

**June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**“The Man Who Gives Himself”**

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**Ephesians 5:25-32**

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,**

**26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,**

**27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

**28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.**

**29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.**

**30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.**

**31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”**

**32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

Happy Father’s Day to all of the fathers in the house, and thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. As we begin, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Our text for today describes the dominant role of a husband and father in a single clause. **Ephesians 5:25** tells us:

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.**

The husband and father is the one who is called to love his wife and give himself for her. The standard of loving behavior is given in the example of Jesus Christ. It is interesting that love does not necessarily mean the same thing to Jesus as it means to those who are writing the love songs. With Jesus, the emotional feeling of love is not the predominant good, but rather, producing the best outcome in the life of the one that He loves. Let us look, for instance, at **Matthew 16:21-23**, which says:

**21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.**

**22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”**

**23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

Peter was trying to encourage Jesus, but Jesus did not appreciate Peter’s encouragement, as Peter was encouraging Jesus to avoid, rather than to execute, the plan of God. Jesus referred to Peter as the devil because of Peter’s inappropriate encouragement. Another example of Jesus’ love is found in **Matthew 17:14-18**, which reads:

**14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him [Jesus], kneeling down to Him and saying,**

**15 “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.**

**16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”**

**17 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.”**

**18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.**

Because the disciples had a little trouble curing an epileptic, Jesus rebuked his disciples, calling them a faithless and perverse generation. This may not seem much like love, but coming from Jesus, it is, as we will see in our next example of Jesus’ love, found when Jesus was teaching and the crowd was so great that his mother and brothers could not get in to see him.

**Luke 8:19-21** records:

**19 Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd.**

**20 And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.”**

**21 But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”**

The Scripture makes it clear that the priority that Jesus’ biological relatives, including His mother, sought to presume did not carry a great deal of weight with Jesus. Neither, apparently, did the inability of the disciples to command the winds and the waves as did Jesus in our next example of Jesus’ love. **Matthew 8:23-27** records:

**23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.**

**24 And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.**

**25 Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”**

**26 But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.**

**27 So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”**

In our next example, some men informed Jesus about the Galileans that Pilate had killed in the temple precincts as they were offering sacrifices to God. These men may not have been

prepared for the lack of sympathy that Jesus showed in His loving answer to them. **Luke 13:1-5** records:

**1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**

**2 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?**

**3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**

**4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?**

**5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

One day, a ruler came to ask Jesus about the Kingdom of Heaven. It would seem that Jesus was the correct person to ask about heaven, but Jesus’ loving response was not exactly what the ruler expected. **Luke 18:18-19** records:

**18 Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

**19 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.**

Jesus explained to the man in **Luke 18:20**:

**20 You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”**

In effect, Jesus told the man, “You know how to get to heaven. Just do what you know that you should do.”

The ruler is not getting much satisfaction from Jesus. First the ruler is rebuked for giving Jesus a compliment, then Jesus indicates to the ruler that his question is elementary, one to which he should already know the answer. The ruler tries with one more question, in **Matthew 19:20**:

**20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”**

Jesus’ final answer to the ruler called for discipleship, but the answer was so hard that the ruler decided to give up. **Mark 10:21-25** gives us the end of the story.

**21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”**

**22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**

**23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”**

**24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!**

**25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Although the Scripture records that Jesus loved the man, Jesus hurt the rich ruler’s feelings. Regardless of what the ruler said, he could not get a break from Jesus. Of course, the ruler was not the only one in that situation. There was a woman who couldn’t get much slack either. Her child was sick, and she tried to get help from Jesus, but the Lord took issue with the fact that she was not an Israelite. **Matthew 15:21-24** records:

- 21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.  
22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”  
23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”  
24 But He answered and said, **“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

The disciples asked Jesus to get rid of her and Jesus gave her an answer that easily could have done so. After all, how could the woman change the fact that she was not an Israelite? The woman tried worshipping Jesus, but Jesus still was not giving out any slack. **Matthew 15:25-26** records:

- 25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”  
26 But He answered and said, **“It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”**

The woman worshipped Jesus and begged Him for help. Jesus said, “No help for you, little dog.” To get Jesus’ help, the woman agreed that she was a dog and that Jesus was her master. **Matthew 15:27-28** records:

