

Paul's Exhortation to Wives

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[0 : 00] Dear Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the victory that you won on the cross for us. Lord, not only it is the centerpiece of history, it is the centerpiece of our existence, it is the centerpiece of our worship.

And even now as we get into the subject of marriages, it has to be the center of our marriages, of how we live these marriages out, how we relate to one another as husband and wife, how we relate to our children, how we relate to one another in the workplace.

It's only because there was a victory that was bought for us over 2,000 years ago. And Father, if there's a prayer that I have for this church, is that there would be a deep and abiding understanding of this victory and how important it is for everything that we do.

So Father, as we come before this text, I pray that you would keep that at the forefront of our mind as we untangle some of the tangling that has occurred in here.

I'm not ignorant of the abuse of this text, but I pray that those who have been abused, who have felt abused or have seen people abused, I pray that you would bring clarity, that you would bring healing to hurt, and that you'd bring a newfound confidence to the words that the apostle wrote to us so many years ago, that the truths still stand today as they stood 2,000 years ago when first written.

[1 : 57] All because that you, Jesus Christ, had victory. We ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. Please take out your Bibles and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5.

As you all know, we have been in a series of Ephesians for the past little while, and it is our desire to get through that before the end of the year.

But as we find ourselves in chapter 5, we're kind of getting to this whole text of marriage.

There's a lot of thoughts and words that I have to say on this. Today I was actually overwhelmed with the memory of, in the first church that I planted way back 2007, 2008, was the first time I had preached through marriage, and I did so as a single man.

And it was interesting because people in the church were, how can a single man preach on these words? And sometimes I go back, I read my old sermons, and sometimes I'm like, oh, I can't believe I said that, or there's some other idea.

[3 : 22] But when I went through, I was relieved to see that there is still a continuation of thought, of growing, and understanding. And now I live in the experience of marriage.

And it hasn't changed my understanding. It has grown my understanding. And I can say for that church, it was kind of a landmark moment.

We were less than a year old, and God certainly used that in a lot of marriages as we got to take a look at what God says, not man says. So I want us to really focus on that.

And I'm going to take some time. I've now been pastoring for 15 years or so. I've come across a lot of stories. I've been a believer most of my life, always in church.

There's going to be some good stories, bad stories. But I've been sitting there this week thinking about every question that I've ever had pertaining to this passage. And I've just been jotting them down and trying to slot them into different sections of what we're going to be studying for the next several weeks.

- [4 : 34] So without much further ado, let's take a look at what Paul writes to us in Ephesians 5, starting in verse 22. Verse 25.

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 it 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 am 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.

- [6 : 26] The passage that I just read to you is actually the most detailed teaching on Christian marriage that we find in the entire Bible.

Sadly, it has become somewhat the most contentious, nefarious, and by some embarrassing passage of the New Testament.

And I can admit that there's good reason for that to have happened. The first, and I call it bad reason that this has occurred, is because there has been a history of abuse by men who quote one line out of the text, completely out of context, in order to force women, their wives, into a subservient and obedient position.

All right? During the sermon, I'm not going to shy away from the abuses that I've seen. I'm going to call out some of the abuses. My hope is desire, as we untangle this mess, that you will be able to see clearly.

We have heard men say, I have had it, even being here in Squamish, heard people say, not necessarily people at the church, but people have said, look what the Bible has to say.

- [7 : 58] You are to submit and obey me. And this is a horrible and tragic thing that has happened in many, many, so many Christian homes.

Some of you, I know, have witnessed this in your own lives, perhaps as a spouse, perhaps as a child, or even a church member. You grew up with that understanding.

So when I mention that I'm preaching from Ephesians 5, and someone recoils, I get it. I get the pain.

I get why they recoil from it. I have seen this teaching used against women, and I am deeply ashamed of what I have seen.

As a pastor, as I've said, I've seen all matters of abuse used by this verse. Also, I have seen what I call tragic mistakes.

- [8 : 57] And what I mean by tragic mistakes are mistakes meant by sincere, God-loving people who, wanting to do what's right before the Lord, have been erroneously taught this passage and tried to implement it into their lives to disastrous consequences.

Some have been able to find a medium point where it seems to work. They think they're obeying God, but they're obeying God in something that he's never called them to.

And there's a misunderstanding or a confusion about what Paul is truly saying here. The second bad reason, or the second reason why people cringe from this passage.

