

# PM Ephesians 5:22-33

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Preacher: Rev Trevor Kane

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well friends, we've joined together again this evening. We're thinking this time about Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, continuing our studies in Ephesians. Maybe some of you are wondering what the plan is going forward. I suppose we're consciously aware that we're coming towards the end of Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus.

So where are we going to go after that? The plan is that we've got a few studies left in Ephesians that should take us up to the end of April. And then hopefully after that we will start a little series, I suppose, in the life of Joseph, considering some of the key events and the key ideas and some of the key themes that we see in the life of Joseph together.

There's about 10 weeks of that, 11 weeks of that. Maybe I'm not sure how much of it we'll get through. But that's the plan going forward and we'll keep going with Luke's Gospel on Sunday mornings together.

But we're coming to Ephesians 5 tonight. Ephesians 5. Let's read together from verses 22 to 33. Verses 22 to 33. This is the Word of God.

Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church, his body, and is himself its saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

[ 1 : 2 7 ] Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Amen. Well, perhaps if you keep those verses open in front of you, it would be helpful for us as we come to think about this section together this evening.

Suzanne's grandmother loved Downton Abbey. It was on on a Sunday night. Suzanne's granny wasn't the most technically minded of people. Not having catch-up TV, she often missed it.

[ 2 : 4 1 ] When I stayed with her, one of my roles, one of my jobs, if you like, was getting the latest episode of Downton Abbey on TV for her. Say on a Tuesday afternoon, I'd come in from college, and she'd ask me if I could get it up for her.

I'm not sure why she loved it. I've never found any particular enjoyment in it, but then I suppose I'm not Downton Abbey's target market, if you like. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Downton Abbey, it follows the life of a country estate, really, a fictional country estate in England.

But one of the things about Downton Abbey that did fascinate me, and I think it's probably true of society as a whole, but it's shown in Downton Abbey, was how structured it was.

Everyone knew their roles. Everyone knew their place. Everyone knew who their superiors were. Everyone knew who their inferiors were. Everyone was answerable to someone. And as we come to Ephesians 5 tonight, as we come to this section, verses 22 through 33, as we come to consider it together, it shows us a lot about how society should be structured in the church.

It shows us a lot about how Christian society should look. We see how the Christian life flourishes within this structural setting that Paul gives us. How the Christian life flourishes when we order it according to how God has set out.

[ 4 : 02 ] Now, right at the outset, we need to deal with the fact that a lot of people have problems with the teaching of Paul here. This is the kind of classic section people will look to and say, You see, wasn't Paul just a misogynist pig?

If we read verses 22 through 24 in isolation, it might be easy to come to that conclusion. We might see Paul saying to wives, verse 22, submit to your husband.

But when we read the text as a whole, when we read the context of the text, when we read verses 22 through the end of the chapter, we see how far from hating women, how far from demeaning women, Paul's advice actually serves for the advance.

Paul's advice actually serves for the flourishing of society. The role and the task and the job that Paul gives men is far, far greater, far more challenging than many would admit to.

Wives are called to submit to their husbands, yes. But husbands are also called to love their wives, to sacrifice themselves for their wives, just as Christ did for the church.

[ 5 : 17 ] I want to see three things tonight. Think about three things together this evening. Firstly, we want to think about this idea of biblical submission, of what Paul means in verses 22 through 24.

Secondly then, we want to think about biblical leadership, what it is that Paul means as he says to the husbands, to love your wives as Christ loved the church. And then thirdly, finally, we want to think about biblical marriage.

We want to see how Paul reminds us that marriage serves as a type of the mystery of Christ and his church. So firstly then, biblical submission, biblical submission.

And we see that in verses 22 through 24. So remember where we are in Ephesians. We finished last week by thinking about the command that Paul gives, the instruction that Paul gives in Ephesians 5, 21.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Submit to one another out of love for Christ. And this then, as we come to verse 22, is the outworking of that, if you like. This is how submission to Christ is going to look for each of a few different groups.

[ 6 : 22 ] This is how it looks in the lives of different people. Firstly, Paul's going to talk about husbands and wives and what submission might look like for them. Secondly, he's going to talk about children and parents and again, what submission might look like for them.

And then finally, slaves and masters and what submission might look like for them. We see Paul says to wives, verse 22, Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Now there are a couple of things that we need to draw out from that. A couple of things that we just need to make sure that we understand from what Paul is saying to us here. Firstly, we see that as Paul writes this letter to the church in Ephesus, what does he call wives to do?

He calls them to submit, yes. But notice the restrictions he places on that. Notice the limits that he places on that.

Wives, submit to your own husbands. The women in Ephesus weren't called to be submissive to every man that they met. The wives in Ephesus weren't called to walk around with a crushed spirit, with their head bowed, fearful of making eye contact with any man that they met, fearful of having a conversation with any man that they met.

[ 7 : 39 ] Rather, Paul says, wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. So that's the first thing that we need to draw out, is that this isn't a universal call for all women to be submissive to all men.

This is a call from Paul for wives to be submissive to their own husbands. Secondly then, we see why Paul tells them to do this.

Wives, be submissive to your own husbands. Why? As to the Lord. It's an act of service. It's an act of worship. It's an act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not so much to their own husbands, but it's to the Lord. When they offer their submission, it's to the Lord. It helps us to understand why I think women can perhaps be submissive even in difficult situations.

Perhaps even in situations where their husband isn't a believer. Because they know that their submission isn't merely offered to their husband, but their submission is offered to the Lord as an act of worship and obedience to Him.

[ 8 : 44 ] Paul then gives in verse 23 the reason, if you like. He says to them, verse 22, look, be submissive.

Then, verse 23, for the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church, His body. You notice what Paul goes on to say.

He Himself is its Savior. Now, some people will read this and say that there's a strict parallelism here. That what Paul says is that the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church.

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the church, therefore the husband must be the Savior of the wife. He must be the head and Savior of the wife, as Christ is head and Savior of the church. Well, to be quite honest, that's just silly, isn't it?

Scripture constantly reminds us, Scripture constantly tells us that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It doesn't matter if you're man, woman, or child. That is how you're saved.

[ 9 : 47 ] That is how you're made right with God, through faith alone, in Christ alone. So what does this mean? Well, quite simply, it says that Jesus is head of the church, that He is the Savior of the church, and the husband, likewise, is head of the wife.

What we see here is an idea of order. It's an idea of structure. God is a God of order. That's the clear, consistent testimony of Scripture, isn't it? Think back to Genesis.

What are we told? That the earth was empty, was without form, that the earth was void. And into that, God brings order out of chaos, by speaking. But we also need to see that that, that order, that structure, has been disrupted, by the fall into sin.

Think about Genesis 3. The curse is pronounced, on all of creation. But think especially, of that curse, that's pronounced, on the woman, Genesis 3.16.

Your desire shall be, for your husband, and he, shall rule, over you. Ever since the fall of mankind, into sin, that has been the problem.

[ 10 : 59 ] That man and woman, rather than cooperating, man and woman, rather than coming together, man and woman, rather than having this, positive relationship, that ever since the fall of mankind, into sin, man and woman, have been coming, against each other.

They've been set, against each other. We see that again, even in Genesis, don't we? What's the man's excuse? What does the man say, when the Lord says, well why did you do that?

Why did you eat the fruit, of the tree I told you not to eat? What does the man say? He says, well, the woman, the woman you gave me, she did it.

The woman desires, to rule over her husband. The woman desires, to take the place of leadership, of her husband. That's one way of understanding, Genesis 3.16. And the husband then, has to rule over the wife.

Ever since the fall, that conflict, has been present, in every marriage. Ever since the fall, that tension, has been present, in every marriage, even our own. And it's against that, backdrop, it's against that background then, Paul says, verse 21, submit to one another, as to Christ.

[ 12 : 06 ] And verse 22, wives, submit to your husbands then, as to the Lord. Not because the husband is better, not because the husband is stronger, not because the husband is, is more able than you. But because that's the way, God has ordered the world.

That's the way, God has set his creation, to work, to its optimal strength. So as, verse 24, the church submits to Christ, so wives, should submit in everything, to their husbands.

Now what does it mean here? What does Paul mean, when he says to the church in heaven, he says, look, wives submit in everything, to your husbands. Now we can take that, at the surface level, we can say, well, it's quite obvious, what that means, isn't it?

Quite simply, it means that wives, are to do everything they're told. But to do the dishes, do the laundry, make sure that the kids are fed, and watered, generally do whatever, their husband says.

But that can't be what it means, can it? Because for example, the wife isn't compelled, to do something, that is in and of itself sinful. The husband can't expect his wife, to do something, that is sinful.

[ 13 : 15 ] I would also argue, I think from our confession of faith, that the wife cannot be compelled, to do something, that goes against her scruples. But the wife can't be compelled, to do anything, that isn't in and of itself sinful, but something that she may feel, particularly strongly about.

Let's say for example, let's try and, put some flesh on it. Let's say for example, Billy comes home from work one night, and he says to her, right Beatrice, get your coat on, we're going to go out to the movies, going to go and see a picture.

