Marriage Glorifies God's Redemption, Part 1

Ephesians 5:22-24

March 6, 2022

Well, we are in a middle of a series on marriage and we have already looked at marriage as God designed it from creation in Genesis 1 and 2. We've also seen what's happened to marriage as an institution because of the people who inhabit that institution in the sinful inhabitants of the institution. What happens to marriage in the fall. And today we are going to look at marriage as it is redeemed, marriage as it glorifies divine redemption.

So you can turn in your Bibles to the book of Ephesians this morning as we get started, and in Ephesians we find some of the most comprehensive teaching on the roles of marriage, husband and wife, and what they're to do in their marriages. Doesn't say everything that there is to be said about marriage and practicing marriage, but it does set some baseline instruction on the roles in marriage of husband and wife and it goes right

back to Genesis 1 and 2, and what we see unfolded in God's design for marriage.

But in Ephesians we find that marriage is set and the practice of marriage is set within the framework of divine redemption. We understand marriage to be an institution that is a creation institution. It's designed on the sixth day when God created the individuals. He also created the institution to be a part of that for the individuals to be a part of and be shaped by. He did that on the sixth day.

But here in Ephesians we see marriage as it is to be in the framework of divine redemption. According to Ephesians chapter 5:31 to 32, kind of at the end of that instruction we find out that God tucked a mystery into the institution of marriage. It's a mystery that was there ever since its inception, ever since its creation from the very beginning. But it's a mystery that was not solved, not unveiled and unpacked until Christ redeemed his people on the cross.

The mystery in marriage unveiled in Jesus Christ is that marriage pictures Christ relationship to his bride, the church. When Christians practice marriage, as God intended them to do from the very beginning, Christian husbands and wives paint a beautiful picture of Christ's love for the church and they in

their marriages glorify God's redemption in Christ. In fact, I'll say that any marriage, Christian or non-Christian it will portray, to the extent that it approximates husband roll and wife role in marriage, a marriage, even a non-Christian marriage, will portray Christ and his relationship to the church. And the closer it approximates what God designed for marriage the more it unpacks and portrays the glory of God in his redemption.

Today is the first of a two part sermon, really. Two parts I'll start today and then finish next week. But I want to begin today by laying a foundation for thinking about the Christian life and it sets marriage in its proper context. Without this context, we need to understand that marriage is undermined by a man-centeredness seeing marriage in isolation from the context that really Paul sets in Ephesians, it creates a man centeredness that leads ultimately to frustration and futility. But set in its proper context, marriage glorifies God and brings blessing and good to us. So that's what we're going to do this week and next week we're going to see how marriage glorifies God's redemption in Christ, and we'll set a foundation from here from Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

So let me give you a first point right up front number one, we glorify God's redemption in exaltation. We glorify God's redemption in exaltation. I'm gonna give you five points over this week and next. Three points today, two next time, but that first part, we glorify God's redemption. That's going to be the same for every point, and I'm just going to change that last word for every point.

So this one, we glorify God's redemption in exaltation. And by exaltation I'm referring specifically to the exaltation of God, not the exaltation of marriage per se, not the exaltation, certainly not the exaltation of man. It's the exaltation of God that is primary.

If you're familiar with the letter to the Ephesians, you know that the first three chapters set a doctrinal foundation for the kind of living that is the subject of the last three chapters. So six chapters, in Ephesians first three chapters, doctrinal foundation, last three chapters build on that doctrinal foundation and launch us into Christian living.

That's instructive for us, isn't it? I mean, Paul's letters are like that doctrinal foundation, practical living after that. So many people want to rush right into the Christian living section of the bookstore, the Christian Living section of the library

and skipped the theology section. Skip the doctrine section. They want practical Christianity. They want to know what to do tomorrow, what, how to practice their lives, and so it's, it is a very American impulse. Really very pragmatic, very utilitarian. Just get me to the practice, get me to what works.

God wants us to stop and know him first. God wants us to camp out, as it were, in the theology section to study the doctrine, so that we can get to know him, so that we can worship him, and then with a God saturated mind with a heart directed toward him. Then we think like he thinks, and thinking like he thinks we then can set out to live the way he has commanded us to live. It all makes sense. It all comes together.

So we first need to know the theology. We first need to understand the doctrine, so that we know what righteousness is, so that we know what righteousness looks like, since righteousness, and practicing, and pursuing righteousness, really is the essence of living the Christian life. Practicing righteousness, conforming to God's righteousness, that really is what it is to live a holy life, to be sanctified to, to walk in the Christian life.

So, if you're looking at Ephesians, you can go back to chapter 1, and you'll see that the first major section of chapter 1, it

runs from verses, verse 3 to verse 14. That is a single section in the Greek language, just a single sentence that runs from 3 to 14, very long sentence and Paul used a lot of commas. The opening section of Ephesians, it really does highlight the spiritual privileges of the believer, but you need to understand and if you follow the subject verb combination there in Ephesians 1:3 to 14, you see that it's ultimately not about us at all.

That opening section is about God, and that's what that first sentence in verse 3 tells us, "Blessed be" who? "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." So to miss that point, is to turn a God centered passage into a man centered passage. Let's not do that. Paul wants us to see here that God is the one to be blessed, glorified, honored, worshipped, praised, and it's because of all that he has accomplished in our redemption.

You can see that in all the subject verb combinations in the rest of this section. Why is it that God is to be blessed? Why is he to be praised, and worshipped, and honored, and thanked, and glorified, because you can follow it there, because, verse 3, God blessed us. Look down at your Bibles, you can see in verse 4, God chose us from before the foundation of the world;

he predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son; he blessed us in verse 5. Again, in verse 6, he blessed us.

Then in verse 7, he redeemed us and forgave us. He lavished the riches of his grace upon us in verse 8. In verse 9, he made known to us the mystery of his will. In verse 11, he granted us an inheritance, in verse 13, he sealed us with his spirit, to make sure that we would receive that inheritance, that we'd be full beneficiaries of that inheritance. For all those reasons, God is to be thanked. He is to be worshipped because of all that he has done, all that he has done, accrues to our eternal benefit.

But why is God done what he's done? Are we the end goal? Is it all about us? Are we the end game? Are we the ultimate purpose of all this? Not at all. We're the beneficiaries, but he is the great benefactor. He is the one who deserves all glory, all honor, all praise. We're caught up in this. We are part of God's eternal plan of redemption. The plan that he accomplished in Christ to glorify himself. But it really is all about God.

It's all about unpacking, unfolding, who he is. Look back at those verses and see what God says about why he's done what he has done. God has, verse 5, "blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing," Why? "According to the purpose of his

will," verse 6, "according to the praise of his glorious grace." It's about glorifying, end of verse 7, it's about "glorifying the riches of his grace that he lavished on us."

How does a king make himself known? How does a king make known his, his power, his glory, his majesty? It's through the gifts that he gives. It's through the treasury that's his, the wealth, the manifest wealth. You see, how powerful, how great that king is. God is the same way he's glorifying self, himself, in the riches of his grace, that there are eternal, infinite riches of grace that he pours out and lavishes upon us, verse 8. He does that in the infinite perfection of his wisdom and insight; this is all about, verse 9, it's about the unveiling of his will according to his purpose. It's a plan that he set forth in Christ, verse 10, "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on Earth."

He is a great king. He is a mighty God. He can take this broken, ruined, sin saturated world and bring glory to himself through it all. God has predestined all of this according to verse 11, "according to the purpose of him, who works all things according to the counsel of his will."

Why? So that we might be, we might exist, we might be to the praise of his glory, all that is going to be guaranteed by the

seal with which he has sealed us and secured us; his own Holy Spirit is the seal, verse 13 and again all of this, verse 14, "is to the praise of his glory."

That's why we never look at a human being and say, what a magnificent specimen! Of course, this person saved! Look how glorious they are. Look, look at this person. No wonder God redeemed this person, brought him on the team, because who wouldn't want that guy, that gal, on the team?

Every single one of us we know "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." The best of men are men at best. Every single human being, no matter what position they hold, no matter what title, no matter what honors, what fame, no matter how high how low, how, where they are on the earth, at what time, for what occasion, for what circumstance, every single person we know, they have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All of this God brings glory to himself by bringing his son through it all, and magnifying him, and bringing him praise and glory and honor.

