

“One Flesh”  
Ephesians 5:25-33  
(Preached at Trinity, November 8, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen this latter part of **Chapter 5** describes the effect of the Gospel on human relationships. This will continue into **Chapter 6**. The Gospel enables us to humble ourselves before God and man. The Christian model is one of submission and humility.  
**Ephesians 5:21 NAU** - "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."  
**1 Peter 5:5 NAS** - "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
2. In **Verses 22-33** Paul speaks specifically on the affect the Gospel has upon the marital relationship. Several weeks ago I began a series of sermons dealing with this great institution of marriage.
  - A. Marriage is God's ultimate design for men and women. It is a great blessing from God and the path for most human beings, but sin has taken the great blessing and filled it with great difficulty. So it's necessary for us to have sound teaching on the different roles of husbands and wives. Even with proper teaching it takes much grace for men and women to live together as one.
  - B. **Verses 21-24** have a focus on the duty of wives to their husbands. Wives are to submit to the leadership of their husbands.  
Beginning with **Verse 25** Paul shifts his attention to the duties of husbands towards their wives. Men have a duty to care for their wives in sacrificial love. The church's subjection to Christ is given as the example to wives.  
Christ's love for the church serves as the model for husbands.
3. When husbands give of themselves in loving their wives, giving greater attention to the needs of their wives than their own needs, and when wives give themselves in submission to their husbands, marriage becomes wonderful instrument for building strong families to the glory of God.
4. Marriage is truly a work of God.  
There is a wonderful unity that can only be described as amazing. God's design is that two separate individuals are joined together as one.  
We can see this in the first marriage  
**Genesis 2:24 NAU** - "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."
5. This morning I want us to explore this wonderful union. If we truly understood this it would be the end of every marital dispute. It would surely be the end to divorce. There are two elements to this – both are wonderful to consider.  
First we'll look at this unity as it applies to the husband and wife in marriage.  
Second, we'll look at the unity as it applies to Christ and the church. Paul's great emphasis in this passage is to link marriage to the relationship of Christ to the Church.

- I. First Paul reminds us of unity in marriage
- A. Physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, financially, and in every other way, the couple is to become one.
1. This is what is meant by “one flesh.” It’s an organic unity – one body
  2. God has created men and women as perfect compliments to one another. These two distinctly different human beings are designed to become one. In other words, they “fit” together. In our day people are trying to re-define the concept of marriage and family in terms of a social construct according to the will of man rather than something God has ordained as a part of His created order. Marriage is the union of a man and woman and family begins with this union.
- B. As far as the physical attachment, they become one in a physical union.
1. Children are the result of this union. These children now possess a special genetic makeup, a genetic inheritance specific to the union of the parents.
  2. In the sexual aspect of their relationship, it is a union exclusive to the marriage. This is the heart of the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment. And the husband and wife are not to consider their bodies as their own but as belonging to their partner.  
**1 Corinthians 7:3-4 NAU** - "The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*."
  3. The reason adultery is so heinous is it tears apart the unique union God has formed between the husband and wife.  
Matthew Henry – “A man's children are pieces of himself, but his wife is himself.”
- C. As far as emotional union, the new unit takes precedence over all previous and future relationships  
**Matthew 19:5-6 NAS** - "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" ?  
<sup>6</sup> "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
1. The word for “cleave” literally refers to glue. This describes just how tight and inseparable the marriage bond is.
  2. There is mutual love and harmony in the union of marriage. It is the greatest of friendships.
  3. There is an intimacy in this relationship like no other. There is trust, honesty and openness—a sense of being safe.
- D. As far as the intellectual union, the two share plans together
1. As the two become one they become a union so that together they might display the glory of God. This demands planning.
  2. There are countless decisions to be made; countless weighing of options. The two work together sharing in the uniting of their minds. While the husband bears the responsibility of headship the two labor together in the sharing of intellectual pursuits.
  3. Too often a couple become intellectually distant. They cease talking. They cease sharing.

