

KEEP YOUR HEAD
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST AUG 23, 2015

EPH 5:22-33

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

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

I remember, in high school, studying perpetual motion machine.
where each part kept the other part going.

Like electric fan that ran a windmill that ran generator
that in turn ran the fan.

God's design for marriage relationships is like this.

v. 21, which we heard last week, introduces these verses,
says: "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul then describes how husbands submit desires to wife
as wives submit their will to husbands
in a relationship with complete unity.

But there is no such thing as perpetual motion machine.

Reason is friction which causes kinetic energy
to turn to heat which is dissipated
so that the whole thing runs down and wears out.

U.S. patent office has had applications submitted
for perpetual motion machines but all have been found
to have extra source of energy hidden inside,
like a battery or spring.

Same kind of thing is true of marriage.

Reason it doesn't work like God designed it to
is friction, which causes energy to turn to heat,
so it wears out and runs down,

unless it has a power source inside it.

Source of power that keeps us going is Christ.
In verses following this, Paul goes on to apply this
to other relationships as well, but here he describes how...

WIVES RECEIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST
HUSBANDS GIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST
ALL ARE CHANGED BY CONNECTION WITH CHRIST

WIVES RECEIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST

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First part of last week, many were using umbrellas
which protected them from the rain.

Some hate using them because you have to hold them up.
But they only work when you hold them over you.

I think that is picture of submission text talks about.

Submission means putting yourself under something.

This submission is voluntary, wives submit themselves.

Not same as subjection which is being put under.

This submission involves holding up, supporting husbands,
which also involves holding them responsible
for what is under them.

This word is not same as "obey" but it is obvious this involves
submitting to will of husband, supporting his decisions.

What may not be so obvious is that this goes along with
submitting to care as well.

Connection between submitting to both care and will
is more obvious in following verses which go on to
parents and children who need to submit to
parents will in order to submit to their care.

It is hard to care for one who is rejecting you.

Same word is used in Rom. 10:3, where Paul writes:

"Submit to the righteousness of God."

Submitting means being willing to receive.

These verses keep referring to how we receive everything
from Christ, the head over all, who is our savior.

This helps us understand what Paul means by head.
and how wives look to husbands as subordinate
of Christ who's will and care is over both of them.

Problem is, because of sinful human nature,
no one likes the role of being a dependent receiver
from anyone including Christ.

We would all rather independently provide for ourselves
which includes deciding for ourselves.

But look again at phrase in v. 22: "your own husbands"

Paul emphasizes tight connection, unity. He is your own.
Husbands & wives are not independent or loosely connected
like one car following another or being pulled by a chain
which can result in jerking, bumping and crashing.

Instead they are to be like semi-truck tractor trailer
firmly joined together, each useless without the other,
but working well when each is in right position
one following other, rather than trying to go backward.

One woman said, OK, husband is the head,
but head is connected to neck and the neck turns the head.
Fair enough.

HUSBANDS GIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave
himself up for her...

²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without
spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without
blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does
the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a
man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the
two shall become one flesh."

Again Paul emphasizes unity between husbands & wives
which involves total commitment to each other.

That is what marriage means and why it is so important.

This commitment is what the physical union claims.

This is important because what husbands need to do
only works when there is complete & lasting unity.

If the head is part of the one body, what is it's role,
to just take care of itself at the expense of the body?
no, it's role is to look out for the body.

Husbands, love your wives. How much? as Christ loves church,
willing to give up his whole life for its sake.

This kind of love means wanting what is good for the other
as much or more than what is good for oneself.

Can you tell someone how they must feel? No.

But Paul says husbands must love their wives.

You can tell he is not talking about feelings but behavior.

Just do it, whether you feel like it or not.

You are a head. This is a head thing, not just a heart thing.

Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies.

It is natural for us to love ourselves,

that is to want what is good for ourselves,
even if we don't totally like ourselves - maybe I think
my nose or rear end or bald spot is too big,
but I still want what is good for me.

That is how Christ loves us, in spite of all our flaws.

But Paul implies that husbands, by their love,
can actually make their wives more lovely.

You know how models in magazines are made so lovely:
imperfections covered up by airbrushing and photoshop .

This is how Christ presents us to himself

without any spot, blemish or wrinkle, not by anything we do
or by our staying the way we were when he found us,
but by what he does for us, by lovingly forgiving us.

This is how husbands make their wives precious & attractive,
by what they lovingly do for them.

Like what makes us love our precious children,
not what they do for us but what we have put into them.

But again there is a problem, because of sinful nature,
no one likes to be just a giver without guarantee of receiving.

We want to take care of selves first & keep what is ours.

Husbands tend to care more for their own physical desires
than their wife's heart

And try to lead with power rather than love.

No wonder it is so hard for wives to submit & husbands to love.

First because they are a poor miserable sinner,

Second because their spouse is a poor miserable sinner.

This is why we all need that inner source of power.

ALL ARE CHANGED BY CONNECTION WITH CHRIST

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might

sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Marriage between one man and one woman,
one designed by God to be a giver
and other designed by God to be a receiver,
perfectly united by permanent commitment,
with the result of passing life on to others.
is not just a picture of Christ relationship with church
but is also a result of Christ's relationship with church.
We are able to fulfill our roles in marriage
and in the rest of our relationships in life
only when we are willing to submissively receive
what he himself chooses to give us.
and when we are willing to freely give to others
what he first and constantly lovingly gives us.
We are able to do what God calls us to do
only because he himself has done it for us.
Jesus, the Lord of all and head over all things.
showed what he meant when he said the greatest
is not the one who lords it over others
but is willing to be the greatest servant of others.
He willingly submitted himself to doing all God's will
by keeping the whole law in our place
and lovingly sacrificed for us his whole life
in order to protect us from punishment we deserve
and rescue us from sin and death.
Now he generously gives us his perfect holiness,
pouring it out on us in Holy Baptism,
which brings us into his church,
uniting us with him in one body,
where he, our head, acts in and through us.
He does this, not just by washing with water on the outside
but by his word, which by its connection with that water
washes us clean on the inside which makes us pure
and full of splendor before God like beautiful bride.

As we continue to live our lives in this world,
we continue to fail, fall down and mess up,
and so we cover ourselves with bruises, scratches & filth
which ruin the beauty we are to show God & each other.
But each day we return to the bath of our baptism
as we receive again God's word of forgiveness,
which not only calls us good but is what makes us good
so that we can go again and share this goodness of God
with our spouse
by willing submission to receiving
what God wants them to give us
and lovingly giving what God has given us to share.
A study asked husband what they most wanted from wives,
#1 answer was respect, being treated as
valuable and worth respecting.
Study asked wives what they most wanted from husbands.
#1 answer was love, being treated as
valuable and worth loving.
This is just what Paul says it all boils down to.

When my wife and I were recently on vacation in Australia
we had to get used to driving car on left side of road.
It sometimes felt scary and took constant concentration
but we helped and kept reminding each other.
It is also like this in kingdom of God & state of marriage.
Avoiding a crash requires doing what may feel backward.
So Paul tells husbands, wives and all of us: Keep your head.
That is, don't just do what you feel like
but submit to God's will and design for each of us,
with Christ as head over all.

WIVES RECEIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST
accepting the will and care that come ultimately from him.
HUSBANDS GIVE IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST
giving the unconditional love coming ultimately from him.
ALL ARE CHANGED BY CONNECTION WITH CHRIST
who preserves our connections with each other
by submitting himself for our sake and lovingly giving us
all we need through his eternal commitment to us.