So the first one is the abuses. The second one is cultural. That we indeed live in a time, especially now, where we try to erase all distinctions between man and woman.

And we do this, including the home. What I find interesting about our culture is it's kind of funny.

[10 : 17] And this kind of came to mind a couple of weeks ago. We live in this day and age where we want to celebrate diversity. We want to celebrate uniqueness. But we're doing everything that we can to squash free speech.

We're trying to squash certain thought processes. And we're trying to erase all aspects of the individual and kind of make them all look like one.

Act like one. It's kind of this antithetical thought that I see going on in our society today. It seems to want everyone to adhere to its own set of subjectively arrived principles.

But if you don't agree, you can't be a part of it. I would call it the intolerance of tolerance. Everyone is to look and act the same, all in the name of individuality.

And it's no different. Even with men and women, there's a concerted effort to say we're about science, but we're going to erase and it's just a matter of deciding. And it totally contradicts what God tells us in Genesis, that God made man and God made woman.

[11 : 34] And we are different. The reason we fall prey to this gross error is because, as Francis Schaeffer wrote in his book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, that in regard to marriage, evangelicals have, with tragic results, accommodated to the world spirit of this age.

So the first reason we see a desire to have nothing to do with this passage is because of the abuses that we have seen. The second reason is because we now see everything through the cultural lens, which tells us which is right and what is wrong.

And we no longer trust God's Word, the one who created us, who made us, who designed us, who knows us, and how we're supposed to function.

We've allowed our culture to define marriage for us. And with that, we've begun to even accept that there's distinctions or no distinctions between man and woman when there clearly have been.

Why does this happen? Why is there so much confusion? I think the first one, and I will argue later, sin.

[13 : 06] We just learned from the text, and we're going to go back into it, that our marriages, which are supposed to model Jesus Christ, if Satan was to target the Christian witness in this world, what is the number one way he's going to do it?

What's the most obvious way? Marriage. We're going to get into that in a little bit, right? So we see the sin aspect. We see Satan coming against it.

And as I said, I know some many, many very sincere, God-fearing people who misunderstand the text. And what happens when you misunderstand the text, you misapply the text.

So not only do errors come from wrong understanding, errors come from wrong doing based on wrong understanding. Let me begin here by telling you, assuring you, that what Paul teaches on roles within the family are not only right, but they are to be celebrated.

They are to be celebrated. Paul's instructions are not abusive. Paul's instructions in regards to roles, and we're going to talk about what roles really mean, are not horrible.

[14 : 37] And in fact, when we properly understand this text, I believe it brings freedom, and it brings blessing.

And my prayer for you at SBC is that maybe for some of you, this will indeed happen. You've had a wrong understanding, which has brought in not only wrong actions, but wrong attitudes towards the text.

Perhaps not even negative, but what you thought was positive. But perhaps you haven't experienced that blessing because you still just did not understand it correctly.

So now there's three reasons, or not three reasons, three ways we're going to come at this text.

Because the most important thing we need to do is to understand the text. We need to understand what the words mean. We got to understand what was the intent of the author and all those things. So the first way we come to understanding this text is called textual context.

[15 : 45] Textual context. That's what we're going to call it. And the first mistake that people often make when we come to this passage is that we equate words that we understand today to mean the same thing they meant 2,000 years ago.

Right? And this is very easy to do. And it happens all the time. I remember when I started a youth ministry, I was 36 years old. I'm working in this pretty large youth ministry and kids kept telling me that I was bad.

Okay? I thought I was the most horrible youth leader around. But the point is, for me, bad meant not good. But for them, bad meant really not so bad.

Kind of good or cool or whatever. I'm not going to go as far as to say I was cool. But I was, they could tolerate me, let's just say. But even in my short world, even with my sons, there are certain words that I have to ask them to explain to me.

There's certain things they say, I don't know what it is. Because the saying has changed. Here's an illustration from the Bible about this, unrelated to this passage.

[17 : 08] In Luke 13, 31, the Pharisees are coming to Jesus. And they're trying to warn him about Herod. Okay? So it says, At that very hour, some Pharisees came and said to him, Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.

So these are Pharisees that are pro-Jesus. They're concerned for him. If you know anything about Israel, there was actually four ruling places. There was different Herods, which meant rulers.

And they wanted him to move to the other territory. That way he would not be harmed. Now Jesus responds and he says, Go and tell that fox. And he uses this word fox.