Now Beatrice doesn't like the movies, doesn't like the sex, and the violence, she feels that it's, a glorification of things, that go against the word of God, and says you go if you want, but I'm not coming.

Now is Beatrice being unsubmitive, in that instance, is Beatrice being, difficult in that instance, is she going against, what Paul says here, in Ephesians 5, I would argue no. Because Jesus is the Lord, of the conscience, and in her conscience, Beatrice doesn't feel, that she can go to the cinema.

She doesn't feel, that she can engage, in something, that goes against her own conscience. Wives submit, to your husband's name, that's the, the biblical submission, if you like, with the writers, that we've added, with the parameters, that we've thought about perhaps.

[ 14 : 33 ] Secondly then, we want to consider, the idea of biblical leadership, biblical leadership, and we see that, in verses 25 through 30, verses 25 through 30, biblical leadership. So we've considered, the advice to the wives, we've seen Paul say, verse 22, wives submit, to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

And we then move on, to consider Paul's advice, to the husbands, if you like. And we see that, as we begin verse 25. And we see the key thing, right away in verse 25, it's going to be verse 25, that helps us understand, this whole section, from 22 to 33.

It's going to be, verse 25 I think, that sets our, our framework, of understanding, verses 22 through 33. What do we see, verse 25? Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up, for her.

Now notice what Paul says here. Husbands, love your wives, and lays on the sofa. Husbands, love your wives, and expect your dinner, on the table, every night, when you come in.

Husbands, love your wives, and don't ever lift a finger, to help. Husbands, love your wives, and do everything, you want to do. Husbands, love your wives, and be a tyrant, in your own little fiefdom.

[ 15 : 46 ] Is that what Paul says? No. Paul says, husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up, for her.

Now don't miss, how counter-cultural, this would have been, don't miss, how different, this would have been, from the society, of the time. Paul writing, to the church in Ephesus, Paul writing, to this culture, would have said, this Greek pagan society, that said marriage, wasn't really that valuable.

A man could have a wife, whose job it was, to produce offspring, but he was also free, to go and have, as many mistresses, as he wanted. Think about all, of the religions of the day, and again, we keep coming back to this, think about the temple, to Diana, at Ephesus, this great, shrine of prostitution.

And what does Paul say? Husbands love your wives, and go to the temple, prostitutes. Husbands love your wives, and go with whoever it is, you won't know. Paul says, husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church.

More than that, Paul says, they're to love their wives, as Christ loved the church. Love your wives, in a self-sacrificial way. Love your wives, Paul says, in a way that actually costs something.

[ 17 : 05 ] The rule of a husband, isn't to be exercised, in a domineering way. It isn't to be exercised, in an overbearing way. It isn't to be exercised, in a way that insists, that it always has, its own way met.

It isn't to be exercised, in a way that seeks, comfort and ease. Rather, it's to be exercised, in a Christ-like way. But what does that, look like?

Who was Jesus Christ? He was the one who came, to seek and to save the lost. He was the one who came, to lay down his life. He was the one who came, not to be served, but to serve, and give his life, as a ransom for many.

He was the one, who would freely, lay down his life, for the sheep. Husbands, this is our calling tonight. If you're listening to this, and you are a husband, this is your calling.

This isn't us, saying to our wives, look, well you go, and you get dinner ready. You go, and you get the dishes done. You go, and you do all of the things, that I can't be in a way doing. This is us, saying to our wives, well how can I help you today?

[ 18 : 11 ] How can I love you today? How can I serve you today? As cheesy, as that sounds, that's what it's all about. And leadership like that, will be easy, for our wives to submit to.

Leadership like that, will be easy, for our wives to follow. Leadership like that, will lead to our wives, flourishing. Because it isn't about us, but it's about Jesus.

Why did Jesus, give himself up for the church? Why did Jesus sacrifice, himself for the church? Verse 26, so that, he might sanctify her, so that he might, cleanse her, so that he might, purify her, so that he might, wash her.

That's why Jesus, gave himself up for the church, and that's the husband's, calling, in his leadership. We can't, obviously as husbands, we can't, sanctify our wives, we can't, make them pure, we can't cleanse them, any more than Christ, already has.

But it is our job, to help our wives, along that road. It's our job, to help our wives, down the path, of sanctification, if you like, to encourage our wives, to look to Christ, to show them, what it means, to follow Christ.

[ 19 : 26 ] We are not the saviour, of our wives, but we point, to the one who is. It's a glorious vision, that's held out, in verse 27, isn't it?

