

## Ephesians 5:21-6:9 (NRSV, adapted)

21 *Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

22 **Wives** – act in the same way with your own husbands as you would with the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, but only in the same way that Christ is the head of the church: saving the church as if it were his own body.

24 So, in the very same way that the church is subject to Christ, wives should also act, in everything, with their husbands.

25 **Husbands** – love your wives, in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. 26 He did this in order to make the church holy, by cleansing the church with the washing of water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, becoming holy and without blemish.

28 *In the same way*, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own body, but nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 because we are members of his body.

31 *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:24, the key verse used by Jesus to define marriage in Matthew 19:5)

32 This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.

33 Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

6:1-3 **Children** -- obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. *“Honor your father and mother”* —this is the first commandment with a promise: *“so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”*

4 **And, fathers** -- do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

5-8 **Slaves** -- obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.

9 **And, masters** -- do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

## Sermon Notes

Ephesians 5: 21-6:9 -- Christian Marriage

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### 1. In Ephesians 1-4, Jesus' Salvation involves

- Giving us forgiveness us now, and opening up heaven to us now and later
- Empowering us to grow in character now, and *transforming our relationships and institutions now*
  - a. Work (slaves/employees, masters/employers; 6:5-9)
  - b. Family (children/parents; 6:1-4)
  - c. Marriage (wives/husbands; 5:22-33)

Watch or read other sermons on marriage on the church web-site:

<http://www.nationalpres.org/faithful-marriage-0> (Oct 13, 2013)

<http://www.nationalpres.org/faithful-marriage-plan-b-0> (Oct 20, 2013)

<http://www.nationalpres.org/whats-so-sacred-about-sex> (Jan 31, 2016)

<http://www.nationalpres.org/love-and-marriage> (Oct. 9, 2016)

### 2. Relationships and Institutions change with time – *In the Bible, how do we know what's central and permanent, and what's peripheral and temporary?*

#### a. The Nature of the Bible

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through *the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written. The Scriptures, given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are nevertheless the words of men*, conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written. *The church, therefore, has an obligation to approach the Scriptures with literary and historical understanding.* As God has spoken his word in diverse cultural situations, the church is confident that he will continue to speak through the Scriptures in a changing world and in every form of human culture. (Presbyterian Constitution: Confession of 1967)

#### b. “Literary Understanding”

The controlling verse/lens for *the whole* passage (5:22-6:9), not just for wives, is Ephesians 5:21: *“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.”*

Paul, here, reflects the teaching and example of Jesus:

Mark 10:44 *“Whoever wants to be great among you must become slave of all.”*

John 13:14 *“If I, your teacher and master, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.”* (Note: the word “master” here, is the same word used in Ephesians for “master” = lord = owner)

c. Institutional Transformation: Neither Paul nor Jesus set out to change institutions directly, but to revolutionize them internally BY

- (1) placing service (“being subject”) at the core of all relationships; and
- (2) calling people, especially those in power, to acknowledge that they are ultimately accountable to (“subject to”) God.