I remember the first couple of times I heard that. People in our day, we think, Fox, wow. That must have mean Jesus was calling him cunning. He was calling him clever or wise.

Therefore, Jesus must adopt his strategy to counter what Herod is doing. All right? And that's how they come to this interpretation. That's actually not what it means.

[18 : 15] In first century Palestine, a fox was simply a nuisance, a pest. The greatest damage they did is they would eat your food in the vineyards.

So the meaning meant that Jesus couldn't care less what Herod thought because Jesus had his own timetable. Jesus was going to do things the way he was going to do them.

So even that understanding of that idiom, that word fox, an animal that we have today, can cause confusion. So we put this under the whole heading of textual context.

Yes, words have meaning. And we need to understand those words. We need to look at the grammar. We need to look at what words happened before those words.

And all those things give us an understanding. Now, we all know, and maybe you don't, but the Bible was written in Greek. And it's actually an old Greek.

[19 : 16] It's biblical Greek. It doesn't even exist today. The Greek that is spoken today in Greece, these similar words, but there's enough variations in meanings. And one of the chief ways that scholars, that we figure out what the Bible means is that we have other texts from that time, and we look at words, and we see them, and we're not even talking Bibles.

We're talking about histories, biographies, all those different things that were written at the time, and we see and we've cataloged what some of these words mean. So we're going to look at grammar, sentence structure.

But there's two words right at the very beginning which give people a lot of pause, right? First verse, verse 22.

Wives, submit to your husbands. Submit. We're going to get into that a little bit later. But it's a word that has exceptionally negative connotations today.

And then you go down to the next word, the next verse, verse 23. For the husband is the head of the wife. That is not a term that we use often today.

[20 : 35] So there is a lot of arguments in trying to understand that, okay? So, when we get to this passage, and we're going to be going through, and we're going to be taking a couple of sermons, several sermons to do this, we're going to look at the textual context.

And we're going to break down the words. I want you to have absolute confidence in the words that are being spoken in this text. The next understanding that we use, or the other tool, is called the cultural context.

As I said, these events happened over 2,000 years ago that Paul wrote this letter. It is a much different world than it is today.

Even the idea of marriage, completely different. Not only that, Jews have a different view, the Greeks have another view, and the Romans still another view.

So when we even talk about marriage, it means three different things to those three different people groups. So we need to get to the bottom of what Paul is trying to do.

[21 : 45] And obviously, our backgrounds affect us. Even our backgrounds affect our understanding of the word marriage. So what we're going to see is that this passage was incredibly counter-cultural to the people that it was teaching.

Because today, people will say, well, that was Paul teaching something then. It was already a part of their culture. It's different. No, no, no. What Paul was teaching was incredibly counter-cultural to what all those people groups had.

The Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans. We're going to get into that. Then, we have our culture, which this teaching is now considered counter-cultural for completely opposite different reasons.

Which is quite amazing. All right? So we're going to have the textual context. We're going to look at grammar, syntax. Those are all the technical words. Structures, how everything comes together.

We're going to look at the culture. And then today, more specifically, we're going to look at the literary context. What do I mean by the literary context?

[23 : 02] Where do these instructions that Paul gives us fit within the context of the letter? All right?

These instructions on marriage do not happen without chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, and chapter 5.

All right? You know, you can have certain books you read and every chapter is totally unrelated. That is not what's going on here. Every single chapter, every word that Paul has spoken is leading us to this point on marriage.

Too often, and I know most of you guys, we've been kind of in a Bible discussion and someone brings up a verse to support their argument. That's called proof texting.

See, it says it in this verse. The problem with that is there's a whole bunch of other verses in the rest of Scripture that need to be taken into consideration.

[24 : 06] because the Bible is one message. There's going to be no contradictions. If there's a contradiction with something, we have to figure it out. There's a problem. So, as an example, let's take a look at verse 23.

This is what a proof text would be. For the husband is the head of the wife. Honey, I am your head. Now, just think where you can go with that.

Right? If I'm your head, that means I am your boss. I am your soul provider. Your whole basis of existence must come under me because I am your head.

Right? You understand? And I know we've heard some of those horrible things. And I've seen men think they are that head because they take this verse. But it's completely out of context.

In fact, they treat it like a sentence. But you just have to finish reading the rest of the sentence. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is it himself his Savior.