So for all these reasons, God is to be praised. He is to be worshipped. He is to be honored, magnified, glorified. Why is that, because that's why he has done what he's done, that he might be honored and glorified, so that he would glorify

himself. When God is glorified, listen we are blessed. We are filled with joy and rejoicing, that's what we created for is to glorify God, and when we, when we see the purpose for which we are designed and created, fulfilled, our hearts are bursting forth with praise. God's glory is our reason for existence. It's why we are. It's why we're here.

Why am I saying all this to start a thing on marriage? Because this sets our lives and our marriage is in proper context, doesn't it? It sets everything that we are, whether we're married or unmarried. It sets everything in proper perspective. This is not about us. Whether we're married, whether we're single, whether we're divorced, whether we're widowed, whatever the status is, if we have failed in the past and had multiple marriages and we got blended families and everything is a big scrambled egg omelet, confusing mess. Don't even know how many birthday cards to send every, every year. It's very difficult things, and yet we see this is not about us. It's never been about us.

It's all about God's goodness and God's grace and whatever status we're in, and whatever condition we're in, whatever the circumstances are, it's all about him, all of it being fulfilled in Christ and pointing to Christ. Just as God glorified himself,

revealing his manifold goodness in creation in like manner in the same way God has glorified and is continually glorifying himself by revealing his manifold grace through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus.

So our marriages are caught up in this, along with everything else in our lives, along with every single relationship, all things are to the glory of God's goodness because of creation and his grace, because of redemption. The more we understand the theology of redemption. The more we grasp the eternal purposes of God, to bring glory to himself, in and through Jesus Christ, by lifting him up, the more we see where we fit into this eternal plan of redemption, the more it settles our hearts. Whatever our status, as I said, whether we're married, unmarried, whatever our situation, whatever our condition, whatever our circumstances, we exist to magnify the glory of God's goodness and his grace.

Everything else in these first three chapters, in Ephesians. A lot about the revelation of the mystery of Christ, a lot about the plan of individual salvation, a lot of that in Chapter 2, taking us, predestining us, for being holy and blameless before God. God prepared works beforehand before time began that we should walk in them as believers, now. All of this God has done,

all this done in chapters, 1 through 3, it unfolds the mystery of the church; Jews and Gentiles, hostile to one another, theologically hostile and separated and God yet brings them together in unites them in one body.

What Paul is writing about in these first three chapters is about the fullness of God, the fullness of God, the fullness of the glory of God being manifest in Christ, in believers and through the church.

So when both partners in marriage get that, when husband and wife understand this, when they embrace this, when they share this perspective about life, and marriage, and everything else, they are not going to be caught up in jobs, careers, vacations, wealth, accruing wealth, whether or not they're going to get the promotion. They're not going to be caught up in relational drama. It's all going to be eclipsed by a greater, grander perspective. They will move through life together as partners in the grace of life. Sharing the same perspective, having the same mind, the same judgment, the same goal, which is to glorify God.

When both husband and wife share this perspective, what is there to argue over? What financial troubles, relational conflicts, difficulties of circumstance, or situation, affliction, trials, circumstantial challenges, what of all of that can weigh heavier

than the ultimate and supreme privilege that's theirs that they share to glorify God.

What does it matter if a husband wakes up on the wrong side of the bed, has a bad day, is grumpy all day? What does it matter if a wife, ultimately, if she's cranky and her tongue is lashing out, and -Put into broader perspective, a husband dealing with a difficult wife, a wife dealing with a difficult husband. Is there anything that can keep an individual from pursuing this purpose, to glorify God, pursuing her purpose, to glorify God? No.

We have to transcend the circumstantial, we have to transcend the day-to-day and see our lives and the individual verities and all the things that go on in life. We have to see them in this grander, broader perspective. This is why we exist. This is why we're created.

Once again, we see that teleology of marriage, the end for which we're created, the purpose and end for which marriage exists. It's there to glorify God. It's there to exalt the glory of his goodness in creation and now his grace in redemption. We glorify God's redemption in exaltation, exalting him.

