

Sunday Sermon October 7, 2018

Sermon Text: Ephesians 5:21- 6:4

Sermon Theme: God's Family Plan

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Cell phone carriers are trying a new gimmick to sell phones: the family plan. All of the commercials and ads show families of all sizes and shapes coming to the cell phone company and buying a plan that fits their needs. They boast about the benefits of their plan for the family. Can these family plans really help families? Not really, the truth is a cell phone and family plan can't really bring families together or help families that are hurting.

What we need is some kind of plan that really works for the family. This plan would work to bring families together and build a foundation that would not only be a good one for earthly life, but would also lead to heavenly blessings.

The good news is that there is plan for the family that works. It is a plan that has been bringing families together and building a solid foundation for many years. This plan that works is the plan that God has laid out for the family in his Word.

God's plan for the family goes all the way back to creation. God's plan is not built on emotions like love or affection. He didn't build a family around a social contract. His plan is built in a different way than we would expect. In our OT reading, God shows us his foundation for the family which is built on two basic building blocks. ¹⁸ **The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”** ²¹ **So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.** ²² **Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.**

²³ **The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”** ²⁴ **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.**

God's first thought was that one person would not be enough to create and build a family. God planned that a family foundation would need two separate sets of gifts, two separate ways of looking at things, two separate people who were different from one another, but who would work together in unity to come together and make a family.

God made a statement when he created man and woman. God did not create man and woman exactly alike, so that they would be interchangeable. God created man and woman uniquely different. He blessed them in this difference to look different, act different and to even think different from one another. He did this so that when man and woman come together in a marriage they will complete one another. A man will help his wife with her weaknesses because he might be strong in those areas and a woman may help her husband in his

weaknesses because she may be strong in those areas. When they would come together in a marriage and make a family they would be stronger together than when they were alone.

God intended that man and woman would join together in this thing called marriage to be the building block for the family. Their life after marriage would be different. It would no longer be a life that relied on mom and dad for support, nor would it be one where they would fend for themselves. After marriage, they would look to one another and rely on one another to live and make their way in the world.

God intends that this unity should not be one that is entered into lightly. Marriage should not be a bad decision on the strip kind of thing. God intends that every man and woman that enters into marriage together think long and hard about the decision that they are making because it is a commitment that is lifelong. In our second lesson, when the Pharisees came and challenged Jesus, Jesus repeats God's order for marriage from Genesis and affirms that God's intention is that marriage should be a lifelong union of one man and one woman. **What God has joined together let man not separate.**

God did not intend that this marriage, this family, would run by its own guidelines, God continued to set loving guidelines for this family to live under so that they can live in peace and harmony and continue to live in a God-pleasing manner.

God also intends that he should play a large part in a marriage. In our sermon text for this morning we see that a marriage is built on the solid foundation and example of Christ. The love that Jesus has for us is committed and sacrificial. It is not a selfish me-first type of love. It is the type of love that seeks to build up the other person and to make sure they were firm in faith.

In our sermon text God directs guidelines towards both husbands and wives. Husbands, men, let's look at what God says to us first. **²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself**

God doesn't direct us to look to some great example of human love to see the way that husbands are to love their wives. Instead, God directs us to look at the example of the love of Jesus. ... **just as Christ loved the church** is very important for us to understand the type of love we are suppose to have.

The type of love that Jesus showed had submission in it. This word submission in the Bible is not the picture that we have in our minds of someone forcing us to do something. The Biblical word submission has a much better connotation. It means yielding to another person because we love them. This form of submission is what we do when God says, Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. It is the submission we show when we come to Jesus' altar at his request. The ultimate example of this submission is Jesus yielding in love to the plan the Father had to save the world.

There are many more pleasant ways that we could be saved, other than suffering and death. We could work hard to please God. We could perform some great act of service for God or make sure we are in church enough. But none of these things brings comfort to us and the assurance we are saved.

God's plan of salvation did not include our works. It included the perfect works of his Son. It included the sacrifice his Son so that man would know that his salvation was secure. He did this so that man would never have to wonder if he had done enough to be saved. God sent his Son to suffer pain and then die, and the Son submitted to the will and plan of the Father and did everything that was necessary in the Father's plan to save us.

This is the love that husbands are to show to their wives. A husband is to be committed to his wife and to no other earthly person. A husband is to submit to the guidelines of the Lord in all things and follow his way to make sure that his family grows in faith and knowledge of their Savior. He is to be sacrificial in his love for his wife and be willing to go to the same lengths of love that Christ was willing to go for the church so that the family continues to go in the correct direction. He is to love his wife as if she is a part of himself..... which she is because they are one personally, financially and spiritually one.

Women, ladies, you're up. Let's listen to God speak again. **²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**

There it is that word that turns us off. SUBMIT. Before we head for the doors, let's think about this a little bit more. Is the basis for submission here any different than the basis of submission for Jesus, or for the

husband, or for the church? No. It is the same; yielding in love because we love someone. Jesus submitted to his Father out of love for his Father and love for us. The husband submits to Jesus out of love for Jesus. The church yields to the teachings of Christ and doesn't just make up its own teachings, it follows what Jesus says because we love Jesus. Women are also asked to submit to Jesus in the same way that husbands are asked to submit.... as Christ did. God also adds one other guideline: wives are also to submit to their husbands out of love for Jesus.

Yet, we still have that sinful nature does not want us to do this. Our sinful nature will take a backseat to no one. It will not submit even if God says so. Women, it's not only your problem. It's men's too. It's also children's problem because the sinful nature is really a people problem.

This is the reason that God's marriage is in tatters today. Sinful people are not willing to follow the guidelines that God gives. We are not willing to get married, instead we trade God's plan of protection and preservation for the false commitment of living together. They forgo marriage and say that it not important. We are willing to love and honor our spouse as long they look good or agree with us on everything, but as soon as age sets in or there is a problem we are searching for the next person. We don't want to listen to anyone, much less our spouse and allow anger and resentment to replace cooperation and respect. We fail in bringing God into our lives at our marriage and keeping him there throughout our marriage. We forget our vows that we make to God and to each other and we are not willing to submit to the God we made them too.

Children don't want to listen to parents or authorities. They don't want any rules or listen to anyone who tells them anything. They don't want rules at all. Sin is a people problem. We don't want to submit or follow any rules out there and we definitely don't want to follow God's rules.

Sin plays a powerful part in our life. That is why God wants to be in our marriage and be in our families. We need to hear about a Savior who forgives our sins. We need to hear these guidelines because we forget them so quickly. We need to come often to the Lord's house to repent of our many sins and hear of the forgiveness that is ours only through Jesus. These do not come to us because we make the rules. These only come when the Holy Spirit is at work through the Word and the Holy Spirit points us back to our Savior. Where the marriage is centered on God's Word, the family will also be centered on God's Word.

A family that is built on this foundation will not be perfect. But the blessing is that this family can go back to the word together and study it together. Parents can model model what committed and sacrificial love for each other and for their children. They can and will model repentance and forgiveness. They can and will bring their children to the Savior's feet where they will receive the blessings that only come from a loving Savior.

As we lead our very busy lives, let us not forget to work on building our marriages and our families according to God's plan, with Jesus at the very center. This is God's Family Plan.