men abuse the responsibility God has entrusted to them. Not all men abuse that. Third point.

[37:33] God's calling a wife to submit to her husband is a high calling. It's a high calling. It's a call to live a certain way for Christ. A specific way to walk in a manner worthy so husbands have you been joking about it?

Have you been making light of that? Have you been making jokes about submission? You're undignifying your wife. You're belittling God's design.

Do you realize that how your wife relates to you matters to Christ? God's love to Christ? It's ultimately about him. Wives, are you looking to Jesus to help you voluntarily entrust yourself to your husband's care?

Are you submitting yourself to your husband for Christ's sake? Are you making it about you? Are you making it about your husband? make it about Jesus as to the Lord.

Just one life which will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last. Now, I'm guessing that about halfway through this sermon, you began asking a what-if question.

[39:03] I was talking about the command to wife to submit to their husbands and I said that if your husband was exercising his responsibility in a Christ-like fashion, submitting to him would be a joy and a privilege because you know he's in it for your welfare.

But what if a husband is not seeking his wife's welfare? Isn't that the question? Anybody ask that question? Worse yet, what if the husband is actually using his role to harm his wife?

Does she still need to submit to him? Let me answer that question this way. This is going to take a couple minutes and we're done.

First, if you're experiencing that, there is a misuse of responsibility going on. It's grievous in God's sight. Let's agree on that.

Second, as a follower of Jesus, you are to live for Jesus no matter how your husband is treating you. It's about Christ.

[40:21] Your relationship with Christ informs and directs your relationship with your husband, whether he's walking in obedience or disobedience, whether he's a Christian or a non-Christian, whether he's more mature than you or less mature than you, Christ leads you on as to the Lord.

But, you are not to submit to your husband if he's commanding you to do something that God forbids or forbidding something that God commands you to do because your primary devotion is to Christ.

Get it? Now, here's where things get kind of brass tacks. If you are a wife in this kind of situation, that word submit is a really difficult word to kind of make fit into a situation when there's difficulty going on in abuse.

So, let me suggest another biblical word for the role of life, helper, found in Genesis chapter 2. If your husband is not seeking your welfare or is doing your harm, the question that you need to be asking, though it's difficult to ask in that context, is what does it look like for you to help him in the name of Jesus even though you're being hurt?

And in order to get your head around the answer to that question, you need help. You need wise, compassionate counsel.

[42:05] And that's why God has provided godly friends and godly leaders. If you're a woman in need of help, the elders of this church are here to help you.

We want to do you good. We want to provide and protect for you within our roles. But if you're a woman in this situation, you need to take a courageous step.

I know there's shame. I know there's disgrace. I know there's embarrassment. I know there can be threats. But to bring this into the light is the way to move forward.

God, we will be unable to help you if we don't know. We want to know. Wives, your relationship to Christ informs and directs your relationship to your husband.

Next week, we're going to look at God's call on husbands. It's a call to die. Let's pray.

[43:33] Jesus, I am so aware that there are potholes all over the place with this. God, would you bring the truth of your word to bear in our hearts as you see fit.

God, would you pray for sisters who need help. God, bring them help. God, thank you for your word. Thank you, God, that you speak right into our lives.

In Jesus' name, amen.