

Gospel shaped Husbands

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[0 : 00] Okay, so we're in Ephesians 5, verses 22 to 23, as Simon read out. If you have one of the Bibles at the back, then it's page 978. If you don't have a Bible, I'd encourage you to grab one now so you can follow through in what we're saying.

If you're not really good at finding your way around the Bible, we will put up the key verses on the PowerPoint behind me there, so that'll help you stay in touch. Okay, right, we're starting with husbands.

We're looking at family. We've looked at relationships broadly with David last week. This week we're narrowing in and looking at husbands. And judging by the show we had earlier, there is a little bit of confusion about what husbands should be, who they are.

I can tell you that it doesn't just happen among children as to this confusion, but it happens among adults too. I remember working with a guy who I'm preaching on marriage and relationships within marriage.

He began his sermon by sharing his wedding day and how he prepared for his marriage. His last morning, he took us through it.

[1 : 05] He spoke about it in a sermon, in fact. And he talked about how in his preparation for his wedding, he sat down with his best man in his hotel. Before they actually went off to the church to get married, he sat down with his best man in his hotel room and watched a movie.

He watched Gladiator. He shared this story in a sermon, and it was funny until I realized that he kind of wasn't joking. What he was doing with that illustration was actually saying, this is what marriage is like.

Marriage is a fight. Man, I got a whole lot less funny when after the service, the thing that men wanted to talk about was how much marriage was like the Gladiator movie.

How much marriage was a fight, a bloody fight. How many men actually identified with that as the thing that they were being called to as husbands?

So let's be clear from the start. Marriage is a whole-of-life commitment. But it is not a combat to the death. Marriage is hard work.

[2 : 15] Nobody who will take the stage today is going to claim to be the one who has it all sorted out. We are all aware of our own failings. But God, as he lays out his design for marriage in the Bible, has a very different picture, and we need that picture.

We need to hear what our Creator intended. It is so often, so far from the marriage that we managed to produce. But when we look at that picture, it is beautiful.

It is compelling. It is heavenly. So let's look at what God has to say about husbands. So first we are going to see the command that Paul gives.

So if we look at... We had that whole passage read out because it is kind of husbands and wives are kind of intertwined there in terms of how it is expressed. We are going to start from verse 25.

And the command, husbands, love your wives. Love your wives. A definition of love, just so we don't misunderstand what that word means, is this.

[3 : 22] It is sincere affection and high regard. These two things are what love means in the Bible.

Sincere affection and high regard. Now this definition shouldn't be a surprise to us. But it is spoken into a context where the husband has been described as their head. So we have got to think about that.

In verse 23, Paul has said, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Sounds like absolute power, doesn't it? I mean, like Christ?

Well, come back next week and we will actually explore that aspect a little bit more next week. But for now, what I really want to say is this. That the reality is that a wrong understanding of husband is

head as Christ is the head has produced too many big-headed husbands.

But this command to love that Paul drives home in verse 25 is meant to ground us. Love, the command to love is meant to ground us.

[4 : 33] Think back to Genesis chapter 2 verse 23, to the first marriage, to when Adam actually first laid eyes on Eve. He said this, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

As he looked at her, he knew this is the one. Together, we will rule the world. Genesis chapter 1 verse 26.

Together, we will rule our family. Genesis chapter 1 verse 28. And she's amazing. Hold that thought. Love is sincere affection and high regard.

But it's more than that. You see, in Greek thought, they couldn't actually contemplate having an attitude of heart that wasn't expressed. So love is also an emotion that shapes our actions.

Love is an emotion that shapes our actions. In Greek thought, an emotion wasn't an emotion unless it was expressed in action. You can say you love someone, but if we can't see evidence in your life, then you don't.

[5 : 45] That was how the Greeks thought. So, if we should be able to see evidence in your life, what does love look like? Well, thankfully, Paul gives us an example. He says in verse 25, How?

As Christ loved the church. Notice here, though, even in that very first word there, as, as Christ. See what's happening here? The focus is coming back onto God. Paul is heralding the return to being God's image bearers here.

In Genesis chapter 1 verse 27, we read how God created us. And we read these words. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him.

Male and female, he created them. We were created in God's image. God is our reference point for being.

[6 : 52] Sin, on the other hand, is rebellion. It's listening to any other voice over God's. It's pursuing our own will over our creators.

It's looking away from the God that we were meant to be like. That we were created to be like. True love has to be defined by looking to our creator.

And his love, his love, is a giving love. Because we go on in that verse and see that he gave himself up for her.

Christ loved the church by giving himself up for her. God told us that we needed to look to him. And then God showed us what love is like.

How well do you go at that? Not just knowing what it means. Even if we've got that right in our heads. But actually being able to express what it means. During the week, we bought a new car last year.

[7 : 59] And it was registered in Jo's name. And during the week, it came up time for it to be re-registered. And I don't know if you've been through service.gov.au and all the hurdles and steps you have to go through to get through that registration process.

I've done it countless times since we moved to Australia. Jo's English, she hadn't really done it. And because it was her car, she had to actually go through and do it. And so I stood over her shoulder, helpfully giving her advice and guidance on how to follow this form.

And I was at the end of the form, on the end of the page mentally, before she'd even filled out her name at the very top. I was just following through.

I was saying, no, no, left, right, with the cursor, trying to get her to click in the right box. I was getting frustrated. It was crazy. Did she not realise how long this was taking the way she was doing it?

Which was exactly the way I did it the first time. Did she not realise how many more important things I had to do? I had a sermon on husbands to write, for goodness sake.

[9 : 01] I actually had to walk out the room at one point. This is serious. I had to walk out the room. Isn't it amazing? I mean, that's just a simple little example. But isn't it amazing that God told us what it meant to love?

He told us what to do to love. He showed us what it meant to love. He said, just look at me and you will see love in action. And then we still turned our backs on that.

And what did God do? He came back to us and showed us again at the cross. Not in anger or in a patronising way, but through dying for us.

Christ loved the church by giving himself up for her. Friends, this is not a self-centred model. This is a self-sacrificing model.

Husbands, she is not your secretary, your PA, your servant. She is your partner. She is the delight of your eyes. She is your first opportunity every day to serve.

[10:11] And that service has a goal. Paul goes on to say in verse 26. We'll start from verse 25 and I'll read it through. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her.

Sanctify, big word. It means to have the quality of holiness. Holiness, another big word. It means to be set apart, pure, like God.

We were a mess. When we turned our backs on God and God's will, we went beyond the point of no return. So Jesus' sacrifice, I need to express this here.

Jesus' sacrifice is more than an example for us then to follow and imitate. Jesus' sacrifice is the only way back. Only Jesus' sacrifice can bring us back to the holiness that we were intended for.

But our love is to be shaped by Jesus' love for the church. Our love is meant to point to Jesus' love for the church. Our love is meant to pursue the same goal for our wives as Jesus accomplished for the church.

[11:25] Within creation, husbands were meant to promote holiness in marriage. The husband's love is meant to sanctify, to restore the voice of God in the world, to promote God's will over our own.

This is what it's meant, what it means for a husband to love his wife like Christ loved the church. This is what headship is.

Husbands lead by promoting God's voice in the world. And there's a richness to God's provision. God provides all we need to flourish within that too.

But let's think about what I'm saying there, that husbands lead by promoting God's voice in the world. I want to go back to Genesis 2, verse 15. See, in Genesis 2, verse 15, Adam is given the role of keeper of the garden.

Keeper or watchman, you could translate it. Verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. To work it and keep it.

[12:27] That keep word is watchman. He is to be the watchman. To maintain it and to grow it. And it's in this context that he's given the command about the tree.

And then in Genesis 3, verse 17, when Adam is judged by God for rebelling against him, he's got what God basically says.

This is my paraphrase. He's judged by God for listening to the voice of your wife over mine, is basically what God says. Genesis 3, verse 17.

Sin is rebellion. It's listening to any voice over God's. And husbands are called to promote God's voice in the world. This is what it means to nourish and cherish, is what Paul goes on to describe husbands' roles like.

To lovingly serve our wives. To delight in seeing them grow in every way given by God. Physically, emotionally, spiritually. A husband's lead is exercised in self-giving, nourishing and cherishing oneness.

[13:35] A husband's lead is exercised to promote God's glory. To point to Christ in the church. To showcase the gospel. This is headship.

This is love. But we live in a sinful world. We live in a world where nobody's perfect. Least of all us as husbands.

Least of all our wives. So we start to think, but what if she's nasty? What if she's lazy? What if she's domineering, manipulative? What if she's withholding sex or needy?

Man, I've got to tell you, these thoughts come up in our minds. But these questions are the voice of the world in us. They're not the example of God.

Apart from God, as the author and the example of love, we will approach relationships from our own perspective and weigh them up based on whether we're getting what we feel we want or need.

[14:40] And God said this was the trajectory that we were on when we rebelled. In Genesis 3.16, when God judges Eve, he points out where their relationship is heading. To the woman he said, this is verse 16, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing.

In pain you shall bring forth children. There are some people here who can verify that. We've had several babies born recently. I'm sure. Amen. They'll be saying. But he goes on then to say, your desire shall be for or contrary.

We're not sure. It's kind of an ambiguous word in the Hebrew. But it's not saying a good thing, basically. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you. Apart from God, we will approach relationships with demands or expectations, if you prefer, limits or conditions, if you prefer, ourselves as the beneficiary. When we don't get what we want, we get angry.

Think about this. Husbands, in particular, are wired to lead. So when you aren't getting what you want from a relationship, what God is saying is, we're going to abuse that strength that he's given us.

[15 : 52] God said, he shall rule over you. In the absence of God's rule, the strength given to lead will be distorted, distorted into the need to control.

And Genesis 3 gives us this hint that when husbands are denied, they will respond in anger. They will use that strength to assert themselves.

Now, the two main faces of anger are aggression, like an outward show of strength, and withdrawal, kind of a removal of that strength. And we'll look at these in more detail in our interview in a moment. But consider this.

Consider how Paul's command to husbands to love their wives undoes all of this. God's command to love begins with constancy of affection and high regard.

It's expressed in self-giving. And its goal is to restore and to grow God's image in his partner. constancy of affection, clear direction.

[17 : 07] Men, the Bible says to give yourself to your wife. If sex is an issue, talk about it.

But talk about it in a way that nourishes and cherishes her. If your wife is domineering in your thinking, then wrap her in love as you talk about it, as you move toward her.

All the time, pointing her toward Christ, to the gospel. A husband's love is exercised in self-giving, nourishing and cherishing oneness.

A husband's lead is exercised to promote God's glory, to point to Christ in the church, to showcase the gospel. This is headship.

This is love. Husbands, this is your command. Let me pray and then I'm going to invite some guys up to have a chat with.

[18 : 14] Father God, we thank you for sending your son to rescue us, to redeem us. We thank you for not just the rescue that you provided, but such a pure and perfect example of what love is.

A love that shows that you just so, so cherish us. A love that shows your commitment to us, to give even to the point of dying in our place.

Lord, we thank you for that and we know, even as we look at these words, we know that we're just not equal to the task. So we ask you to help us. Teach us, guide us, show us, Lord, not just in your word, but in our hearts.

Transform our hearts so that we can be men who submit to you by loving our wives as you've loved us.

Amen.