

“Christ’s Work of Redemption”
Ephesians 5:25-27
(Preached at Trinity, November 15, 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. In **Verse 18** Paul gave the great charge that applies to every believer, “Be filled with the Spirit.” It is a high charge. This is the heart of the Christian life. It is the power of holiness. It affects everything. In the verses that follow we’ve been looking at the effect of Christianity upon human relationships. **Verses 25-33** have a focus upon marriage.
2. But we must never forget that the chief work of the Holy Spirit is to point us to Christ. All things in the Christian life are done with an eye to Christ. He is the motivation in all that we do. The Christian has been united to the body of Christ. Paul calls this a great mystery.
Ephesians 5:32 NAU - "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."
3. Paul has maintained Jesus as the chief focus of this passage. He shines forth as a brilliant light. (Look at **Verses 21-33**- He is in almost every verse.) This morning, as I bring my series of sermons from **Chapter 5** to a close, I want to direct your attention to the redeeming work of Christ. This is really the heart of the entire passage. Without the redeeming work of Christ we would have no redeeming grace in marriage. It is Christ that makes a family shine forth as a bright beacon.
4. Before we move on to **Chapter 6** I want us to consider the redemptive work of Christ. I want set before you three elements of this glorious work of Christ from **Verses 25-27**.
 - I. It is particular – for His bride - "gave Himself up for her"
 - II. It is personal – Jesus loves His bride - "just as Christ also loved the church"
 - III. It is purposed – that she should be holy – **Verses 25-27**
 - I. It is particular – for His bride - "gave Himself up for her"
 - A. Arminians believe that Jesus loves all men equally and the same
 1. Ephesians 5 puts it in perspective
 - a. As Christians we are to love all men, even our enemies
Luke 6:27-28 NAU - "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."
 - b. This doesn’t mean we love all people equally and the same Christian husbands certainly have a particular love for their wives
 2. The same is true of Christ.
 - a. The Bible declares that one of God’s essential attributes is love
1 John 4:7-8 NAU - "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

- b. Love stands at the very heart of God's nature
God is the father of mercies, and so the father of love, who so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son to die for it.
 - c. We should not be ashamed to tell all men of God's mercy demonstrated in His love.
 - d. We should not be ashamed to tell the sinner that God loved the world enough to send His Son to die for whoever would trust Him.
 - 3. Christ loves all men generally, but this should not be confused with the particular love He has for His bride. He gave His life for His Bride
Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"
- B. This finds its foundation in eternity
- 1. The Father chose a multitude from the mass of fallen humanity. In the eternal Covenant of Redemption the Father pledged to give these people to His Son as His eternal inheritance.
 - 2. Jesus came to die for these people particularly
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
 - 3. Jesus has redeemed them particularly. They are being saved particularly
John 6:37-39 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
John 17:1-2 NAU - "Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."
- C. Particular redemption is most glorifying to God
- 1. It incorporates the entirety of the Godhead
The Father elects according to His eternal purpose, the Son redeems precisely those whom God decreed to save, the HS applies the redemptive work of Christ granting faith and repentance to God's elect.
 - 2. It declares the infinite value of Christ's blood – Not a single one will be lost for whom He died.
 - 3. It glorifies the eternal redemptive purpose of God. He is accomplishing the salvation of each and every one He chose.
- II. It is personal – Jesus loves His bride - "just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"
- A. Jesus looks upon His people as His beloved Bride.
- 1. Jesus has a love relationship with His Bride. 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 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"