- 27 And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”  
28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, **“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.”** And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Even after Jesus went through the crucifixion experience and rose from the dead, Jesus had no problem calling folks out of their names. The men traveling to Emmaus after the resurrection were talking to Jesus about the events of the crucifixion. The conversation begins in **Luke 24:17-24**, which says:

- 17 And He [Jesus] said to them, **“What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”**  
18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”  
19 And He said to them, **“What things?”** So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.  
21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.  
22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.  
23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.  
24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

Jesus responded in **Luke 24:25-27**:

- 25 Then He said to them, **“O fools, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have**

**spoken!**

**26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"**

**27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**

Jesus is a fellow who speaks directly, and He does not change His program for those who are not ready for it. Jesus did come to seek and to save that which was lost, but His first sermon was "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Jesus did receive whores into the Kingdom, but they first washed His feet with their tears. Of course, anyone who is familiar with the commandments that God gave in the Old Testament would understand that dealing with anyone divinely associated with God is a serious situation. Look at the very first commandment that God gave in **Genesis 2:15-17**:

**15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.**

**16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;**

**17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."**

The very first law that God established carried the death penalty. Doesn't that seem kind of harsh? Couldn't God have started off with a more palatable punishment than death? Actually, no. The message that God is giving in His initial commandment, in the episodes of the life of Jesus that we have reviewed and all throughout the Bible is that He is serious about his relationship with us. Our response to God needs to be as serious as is His command to us. God is our parent, our Heavenly Father, we are His children, subject to His commandments and His discipline.

God professes His Love, which is explained to us in that very familiar passage of Scripture, **John 3:16-17**, which reads:

**16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

God is making provisions for us to receive eternal life through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but the eternal life for which Jesus is making provision is available only to those who believe. God is telling us that his salvation is conditional, and there are condemnatory consequences for those who do not meet the conditions.

There are consequences for disbelief and for disobedience, consequences from which we may not be able to recover. Remember the Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, was not forgiven for his sin, but he killed himself and went to hell.

God loves us, and has made us in His own image. He has given us the capacity to decide our own behaviors, to make our own decisions, to act as we please. Although God knows what is best for us and gives us clear instructions as to what we are to do, He also allows us to make our own decisions. When we err, God will inflict discipline, but takes no joy in doing so. He warns us, in **Ezekiel 18:30-32**:

**30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the**



**Lord GOD. “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.**

**31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?**

**32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord GOD. “Therefore turn and live!”**

God knows what is best for us,

God gives us clear instructions,

God gives us the capacity to make our own decisions.

God gives us the consequences that our decisions require.

Because of these characteristics, God calls himself our Father. Moses tells us, in

**Deuteronomy 31:30-32:6:**

**30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:**

**1 “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.**

**2 Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass.**

**3 For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God.**

**4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.**

**5 “They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.**

**6 Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?**

So gentlemen, on this Father’s Day, we find ourselves called to emulate God in his position as Father. **Ephesians 5:25-32** tells us:

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,**

**26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,**

**27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

**28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.**

Jesus Christ gave Himself for the Church. He sacrificed His life that those who believe in Him might be sanctified and cleansed. Jesus did not give His life that we might be indulged and spoiled, but that we might be glorious and without spot or wrinkle. To facilitate this cleansing, Jesus often rebuked His followers in a very direct way. Sometimes Christ had to deal with a perverse and faithless Church and in those circumstances He did not mince words, nor did He allow His Church to get off track because He did not want to hurt someone’s feelings.

Some things are required of us, brothers, if we are to love our wives and families as Christ loved the Church. We have to realize that the call to love is not the call to give in to indulgent emotions, but a call to act in a way that will produce a godly outcome. Jesus showed that He loved Peter by calling Peter a devil and Jesus showed that He loved the rich young ruler

by telling him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. The examples that we have read from the life of Jesus teaches us that Jesus did not shirk from providing the discipline and doctrine necessary to meet his objective.

To follow the example of Jesus, we have to be knowledgeable of the plan of God for our lives and the lives of our family members.

Brothers, we are called to objectively evaluate whether or not our leadership is in agreement with the commandments of God and then to call ourselves and those in our family to account when we or they step outside of the bounds of those commandments.

I remember one of our initial services in which I presented the Biblical paradigm of sexual purity before marriage. I made a reference to **Deuteronomy 22:28-29**, which says:  
**28 “If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out,**  
**29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.**

During our discussion period, a young man asked an interesting question. He asked, “Is it alright to have sex before marriage if the young woman is not a virgin?”

I responded to the question by pointing out that virginity before marriage is not only intended for young women, but for young men as well. Interestingly, I recognize that the young man’s question revealed a way of thinking that has become insidiously prevalent in our society.

The dominant thinking in our secular institutions no longer prizes sexual morality, but consider sex outside of wedlock as simply as a form of recreation, equivalent to playing mixed doubles in tennis.

As fathers, called to present our families to God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, it is our job to make sure that sexual morality is both taught to our children and enforced in our home, notwithstanding the prevailing climate in the world. The reason for the lapse of morality in our homes is in our homes, not in Hollywood. Actors, actresses and other performers may live an immoral lifestyle, but they do not have control over our homes. We have control of our families, our television sets, our entertainment choices, and we do not have to allow our children to be contaminated by those things that are unseemly. Of course, it is more difficult to enforce morality on our children than to simply go with the flow, but to go with the flow is to not show love, but disdain for our families and for God.

If I choose not to advise my son to follow the path of righteousness, I am telling him that I really do not care how he comes out in the end. The penalty that applies to those who knowingly abdicate their responsibility to enforce righteousness in their families is described in **Romans 1:28-32**, which says:

**28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;**  
**29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,**  
**31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;**

**32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.**

Fathers, God summarizes our role in **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**, which says:

**13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is the whole duty of man.**

**14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.**

We are called to live principled lives and make principled pronouncements as did Jesus. We cannot be sympathetic with the activities of those over whom we have the authority when they do not conform to God's standards. We cannot yield to the arguments of our wives and children when they try to persuade us that it is too hard to go against the prevailing climate to hold up the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ.

I am blessed that God has given me clarity about the mission that I have for this work. I recognize that because the Lord has blessed me to have longevity in my marriage and to not be personally involved in sexual immorality or to have out-of-wedlock children, I am in a position to call men and women back to godliness in their family lives. I am here today to exhort you to follow the example with which the Lord has blessed me, that is, to give yourselves to the sacrifice required to be a Godly leader in your family. Recognize that God has not given you a family that you may lord it over them, but that you may sacrifice yourself for them.

Neither your personal comfort nor that of your spouse should be your primary concern, but rather doing the will of God by raising godly offspring. In **Matthew 20:25-28**:

**25 Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.**

**26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.**

**27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—**

**28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

When I was a child, my Dad was the servant for Mom, myself and my two brothers. Mom was our caretaker, and when our musical talent allowed us to travel around the country and compete in musical competitions, Dad was not able to go. I never heard Mom whine or complain that Dad wasn't "helping her" as she took us to the various conventions across the country, and I never heard Dad complain about not getting to travel to see his sons perform. Mom was always grateful to Dad for working. She told us that the only reason that we could travel to these places and stay in these hotels and play in these competitions was that Dad stayed home to work to make the money that we needed to pay for these trips. It was a blessing to have parents who understood the concept of the division of labor and worked together to raise us as their Godly offspring. The fact that Mom could count on Dad to take care of the bills and the discipline freed her to plan and participate in enrichment activities for us. She didn't have to worry about our behavior, because she always had Dad on her side, and just the threat that she was going to tell Dad that we misbehaved was sufficient to keep us straight.

Dad served us by working and providing while we were kids; he kept his wedding vows for over sixty years, cherished my mother and gave me a role model to emulate in my own



marriage. Men that divorce their spouses and/or have extramarital affairs don't recognize that they will have to answer for denying their children stability by not providing them a good example of a wife or a husband. Brothers, if you find your marriage difficult, don't expect God to let you off of the hook. In the Garden, Jesus sweated blood as He anticipated the ordeal of the crucifixion, but then he got up, wiped his brow, and went to the Cross. That is what our text means when it says to love your wife as Christ loved the Church. Cry to God about your problem, then get up, wipe your eyes and keep the vows that you have promised to keep.

Dad did. He served Mom until she went home to be with the Lord.

Brothers, giving your wife flowery words and lavish gifts shows infatuation, not love. To love your wife as Christ loves the Church means to patiently fulfill your vows. As the old preacher used to say, it is not how high you jump when you shout, but it is how straight you walk when you come down. The greatest ability that you can have as a husband is dependability.

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