[25 : 20] So what will drive our understanding of head over the wife is what does it mean for Jesus Christ to be head of the church, head of the body, and its Savior?

All right? It means two completely different things. And when we understand it in its context, we're going to see its beauty, we're going to see its majesty, and we're going to see its power and blessedness that is meant to be a part of marriages that God wants for us.

As I've said, it's going to take us a couple of Sundays to go through this. And I do want to go purposely slow. I want to take a look at what the text does say, and I also want to take a look at what the text doesn't say.

And I want to make some other observations that my prayer is you will truly understand what this text says.

As what is the text doesn't say? Yes, it says submit. All right? But notice in that text it doesn't say obey. A lot of people want to add submission must be obedience.

[26 : 45] Eh. It's not what it means. When you talk to people, they freely just kind of add this obey thing. Wife, you need to obey your husband.

This is just one simple example. We're going to get to other little things that man has added in there or our thought process has added to the text that does not exist.

It's amazing. And I'm hoping as we go through these three areas, these three ways of interpretation, right, the textual context, the cultural context, and the literary context, that you will truly understand the power that this has, right?

So, the first thing we need to understand is that Paul is not simply teaching about marriage.

He's teaching something that is beyond marriage. Take a look at your Bibles. Take a look at verse 31.

[28 : 09] Most of your Bibles will have this in quotations. We've seen that Jesus cites the same thing in Matthew and it goes back to Genesis. Man and women were first created, right?

So, therefore, a man shall leave his father and wife and hold fast to his wife, sorry, his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is profound. All right? This is what wasn't revealed before and I am saying, and Paul's telling us, that it refers to Christ and the church.

So, the teaching on marriage that we're going to be receiving is also referring to Christ and his church.

It gives us this incredible picture of a loving and intimate relationship. You see, the truth of the matter is, if we as Christians cannot understand what the church is and how important the church is to Jesus Christ, we will never, really, ever get marriage.

[29 : 29] You get that? The key to understanding marriage is to understanding the church. Our understanding of the church, what it is to be, what it is to Jesus Christ, will drive our understanding of marriage.

So, if you are unclear of the role of Jesus Christ in the churches, you are going to be unclear in your marriage. Alright?

I'm not saying you're unclear as the duties of a father or a mother or children or all those aspects that are there. But you're going to be unclear as to why you exist.

What is your purpose? And we're going to get into that in a moment. And this is why this whole entire letter of Ephesians to this church is so incredible.

I'm just going to give you a quick overview. And this is where this passage fits in the literary context. If you remember, the first three chapters of Ephesians tell us much about our salvation through God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

[30 : 47] we learned that God first loved us and that he gave us over to his beloved son. And his son, Jesus Christ, sacrificed himself for us.

He saved us, redeemed us, and he then sanctifies us. Jesus Christ made it possible for men and women to become sons and daughters of God.

And it also tells us, and we're going to look at it in a bit, that Jesus Christ's role is to eventually give us back to the Father without blemish, which means he's perfecting us.

He's making us more like him. And if you've been with us for the last couple of weeks on marriage, we're going to see one of the primary drivers of marriage is to make us most like Christ.

And Jesus does this, all of this, because he wants to bring glory to his Father. And we see so clearly in the cross at Calvary that Jesus was motivated by a self-denying love.

[32 : 15] That he accepted a bloody, humiliating, and painful death, all to redeem us, to redeem me and to redeem you.

And we learn that Jesus Christ did these things because of his great love for the Father. And as we learned through these pages, he didn't do it because we were really great people.

He did it because we were really lost. We were really sinful. We were in such a mess that there was no way that we could ever make ourselves right before God.

So we have this work of the Father who gives us to the Son. The Son does this incredible work for us. Then we see this work of the Holy Spirit. And the work of the Holy Spirit puts this mark, this seal on us.

And what this does, it tells us that we are known by God, we are saved by God, and we are sealed by God. That means we are sealed for eternity.

[33 : 29] Once saved, all we save, He's got us. And as Scripture tells us, He did this because of His great love and mercy for us.

So while He does this for us, there's me, there's you, there's you, there's you, there's you, and then we all come together and this church is created.

And Jesus Christ calls this church His bride. It's His bride. This is the absolute most importance to Jesus Christ, His bride.

It's a group of people made up of both Jews and Gentiles who were now one people, this new people.

people. And we all come together to live our lives, to live it in the reality of what it means to be known by God.