2. Paul described this love as immeasurable.
Ephesians 3:17-19 NAU - "that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹,and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."
 3. This love led Him to give Himself for His bride
 - a. He shed His own blood for His Bride that she might be cleansed from the filth of her iniquity
Ephesians 1:7 NAU - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"
 - b. Jesus fully paid the price of our redemption. What love is displayed in the cross
- B. The love of Christ for us is personal, experiential
1. It is a mystery – It is both incomprehensible and comprehensible. It is something that cannot be known, yet something we experience
 2. As Christians rooted and grounded in love we know the love of Christ personally, particularly, experientially
 3. The love of Christ is something we learn and know as we enter into relationship with Him
 - a. We know He died for us – for me. This is the nature of saving faith. We have experienced the love of Christ in His death. We know forgiveness.
 - b. We know He will never leave us or forsake us - He is always with us. We are His beloved. How could He ever forsake one He loves with an infinite love?
 - c. We know we are partakers of His rich inheritance. His death made possible our adoption. We are the beloved children of God.
 - d. We know He is working everything for our good.
 There are many trials and difficulties in this life – some can seem overwhelming. We know that each has been sent from the hand of love.
 4. Too often Christians act as if they had to earn the love of Christ.
 You can never do anything to cause Him to love you less. And there is nothing you can do to make Him love you more.

III. It is purposed – that she should be holy – Verses 25-27

- A. God's great design in our salvation is to make us holy
 "so that He might sanctify her"
1. The word for "sanctify" is ἅγιάζω – It means "to make holy"
 2. The NT word for saint is ἄγιος – It is the same word translated "holy" – 161 times in the NT.
 3. This refers to all Christians – all of us are called to be holy.
 We are set apart unto God. We are consecrated unto His use.
 We are separated from the world to a life of righteousness.

- B. Under the Old Covenant God's people were set apart
 - 1. Israel was chosen as a holy nation—a nation set apart from among all the nations of the earth. God entered into a covenant relationship with them. They were God's own possession.
 - 2. Circumcision marked God's covenant people as being distinct, holy—God's own people set apart from all the nations of the earth. They were commanded to remain separate from them. They were not to intermarry with them. They were not to follow their gods.
 - 3. Circumcision was a mark of obedience signifying trust in God's covenant. It marked their full submission to God.
It was permanent and irreversible
 - 4. The other nations mocked and ridiculed Israel for such foolishness. Circumcision confounded the wisdom of the flesh – yet, it was pleasing to God. God demanded that His people be different.
 - 5. The problem was it was only an outward mark upon them. Circumcision did not affect the heart. God demands that His people love and obey Him with their whole heart.
God was more interested in circumcised hearts
Deuteronomy 10:16 – “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”
 - 6. This demands a supernatural work. This is the work of Christ
Ephesians 5:26-27 NAU - "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
- C. The redeeming work of Christ results in both justification and sanctification
 - 1. Justification is the result of Christ's headship as He took our place at God's court of justice. At the cross He suffered in our stead by taking our sins upon Himself and satisfying God's demand for justice by shedding His own blood and giving His own life. The Bridegroom gave His life for His Bride.
Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"
By His death His own righteousness is also imputed to us.
 - 2. By the death of Christ He has also made possible the work of sanctification. This makes possible the transforming grace that changes every relationship. It makes marriage as God ordained it.
Paul uses the expression:
Ephesians 5:26 NAU - "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word"
 - a. Most often expositors are immediately drawn to water baptism
Leon Morris: “Clearly “the washing of water” here refers to baptism, while “the word” may be the baptismal formula.”
 - b. I believe instead that it refers to regeneration – the miraculous life-changing transforming of the heart that results not only in faith and repentance but in the glorious life of progressive holiness.
Paul speaks of this washing in Titus 3

Titus 3:5 NAU - "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"

- c. The Word is referring to the sanctifying power of God's Word
- John 17:17 NAU** - "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."
- 3. Jesus saved us that we might be holy in heart and conduct
This is God's eternal purpose
- Ephesians 1:4 NAU** - "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

Conclusion:

1. The amazing work of Christ finds its ultimate fulfillment at the end when He returns and His work of redemption will be completed:
Ephesians 5:27 NAU - "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
2. But God's transforming grace in Christ has a remarkable effect upon our life here and now. The Christian marriage is a wonderful display of the work of Christ. The Christian home has Christ preeminent in every way. Our union with Christ shapes the union between husbands and wives. Wives are able to submit to their husbands with Christ as the focus. Husbands are able to love their wives with Christ as the example.
Ephesians 5:33 NAU - "Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband."