

January 27, 2002

Christ and the family

Colossians 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

Ephesians defines the kind of love this is to be.

Ephesians 5:21-33 ¶ *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;** 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY... There are **two mysteries here:** 1) The unity of a husband and wife representing the unity of the church and Christ. 2) the **love Christ has for the church** is a mystery.

Christ's love for the church is beyond human words to express. We can only catch a small glimpse of that love with the words, ***and gave himself for it.***

The unusual thing about this command is that **husbands are to have the kind of love Christ has for us toward their wives.**

Notice the comparison that the Spirit of God makes the love of the infinite God for His finite creature, and the love of a husband for his wife.

There are three things in this **love** that is commanded, but I will only cover the first point:

- 1) How does Christ love the church
- 2) How he proved his love by giving himself for the church
- 3) How shall we think of this wondrous love of Christ.

This is a message for everyone:

I DON'T HAVE A HUSBAND, but if you are a Christian, these are the qualities of Christ you are to have.

PARENTS when the children are at home is the time to train these Christian qualities into them.

BOYS the boys are to be trained in Christian character and how to treat young ladies.

GIRLS the girls are to be trained to be Proverbs 31 ladies, and what to demand of the man they marry.

How does Christ love the church?

FIRST, Christ's love is kind and gentle. We mentioned last week how Christ was among us as one who serves. In other words, husbands, we are to serve our wives. Not be their servants, but serve them.

Yes, husbands, we are to be kind to those around us, but our special kindness is for our wives. Yes, we are to help those around us, but our special help is for our wives. Yes, we are to serve those around us, but our real service belongs to our wives.

Yes, the **Lord cares even for the wicked** in giving them rain in their time of need. He supplies their food and health, but His **special care** is for the church. Christ is kind and generous towards the outside world, but His love is for the church. He is more generous toward her.

ILLUSTRATION:

I have a good friend whom I have known for many years. I am almost embarrassed to be around him because of the way he treats his wife. He is kind, gentle and patient to all around him, except his wife. He treats her like a servant, making demands upon her that stress her to the limit. I called their house one night, and the wife told me she had her bags packed, ready to move out. I spoke with her for some time, and she stayed.

I am embarrassed when I get around others also; they treat their wives like servants. In fact, the household servants I met in Brazil get better treatment than some wives I know get from their husbands.

Christ did not come to be served, but He came to serve. Men seem to get married **thinking** they will be served by their new wives. **As Christ loved the church** means that the husband has a servant's attitude toward his wife. Part of marriage is doing what he can to meet her needs.

Though Christ came to serve, He never became the servant of the 12, nor does He become our servant, though the Prayer of Jabez tries to make Him man's servant. In fact, modern theology presents Christ as a servant who came to make man **HAPPY, WEALTHY AND WISE**.

I have met many husbands who treat their wives as though God put women here to be their servants. Rather than having a servant's attitude toward their wives, they lord over them.

Sad to say, in today's social climate, the wife is many times seen as a **second income**, so the family can live above the standard that just the husband's income will provide.

A married couple many times is seen as not much more than two single people legally living together, as each has his or her own goal, and does his or her own thing. Then they combine their incomes to live above what they could as singles, and then they let someone else raise their children.

SECOND, the Lord Jesus loves His church unselfishly. He loves His church not for what **she has** nor what she **can do** for Him. Rather, He loves her for **what He can do** for her. He loved us as we were, and **His love made us** into a saint. He loved the dirty, and washed them clean with the water of the word, which is in our text.

Notice here that Christ's love teaches the church from God's word; husbands, do we teach our wives from God's word?

Though our best love has a mixture of self-interest in it, Christ had nothing to gain by loving His church. In fact, His love cost Him His life.

Isaiah 62:4 *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*

Here the Lord calls His chosen people, the church, *Hephzibah*, because He **delighteth in thee**. Read the Song of Solomon and see the **delight Christ** has in His people.

Husbands, do we delight in our wives?

What good is in us to make the Lord delight in us?

Why do husbands many times **delight in others** more than in their wives? Why would they **rather spend time** with others than with their wives?