Second point for this morning, we glorify God's redemption in sanctification. In sanctification. Again, just trying to set some context for talking about specific roles in marriage, first the wife for today and then next week we'll get to the husband. But we are making our way, you can turn there, to Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:22. The specific instruction to the wife.

Paul writes there, "Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." Even before we get to the instruction specific instruction to the wife about submission. A brief word of explanation is in order, which sort of prompts us to set Paul's instruction to the wives and husbands in its wider context, which actually explains why we're making this point that, we glorify God's redemption in sanctification. Because individual roles in marriage are an outworking of our sanctification. As we come to verse 22, we have to realize in the original text there is no verb in that sentence. It's simply wives to your own husbands as to the Lord. And so you've just read that out of context. You'd say wives to your own husbands, what "as to the Lord"?

So we go back to verse 21 and that's what our English translations do. They insert the verb from the previous phrase in verse 21, and that is correct. In Ephesians 5:21 we read,

submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ and then the translators in the English take that submission verb and they make it a command, and they say wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

That's obviously submitting to one another out of the out of reverence for Christ. That is the end of an earlier thought. It's connected to an earlier context. It's a simple point, but it's a, it's a very important exegetical point, and it's often overlooked and often neglected.

We need to say this and that's why we're making this point: marriage glorifies God's redemption in sanctification. We need to understand, larger point, marriage is not isolated from a larger context. Marriages is not isolated from other relationships. More specifically for us, as Christians, marriage is not isolated from the church. I've tried to show this marriage is embedded in a much larger context. The glory of God in redemption. But that glory of God in redemption requires sanctification of the Christian in and through the local church.

Marriages are to be engaged in, intertwined with, growing out of, the local church. If they're isolated from the local church, they're like branches that are cut off from a tree just lying on the ground, withering and dying on a hard, barren ground. Look

back to Ephesians 5:14 in the end of the verse there it says, "Awake O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

That is one way of expressing what it means to be a Christian. Awakened from a death sleep, to be risen from the dead, like Lazarus, waking up and walking out of the tomb, we too see the light of Christ and we emerge from the darkness, we walk around in the light of truth, as verse 15 says. Look what it says there, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise. Making the most, making the best use of the time because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with," or by, "the spirit."

Walking wisely, redeeming the time, understanding what the will of the Lord is, all of this happens when we are filled with or by the Spirit. It's another way of saying that we're the controlling factor in our life, the controlling dominant influence in our life, is the light of truth we've received from Christ by the Spirit of God.

Where does that light come from? Where does that truth come from? What is the filling work of the Spirit? It's in the teaching ministry of the local church. This is at the end, that

practical section starting at Ephesians chapter 4 and moving on. How do we walk wisely? Who's to say what's wise? How do we redeem or make the best use of the time? Who's to say what our priorities should be? What we should be spending our time doing? Who's to say how do we understand what the will of the Lord is? By living life with a local church, central in our lives, it takes us back to the beginning, as I'm saying, of Paul's instruction in chapters 4 to 6. All about the teaching, the equipping ministry of the local church.

Tragically, there are so many professing Christians, so many professing Christian marriages and professing Christian families, and they think that they are isolated islands unto themselves, that they'll get along just fine with a smattering of religion on the weekends. It's good for the kids, and you'll get a memorizing verses around their peer group. That's good. That's good stuff. It's good for their morals. Just get a little bit on the weekend and then they do their own thing throughout the rest of the week.

So many fail to see how their lives in and outside of the home, their marriages, their families, their professional lives. They don't see how that grows out of the life giving ministry of the

local church, in the regular ministry of the word, and equipping saints for the work of the ministry.

All of those people who think like that who kind of get what they just hear a sermon or hear something good on Sundays and then go home and live exactly the way they've always lived. They're like branches, cut off from the life-giving nutrients of the tree, of the trunk. They cut themselves off from the vitality of the regular deep ministry of God's word taught by qualified Christ gifted, Christ given men.

They're true Christians living like that. They're anemic, they're weak, they're ignorant, they don't know it. They're withering, dying, but when a marriage, when a family, is tapped into the church, tapped into the mind-renewing, life-transforming power of God's word, God's word not just read and not understood, but read and explained, read and preached, read and exhorted, pressed to the conscience, demanding a verdict, demanding change, that's what preaching is; that's what preaching is to do and to accomplish in the church.