- E. There is also a financial union
1. Each partner is no longer to see money earned as “my” money; but rather as “our” money. It is dangerous when the two have separate checking accounts
  2. The two make plans and set goals together. Income and financial growth are always to be viewed with a purpose of building the prosperity and wellbeing of the home.
    - a. The work of both the husband and the wife has this goal. This is true for the husband as he works outside the home as well as the wife as she works within the home.
    - b. Many times the wife advances the prosperity of the home through her thrift and sound judgment. The model wife and mother in Proverbs 31 pictures a woman maintaining her home while also aiding the home financially.  
**Proverbs 31:16-18 NAU** - "She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. <sup>17</sup> She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. <sup>18</sup> She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night."  
**Proverbs 31:24 NAU** - "She makes linen garments and sells *them*, And supplies belts to the tradesmen."
    - c. This of course works out in endless ways in each home. Sometimes a lady will work outside the home, particularly when the children are grown. She may carefully study and evaluate a product before making the purchase. Even cutting coupons and shopping sales adds to the financial well-being of the home.
- F. There is also a spiritual unity – one soul
1. This is one reason believers only marry believers  
**2 Corinthians 6:14 NAU** - "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"
  2. There is spiritual oneness – unity in Christ.  
 They share together being the body of Christ. They share together in the work of the Kingdom. Before marriage they were serving Christ individually with their lives. After marriage they serve Christ as a unit—as a single God-ordained entity laboring together as one flesh.
  3. They have a common experience in Christ. They can share their struggles. They worship together. They are in agreement as they direct their resources.
  4. Without Christ this true and full oneness is impossible

## II. One flesh in Christ

- A. Paul describes the ultimate display of this union is in Christ  
**Ephesians 5:29-32 NAS** - "for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."
1. Marriage between a man and woman is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church. We are intimately joined with Christ. We are designed to fit with Him. This is why same sex marriage actually contradicts the Gospel.
  2. As a husband and wife are designed to "fit" together, so also we are designed to fit within the body of Christ.  
**Ephesians 2:19-22 NAU** - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."  
**Ephesians 4:15-16 NAU** - "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."
  3. Jesus looks upon His people as His bride. This is a love relationship. He looks upon us with pure delight.  
 When Paul commanded husbands to love their wives he directed their attention to Christ's sacrificial love in dying for the church – His bride.  
**Ephesians 5:25** – "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"
  4. Paul described this love as immeasurable.  
**Ephesians 3:17-19 NAU** - "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."
  5. Jesus defends His Bride, protects her, provides for her. They will always be inseparable.  
**Romans 8:38-39 NAU** - "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

6. And Christ knows His bride intimately. He is gentle towards her. He never puts a heavy burden upon His Bride  
**Matthew 11:29-30 NAS** - "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."
- B. The Bride of Christ also describes a relationship of commitment and fidelity where the Bride is absolutely committed to the Bridegroom
1. **Matthew 7** describes it.  
**Matthew 7:21-23 NAU** - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. <sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."  
    - a. This "knowledge" describes intimacy. Jesus is saying, "I never had a relationship with you."
    - b. The Bride of Christ knows of this relationship.
  2. Like with marriage, when a person comes to Christ all other relationships fade into the background.  
    - a. In marriage all other relationships fade into the background. Friendships fade in significance – they now involve the husband and wife. Parents are still important, but the wife's chief allegiance is to her husband and the husband's allegiance is to his wife.  
**Genesis 2:24 NAU** - "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."
    - b. This is also true of our relationship with Christ.  
**Luke 14:26 NAS** - "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."  
**Matthew 10:34-37 NAS** - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. <sup>37</sup> "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."
  3. A couple espoused to one another remained chaste and faithful anxiously awaiting the wedding day. As the Bride of Christ we are remaining chaste and pure and awaiting His return.  
As a Bridegroom espoused to His Bride, Jesus will come to receive us to Himself where they will be forever together.

4. As the Bride of Christ, one flesh with Him, we should seek to demonstrate fidelity, faithfulness, obedience, and love.
  - a. And this is the glorious picture that we should seek to display with our marriages.
  - b. Just as we continue to kindle our relationship with Christ we must continue to kindle our relationship with our mates.
  - c. Husbands are to love their wives in the same manner that Christ loves His bride.
  - d. Wives are to submit to their husbands as if they are submitting to Christ—not in the same manner they obey Christ, but in obedience to Christ.

#### Conclusion:

1. It ultimately takes a regenerate heart that changes all relationships. It takes Divine help to truly have a God honoring marriage.
2. Only a Christian can accept the Christian ethic.  
To live as a Christian demands the grace of God – the continual help of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. God has ordained that all kinds of people marry. Both believers and unbelievers marry. Both are to vow to a lifetime of commitment to their mates. Both are to unite as one flesh.
4. But only the Christian can truly develop the love, sympathy, understanding, forgiving spirit, and self-denying attitude that marriage demands  
Only the Christian has the motive of glorifying Christ in their marriage. Notice Christ is the motive for both husbands and wives.  
Only the Christian will understand the great blessing of a mate in fulfilling the mandate to govern the earth and display the glory of God.
5. May God grant us Christian homes; husbands and wives joined together as one flesh reflecting the union we have with Christ.