[34 : 37] We live our life with the reality that we are saved by God. And we are to relive our reality as if we were sealed by God.

What does that mean? we know who we are. We know it has absolutely nothing to do with us. And we have this confidence that God's never going to take it away because we understand that God has a purpose for us.

And this is who we are. We are children of the Most High. And then we finally get to chapter 4 of Ephesians.

We're learning how to act, how to talk, how to think, what type of attitudes we are to have as his children. We learn these words that are before us are to demonstrate that we are to be humble, gentle, patient, forgiving, long-suffering, loving.

And there's this verse that he says this is eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. That there's supposed to be no conflict here.

[35 : 55] That's what we're seeing all over the world right now. Conflict in the church. There's conflict over COVID, whether it's open, not open. It's dividing churches. Just horrible stuff that's going on right now.

But the Holy Spirit has a part of our process of making us holy, to be set apart and used by God. And the image he gives, it's put off self and put on Christ.

It's like a jacket almost. So we're to take off this old person that we were before Jesus and now we're wearing this glorious, perfect robe of Jesus Christ.

Christ. And because with that robe we're to walk in love, walk in light, to walk in wisdom, to walk in the Spirit, that means we're going to give no time to the flesh.

We're not going to give any time to darkness. We don't want to give any time to foolishness. Anytime those things come into our life, we've got to get rid of it, got to get out of there as soon as we possibly can.

[37 : 13] Because that defiles the beautiful suit or dress that we're wearing of Jesus Christ.

So now at the tail end of chapter five, Paul brings us to the most important relationships that we will have in life.

Marriage, parenting, and I know it talks about masters and slaves, but that translates today to work, employers, employee, people that we are involved in day in, day out.

The biggest influences that we are ever going to have in our lives. And it's all going to be related to the church.

To the church. It's going to be how, it's going to be interwoven Jesus Christ and the command. So I want us to take a look at the commands that Paul gives both wives and husbands.

[38 : 21] And you're going to see some eerily, not eerily, they're parallels. And the way the verses are even structured, we see a command, we see an understanding of Christ's work, and then there's a reiteration of the command.

So let's take a look going back to verse 22. So verse 22 is the command, right? Wives, and it is a command. It's not a suggestion, it's an imperative.

Submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. And then it gives us Christ's work. What does that mean, right? For the husband is the head of the church, of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and himself its Savior.

And now we see in verse 24 a restatement of the command. Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to everything in their husbands.

So he begins with the marriage and he's tying it back into the church. Now let's take a look at the commands for the husbands. Verse 25, command, husbands, love your wives, right?

[39 : 37] Then, verses 25 to 27, we talk about Christ's work. Christ, as Christ loved the church, 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 splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Then, verse 28, we get the restatement of the command again. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

So just look through these instructions, what we have. It is loaded with theology. theology. First, notice how it says, Jesus Christ gave himself up the church.

That is reference to the passion work of Jesus Christ. That is reference to the crucifixion. That is reference to the redeeming act that Jesus Christ did for us.

All right, so we have that reference. Then, we see the present work of Christ. Notice that it says that he's purifying us, that he might sanctify us.

[41 : 01] So that is the work of Jesus Christ in our lives. We talked about this when it meant to be living in the spirit. The spirit is the power for us to live like Jesus. That is the entire theme of Ephesians.

It's being boiled down to this one verse in verse 26. And then, we see the future work of Jesus Christ.

We see the past, the cross, the present right now, him sanctifying us. And then the future where he presents us to God, verse 27, that he might present the church to himself in splendor.

Is that incredible or what? Just in those verses, we're getting a full picture of the entire power of Jesus Christ. The power of victory over death on the cross, the power of his sanctifying work in our lives right now, and what will eventually happen.

So the theology in this passage is so deep, and we need to understand the theology if we're going to understand the instructions that Paul gives wives and husbands.

[42 : 26] So when it comes to understanding these commands that Paul gives us about marriage, we see they are wrapped in biblical truth about Jesus Christ.

All right? our marriages are about Jesus Christ. Do you get that?

Our marriages from the very beginning of time is truly about Jesus Christ. It is about God's work for us.

what that tells us is that the culture is lying to us when it simply tells us that our marriages are just a social construct, that it happened because of evolution that men and women were able to procreate and carry on their seed to populate the earth when it was better than a man and a woman came together.