When a life, when a marriage, when a family is tapped into that, benefit from that mind renewal, that benefit their life transforms. Christians then are being truly sanctified and

strengthened and mature. Listen, the word changes us. The word has power. I hope you've seen that in your life.

We notice in Chapter 5 verse 19 and following we see the effects of God's word in our lives. We speak to one another, verse 19, in a totally different way. We speak to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Who wasn't blessed by the choir this morning? That song that they sang to us, who wasn't encouraged, strengthened, their hearts uplifted? Who wasn't encouraged by the songs that we sang together? The creed that we recited together, the scripture we read together, the prayers we prayed together, who wasn't encouraged by that? We speak to one another, verse 19, in a totally different way.

Verse 20 we give thanks for everything. Everything is a big word, isn't it? Good and bad. When things are going well and things are going poorly; when things seem to accrue and be moving toward our benefit, or when they don't; we give thanks for everything, always to God the father in the name of Christ. That's what happens when the word is active within us. We speak to one another in elevated psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We give thanks always at all times for everything, good and bad, because "we know that all things work together." Romans 8:28, right? "All things work together for the good of those who are

called by God, who are called according to his purpose, and who love him."

Give thanks for everything and verse 21, "We submit to one another." We line up underneath authority. We participate in the authority submission structure. We embrace the role that God has assigned to each one of us and look what it says there, end of verse 21, we do this out of reverence for Christ. Literally the word is *phobos*, it's the word fear. We do this in the fear of Christ.

Practice submission as an outworking of holiness. We practice submission because it's it, it accrues to our sanctification. We live under authority and submission to authority. We see the authority of the church in Ephesians 4:1 to 5:21. We see the authority of the home practiced in the home in Ephesians 5:22 to 6:4, it's all about the relationships in the home. Luther called it the *haustafe*l, it's the house table. I think many commentators and exegetes have taken that language from Luther, *haustafel*, they talk about Ephesians 5:22 to 6:4 and even beyond, all the way up to 6:9 because it's talking about the workplace relationships.

All that is the house table. It's how a, it's how a house and how a person in the workplace, private and public, it's how he

orders his life, according to this table. So, inside the home authority, outside the home authority, we line up under the structures of authority and submission. As Christians, every single one of us, we're all called to submit. We are all called to live in submission in various spheres in our life. Submission is a good and godly virtue of the Christian life.

The Greek word is *hupotasso*. The fundamental meaning of *hupotasso* is to line up under. It implies that there's authority above, and we line up under. Here's some definition straight from some Greek lexicons, *hupotasso* means to bring something under the firm control of someone, to subject to, to bring under control. *Hupotasso* means to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject to or to put in subjection. *Hupotasso* also means to place or arrange under, to post under two subject or to be obedient.

In those definitions, you hear how many times, under, is a part of that definition? Under is a part of the meaning? That's the *hupo*. The *hupo* prefix in *hupotasso,* it's a preposition that means under, so it's a concept of hierarchy. Someone is over and someone is under, that's how we line up.

Listen, we understand this submission is good for us. God's blessing comes through structure. It comes through order. When

things are unstructured and disorderly, chaos abounds and no one's blessed. Someone being in charge, someone else following, structures of authority and submission are good, and healthy, and beneficial.

And yet, don't we know it, that it is endemic to our fallen nature to buck against that, to suspect authority, to resist authority. Huh? Wonder where that came from? Go right back to Genesis 3, right? All authority, ultimately represents God. Since God is the ultimate and absolute sovereign authority over all. All authority is ultimately from him. All authority ultimately represents him. It's a sin nature that's inherited from the fall.

The sin nature is predisposed to question authority, to suspect authority. Just as Adam and Eve did in Genesis chapter 3. Men and women alike are influenced this way, and it's because of the sin nature and yet, though we are suspicious, though we're resistant, though we buck against calls to line up under authority, we are living contradictions. We contradict ourselves in this all the time, because we live appreciating, and benefiting from, and supporting the order of hierarchical structures all over the place in society, don't we?