A church, that has been washed, by the word, a church, that has had the gospel, preached to them, a church, that is presented, verse 27, in splendor, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, that she might be holy, and without blemish.

It speaks to us, of a perfect church, an unstained body, and that's to be, our vision for our wives. If we're going to love them, like Christ loved the church, if we want, the same things for them, that Christ wants for the church, that has to be, our vision for them.

Our goal, for our wives, has to be, that we can present them, in splendor, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish. Verse 28, Paul says, look, love your wife, verse 28, the same way, that you love, your own body, nobody doesn't care, for their own body, well, a few people may, but as a general rule, everyone, takes care of themselves, the people who don't, look after their bodies, are the exception, rather than the rule.

Why do people spend, well, why do people, used to spend, hour after hour, at the gym, caring for their bodies? Why do people spend, hour after hour, doing their hair, their makeup, before they go out, in the morning, because they're looking, after their bodies?

[ 21 : 04 ] Why do people, brush their hair, shower every day, because they're looking, after their bodies? And so too, Paul says, this must be the way, that husbands love their wives, just as they're caring, for their own body.

This calling, to be a husband then, it's a high calling, isn't it? This calling, to biblical leadership, is a high calling, it's not something, to be undertaken lightly, it's not something, that is easy.

And again, such a task, again, such a high standard, we might be tempted, to say, well, who is worthy, of such a thing? Who can take on, such a thing? And the answer is, that, none of us can.

We all feel. Wives, feel to be submissive, husbands, feel to be good leaders, husbands, feel to love their wife, as Christ loved the church. But thankfully, this evening, we can cast ourselves, on Christ, Christ, the one who gave himself up, for the church, the one who sacrificed himself, for the church, the one who washed, and cleansed, and sanctified us, by his death, this evening.

When we feel, and we all do, when we sin, and we all do, then you can cast yourself, upon him, and know, that he cares for you.

[ 22 : 24 ] You can cast yourself, upon him, this evening, and know, that he will, forgive your sin. So we thought, about biblical, submission, the charge to, to wives, to submit their husbands.

We thought, about biblical leadership, the charge to husbands, to love their wives. And then thirdly, finally tonight, we want to think about, biblical marriage, biblical marriage. And we see that, in verses 31, through 33.

31 to 33, biblical marriage. And we want to finish tonight, by really thinking about this, trying to understand, what Paul means, in these verses, 31 through 33. We see verse 32, he says, this is a, a profound mystery.

Remember, as we thought about mystery, in Ephesians, before we saw, how it's not something, that is, kind of out there. It's not something, that we can just, work really hard, and we'll figure out, the answer to.

A mystery is something, that has been revealed, by God. The thing about, how the gospel, was a mystery, that has been revealed, by God. And so as Paul uses, mystery here, in Ephesians 5, 32, what he means, is something, that has been revealed, by God.

[ 23 : 31 ]    Something that was hidden, but has now, been revealed, by God. This mystery, is profound, Paul says. This mystery, has been hidden, but has been made, known by God. And what is the mystery?

What's the one flesh, mystery of husband and wife? And Paul says, that mystery, the two have become one flesh, Paul says, that mystery, refers to Christ, and the church.

When we come to Christ, when we put our faith in him, when we put our trust in him, we become members, of the invisible church, members, if you like, of the true church. We're joined by faith, to Christ.

And when the day of judgment comes, when God asks us, well what? What reason, should I let you into heaven? What merit, do you have before me?

What can we answer? Because we won't have any merit. We won't have any grounds, on which to stand, ourselves.

[ 24 : 36 ]    So what will we say? What we can say, is that we're joined, by faith to Christ. All that was his, is now mine.

His righteousness, is now my righteousness. His obedience, is now my obedience. His right standing with you, is now mine.

And you see, this is true tonight, whether you're married, or not. This is true tonight, whether you're widowed, whether you've never been married, whatever your situation is. It's true, if this year, you're celebrating, a gold and a silver, or a paper wedding anniversary, whatever your situation, this is true.

This is the truth, that all marriage points us to. This is the truth, that this one flesh union, points us to. Christ, and the church.

The union of Christ, and his church. And yet tonight, there are some, who are listening to this, who've never come to Christ.

[ 25 : 55 ]    There are some, who've never been united, to him by faith. Come tonight, and place your faith in him. Come tonight, and put your trust in him. Come tonight, and be united to him.

Come tonight, and know the peace, of sins forgiven. Come tonight, and be part of the true church of Christ. That church of Christ, that surpasses, every human marriage.

That church of Christ, which will one day be his bride. Come tonight, and come to him.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 27 : 03 ]    Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.