But she did not nor does she now meet my expectations! Do we meet the Lord's expectations and requirements? Does He love His church anyway?

BUT I DON'T HAVE A HUSBAND NOR WIFE do you delight in the Lord?

THIRD, Christ's love protects His church

Isaiah 62:4 says, *thy land shall be married*

Christ not only owns us, but he **protects us** as one would protect a valuable piece of property. Yes, husbands, our wives belong to us, but there is much more involved than simply ownership. It implies **protection**. 1 Peter 3:7 tells us that the woman is to be treated as *the weaker vessel*. She willingly came under her husband's protection.

When I am around some husbands, they seem to be **more interested in protecting their physical property** than they are in protecting their wives. They do all they can to protect their property, but they throw their wives out into the world to be devoured by the wolves.

What is more important to the Lord: things or His people? Then why does it seem that **things are more important** to husbands than even their wives are?

Husbands, ask your wives how important she feels to you. Then, wives are you **afraid** to tell your husbands the truth? Then it is obvious that the husband has violated the commandment, *husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it*.

Widows who have NO HUSBAND then the Lord is your husband, and He has promised special protection for the widows.

Zechariah 7:10 *And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

When there is any doubt about Christ's love, think of His death on the cross.

FOURTH, the Lord loves His church, and He identifies with her in every point:

Hebrews 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Infirmities weakness of the body, frail, feebleness of both physical and spiritual health or sickness. Also includes bearing trials and troubles.

As I mentioned, society today expects women to be **able to work outside** the home as does a man, and when she fails to obtain to the work level of a man, she is condemned. And many times the husband expects the wife to have his stamina.

God did not make the woman to do man's work. He made her to **help the man** in his calling.

First woman killed in Afghan war laid to rest in Gary

By Tom Coyne The Associated Press

GARY - Sgt. Jeannette Winters, the first female U.S. Marine ever to die in a combat zone, was remembered Friday as a proud Marine and the person who held her family together after her mother's death:

...

Winters, 25, who grew up in Gary, was among seven Marines killed Jan. 9 when a KC-130 tanker plane crashed in Pakistan. ...

Fellow Marines are proud of Winters, who was based in San Diego, her platoon commander, 1st Lt. Jeni Froehlich, said.

"She knew she was good at her job and she wanted to go," Froehlich said. "She was very proud to serve her country. She was proud to go over there and do her job."

She said the fact that Winters was the first female killed in a combat zone was not an important distinction.

"A Marine is a Marine is a Marine," she said. "Every time we lose a Marine it's very disheartening and it compounds the situation that she was in our platoon And in our squadron."

(AP, Journal & Courier, 1/26/02)

Deut 22:5 ¶ *The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*

You and I have seen times when there was no choice but for the wife and mother to take on a man's job to support her family, and that is not what I am talking about, and that not the majority of the cases. That is another message.

What if **Christ demanded of His church what many husbands demanded of their wives?**

What if Christ demanded of us that which we were not created for, and therefore not equipped to do?

Christ loves His church, and He **shares the joys and sorrows and pains with His people**. He knows what we go through, and He has **genuine** and **perfect** sympathy with His people.

Husbands, how much do we **unite with our** wives in their **joys, sorrows and pains**? We have compassion for those around us do we have compassion for our own wives? We have sympathy for those around us do we have sympathy for our own wives.

Christ has raised us up together to sit with Him in heavenly places. Do we **raise up our wives** and exalt them?

The Lord speaks frankly with His church through His word and His spirit. And He expects His church to speak frankly with Him. How is our communication with our wives?

As He is, so are we in this world. We are united with Christ. Are we united with our wives?

I would like to cover how the Lord proved his love for His church, but I must quit here.

When we hold our lives up to the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, how do we measure up? Whether we have a spouse or not does not matter how do we measure up to Christ?

FIRST, Christ s love is kind and gentle. Are we?

SECOND, the Lord Jesus loves His church unselfishly. What do we expect in return for our love?

THIRD, Christ s love protects His church. Do we protect those we profess to love?

FOURTH, the Lord loves His church, and He identifies with her in every point. Do we identify with those around us?