We see this everywhere. We never questioned it. Whether it has to do with the orderly organization at the grocery store, the order we take for granted when everybody obeys traffic laws so we can get to the grocery store. If you've ever lived in another country, a third world country, and tried to drive, you so appreciate getting back to the United States where everybody drives within lines that are painted on the road.

You know, overseas those are just, suggestions, they're humorous as a three lane turns into a six lane. Everybody trying to cram everything through, and motorcycles zip through and someone opens their door in a motorcycle accident happens. Same thing we get to the grocery store. Do we, would we be okay with getting to the grocery store and seeing like a tornado has come through and everything the vegetables are all mixed with the cereal all mixed with this, everything mixed together. We gotta pick everything out of disorganization.

No. We want order. We want hierarchical structures. We demand laws, rules and some refuse to submit to the orderly arrangement and the rules of the grocery store or laws that govern motor vehicles that are conduct themselves down the road. We get annoyed with that. When some refused to submit to orderly arrangement and hierarchical structures established in

government with the civil and criminal code; we know that people suffer, we know that property is lost, bodily injury and even death follow. When insubordination comes into a military context, listen, it's no joke. People die because of that.

We take authority submission relationships for granted, and if we'll recognize that fact if we realize how all of us are called to live under authority and line up under authority, we realize we're to line up under government authority, under church authority, under workplace authority, and under domestic authority. "Whoever resists authorities," Romans 13:2, "resists what God has appointed, and that person who resists authority that God has instituted and authorized, that person will incur judgment."

Now consider the Christian attitude toward authority, versus a non-Christian attitude toward authority, a worldly attitude toward authority. In the examples I just brought up, shopping at the grocery store, or the hardware store, or wherever it is, or driving cars and obeying traffic laws, submitting to civil and criminal codes, obeying orders in the military, is the kind of submission that God calls Christians to practice. Is it the same as all those examples, or is it different?

It is different. How is it different? Don't answer. How is it different? That's rhetorical. Submission in society has to be externally imposed upon the members of society and has to be forced upon them from outside by an authority armed with power. Rules, laws in society, they're not suggestions, are they? They come with teeth. They come with restrictions; if you don't obey, loss of privileges if you don't line up. If you go into the store and start flinging things all over the place, they're going to run you out pretty soon. If you come in and do it again, they'll probably ban you for life.

Penalties come from not obeying the rules in society. Fines, punishments for those who break the law. Why is that negative reinforcement necessary? Because by the fallen nature, people are inherently bad, not good. So, any liberal that tries to tell you about the goodness of man coming up, bubbling up from the inside, ask them if they lock their doors at night. Ask them if they watch where their wallet is or their purse is. Ask them if they are more comfortable with law enforcement or less.

The defund the police garbage notwithstanding. Even liberals, even those who are calling for the defunding of the police they have the money to hire their private security. It's written in Romans 3:10, "None is righteous, no, not one." Sinful people

will not submit to laws and rules unless there is external pressure, unless they're incentivized, unless there is either a positive reward for lining up or a negative reinforcement, submission in the world must be coerced and externally imposed.

Biblical submission. Biblical submission is different. Fundamentally different because it's different at the heart. It is, it's an issue of motivation. Biblical submission, Christian submission is a matter of the heart. It's internally motivated. It's joyfully and cheerfully offered up to the one in authority. Biblical submission looks beyond any human authority and looks to the God who placed authorities over us and rejoices.

Look at verse 21, for two reasons for this, first the verb form *hupotasso*, there in that verse to line up under, it's in the middle voice. Okay, so if your need a quick grammar refresher, active voice means I make you submit. Passive voice means I've been made to submit. Middle voice used here, verse 21, it means I submit myself. I line myself up under the authority of one another.

So, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ, this is something that is done from the heart. It is internally motivated, not externally imposed. The submission Paul describes as self-willed, it's an internally motivated, it's voluntary,

we're called to do it, the will is acknowledged, and the fact that this is in an imperative form.

Second evidence for this, the prepositional phrase in the ESV it's "out of reverence for Christ." The literal render, rendering as I said is in the fear of Christ, so the fear of the Lord, the fear of Christ, that's a matter of the heart again. Why are we to line up voluntarily, line myself up under the authority structures that God is, God is set for me? It's because I'm motivated out of the fear of the Lord, out of the fear of Christ. Fearing Christ is what motivates biblical submission.