No, no, no, no. This goes right back to the beginning and this tells us why a man and man and a child is not biblical nor is a man or a woman and woman or two men and a woman in that type of context of marriage of intimacy is not what picture of the church is.

[44 : 00] It tells us that our marriages are not an evolutionary optimum way to have and raise children in order to procure a future for our civilization.

That is not the goal of marriage. The goal of marriage is meant to display the love of Jesus that he has on, that he has through the church.

love, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion. You see, as Jesus Christ died for us on the cross to glorify God, he did that in the same way that our marriages are meant to glorify God the Father in the same way.

You see, the Savior in the same believer. A young believer, and you're thinking you want to marry this young girl, young believing guy, you can be a young believing girl looking at the guy, but you're sitting there and you're having this talk, and you have this talk when you're first getting married, and you usually talk about your dreams, right?

What you want for marriage. I want kids. I want this kind of house. But if you're following the Lord Jesus Christ, you understand, and you often don't have to have this talk. My wife and I were already talking about that. The reason I married my wife is because she had a life that was not in glorifying God, but there was a desire for her to glorify God in all that she did.

[45 : 43] And likewise, I give thanks that she saw the same in me, that my decisions are driven by a desire to please the Lord Jesus Christ who saved me from eternal torment.

I want to marry someone whose life is of Jesus. And what's interesting, there's different ways to glorify God. I'm just going to segue a little bit in some of the marital counseling situations that I've confronted over the years or some of the struggles that some of my friends have had. You know, I've had some guys pursue a girl that really didn't go all that well, and one of the things they simply said, well, she didn't submit to the way I wanted to do things.

Well, what was the way you wanted to do things? Well, you know what? I wanted to live a couple of blocks from home for my mom. I want to work at the same company my dad has and, you know, raise kids. But I remember one guy in particular, the woman he was pursuing had an incredibly scientific gift and was pursuing a career in astrophysicist. And she was actually quite a brilliant girl.

She was at Caltech, which is top of the top, or Einstein studied. And she felt a calling there. And I remember my simple thing is, I know you guys kind of really like each other, but I think you need to love someone who's kind of going in that direction of life that you feel called by God in. And that even though this guy believed that everything would be perfect and glorified in God, yes, as his individual, it was his, but it wasn't hers. And I don't know what happened to them after. I don't know if she's married or whatever, or found someone in that field.

That was many years ago when I was doing college ministry. But that wasn't a matter of submission. That was just a matter of making wise decisions. It would be unwise for me to pursue a woman who doesn't want to be a part of church ministry or share the same type of heart that I have for the church. And someone might be really pro-church, but God might be calling them to a type of career where they've got to travel all over the world.

[48 : 00] And we're going to talk about this later on, about roles and the problems we have with roles. I'm just going to tell you one thing when it comes to the cultural context.

I don't know, I didn't know where I was going to put this in, but it kind of happens here. It's really easy for us to take our culture and make it the overriding truth over all other cultures.

I don't believe the Bible ever teaches that. I believe the Bible teaches a principle and gives us a foundation.

So one of the things that I do when looking at whether this is a true biblical precept, is I say, could this principle, this thing that God wants from us, can it be lived out in Madagascar?

Can it be lived in India or some other culture? Now, some other cultures, let's just say marriage, they have polygamy of marriage. We know that's unbiblical because the Bible states it and we see all the mistakes that happen because of it. But there's other nuances of our culture that we think is biblical. Wife has to work at home. Do I believe in our culture that is the best way? Yes, for some families, it is the absolute best way. But it is not always the best way for all people. There's different challenges that we all face. There's different seasons of life.

[49 : 37] There's different callings of life. And we're going to talk about that because we see some of those abuses. And I talked about it earlier. I knew one family had many kids. All the sons were able to go to university, which he fully paid for, but he would not pay for any of the daughters because he didn't believe a daughter should go to university. She should take something that was just going to benefit her in the home. And his daughter was quite brilliant and kind of had a break away from the family to go to university. And I don't know if she's married yet or even if she had her heart set on that. But well-meaning, Bible-Christ-loving Christians sometimes fall in those mistakes.

And I know I'm saying a lot here, and I really want you to understand me. So if you're confused about anything I say, send me an email and we'll talk about it, okay? I do not want to be misquoted.

But my point is, a principal truth of Scripture has to be able to be carried out all over the world, not here, just here in North America. All right? So I'm going to leave it at that. So we understand that our marriages are not social constructs. We know that our marriages are not just optimum way to raise children, but that our marriages are supposed to be about Jesus. So when I sit there with my wife and we talk about the decisions that we are going to make in our family, we are going to make decisions that are based on Jesus. And there's a whole bunch of other commands. How do we take care of our kids?

How do we give them the best that we're able to give them? And I know I'm a little bit farther along in life, but when you are younger, you might have a decision between a career that has you on the week, on the road, 44 weeks of the year. You might have everything that's kind of a biblical marriage, but if you're away the whole time, how are you able to do your function as a dad and love your kids?

So these are some of the dynamics that come in sense, biblical wisdom, and it's entirely takes place. All right. So what is Christ to us, the church, right? The church is his body. Jesus Christ saved the church.

[52 : 13] Jesus Christ sanctifies the church. And just as I said in verse 27, the role of Jesus Christ is to present us, the church, to the Father without spot or wrinkle, that she might be holy and without blemish. You see, the church is what people see of Jesus Christ on the earth today. We are that visible representation. And our marriages are the visible representation of Jesus Christ in the church. Now, I think many of us know the words, but do we really understand the significance of these words? The model of Christ loving the church. I think we see the significance, as I stated earlier, that this is the area that Satan attacks. Marriage is falling apart. We see the rise of individualism.

That is counter to making Jesus first in your life. Pornography, all the sexual stuff, that is just cheap, counterfeit garbage that is supposed to replace the intimacy that is supposed to happen between a man and a woman.

Everything that Satan tries to copy to take us away is just perverted, broken nonsense. And it's always used to damage the witness of the church. I've heard so many people say, well, I don't feel fulfilled in my career. My question is, what is your goal that Jesus Christ has asked you to?

So the first thing we need to understand is that the teachings of Paul that he gives us here don't occur outside the teaching of Ephesians. So when we get into the roles, for lack of a better word, of husband and wife, it happens within this milieu of the literal context. It's taking everything that we have learned.

The fact of the matter is, if Paul were simply to have written just these verses and given to us and said, go do Christian marriage, we would fail miserably.

[54 : 57] Because we would not have the rest of the teaching and biblical wisdom that Paul gives us in the rest of these verses. The fact of the matter is, as we shall see, these commands that Paul gives both husbands and wives are no small things, nor are they arbitrary commands.

They fit together to look like the relationship that exists between the church and Jesus Christ.

My contention is, if we can understand this, and I would encourage you even this week, as we're going to be in here for a couple of weeks, do your devotions, write your notes, write your observations, write things that you do not see that maybe you've heard.

Pray on it, meditate on it. I think you're going to see some fears, some wrong teaching begin to disappear.

All right, I think this is where we're going to end today. To be honest with you, I'm excited to be teaching this. Somehow it is daunting.

[56 : 24] But my heart's desire is that we would see and understand the marriages here are first meant as a way to glorify our Lord Heavenly Father. Let us pray. Dear Lord, I feel like there's almost a shortage of words in which to speak about all the wrong teachings, the wrong thoughts, the wrong feelings, the wrong hopes, wrong desires that we've had about marriage.

I know this sermon is almost an introduction, and we've heard some of these points before. But I really need us to feel the need to understand that our lives are really truly all about you.

It's about lifting you up. And we see this wonderful, incredible model of marriage in Jesus Christ and the church. Father, I even pray through this sermon series that people who are kind of meh about church would come to see the true beauty of the church.

So one of my friends simply said this week, he says, you know how I know the church is a supernatural work? Is it because it continues with so many broken people?

It's true. If it was just a human creation, it would be crushed. But Father, you use our brokenness, our past, our mistakes, and you mold us into something beautiful, something that you love.

[58 : 09] And that you put us to good work, a work that is to glorify you. So my challenge to the saints here at Squamish Baptist Church, when they step back, are their marriages truly, are they truly glorifying Jesus Christ?

Is there true worship there? Do they worship God? I'm not talking about a small devotional together, but I'm talking about is their purpose beyond just raising good kids, beyond having a retirement, beyond having a nice house.

But do they truly see it as the wonderful picture of Jesus Christ loving his church? Father, we give you thanks for your word and the studies that you give us in these things.

In your most holy and precious name, Amen. Amen.