So working definition for the submission, Paul commands here. Biblical submission we could say is the voluntary, thoughtful, active practice of lining up under the authority of one in charge in the fear of Christ. Biblical submission, I'll just say it again, is the voluntary, thoughtful, it's not turning the brain off, it's thoughtful, it's through understanding, so biblical submission is a voluntary, thoughtful, active practice of lining up under the authority of someone in charge and we do this in the fear of Christ.

It's in light of Christ's love for us as our savior; it's because of his work of redemption. That's what motivates our

obedience to him, in love, from a heart of fear, of awe, a profound regard of deep reverence. In the fear of the Lord, we love him. We are devoted to him, and we're eager and zealous in obeying him and so, when we see a command to submit, we're eager to do it.

This is what sanctification is, is walking in that. When you see people and you see people like this throughout society. You see them in the workplace and by the way, Christian, you see them in the church. When you see people who are prone to rebellion, who are always suspicious of authority, who are always questioning authority, even challenging authority, that is not any sign of maturity. When you hear that kind of talk, when you see that kind of attitude coming out of them, don't look at them as strong standing on their own two feet, that is a sign of weakness, and insecurity, and immaturity.

That's someone who needs to be confronted, rebuked, and corrected, not coddled, not ignored. Mature Christians are submissive Christians. Mature Christians are Christians who have a heart inclined towards submission, not rebellion out of reverence for Christ. Each sphere of authority has a realm of obedience in which we work out our sancti, sanctification God has provided institutions, each of them with a unique

circumstance that tests us, that proves us, that, that shapes and forms us, all these institutions, including marriage, the most fundamental.

So if you look at verses chapter 5 verses 22 to 24, you see that God is. If God has assigned you the role of a wife. Then you submit to your role outlined in Ephesians 5:22 and 24. If God has assigned you the role of a husband, your instructions follow after that verses 25 to 30. If you're assigned the role of a child, your instructions are found in Ephesians 6:1 to 3. Parental instructions? That's in verse 4 of that chapter, Slaves or we could say in today's vernacular, employees. Orders from your highest master, Lord of Lords, come for you to obey your human masters in verses 5 to 8. And if God has assigned you the role of a master, an employer, an owner, a supervisor, you have authority over others, an employment situation. Well, you better pay close attention to verse 9.

Mutual submission is not a burdensome duty. It is a joyful privilege. It is what we get to do in the outworking of our sanctification. And as partners in the covenant of marriage the husband takes up his part, the wife takes up her part; the husband takes up his part to love and care for his wife, and the

wife, the wife takes up her part to respect and to submit to her husband.

As love and respect join the marriage partners together, the husband and the wife mature in the experience of authority and submission practiced together and they grow in blessing and joy, that's what happens throughout life. In a marriage, it's lined up according to God's design.

So let's get to a third point and get more specific here. Starting with a unique role, responsibility of a wife. And yes, I'll get to the husband next week. But here's the wife. Point 3, we glorify God's redemption in submission. We glorify God's redemption in submission. Notice, I didn't say at that point, wives glorify God's redemption in submission, because we all do. Wives have a unique role, by virtue of being a wife, where they get to model submission for the entire church, for the entire world. This is an awesome privilege that a wife has.

So with the word, words from verse 21 still in mind, "submitting out of reverence for Christ," Paul instructs the wife in verses 22 to 24, "Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, 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. Now as

the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands."

Notice here that Paul in writing he does not impose submission upon wives using external hierarchical authority, in other words, he doesn't write to their husbands in authority over them and tell husbands to keep their wives in submission. Any husband who is trying to beat his wife over the head with these verses is out of bounds. He's stepping out of his role. These verses are written to the wife. Let the wife take up these verses and put them into practice.

Paul writes directly to the wives. It acknowledges their the status of women is equal with men, of wives is equal to husbands. He speaks to them as an equal to an equal. Not only by virtue of creation that both are created in the image of God, but by virtue of redemption. Christ died for men individually, and women individually. Died for his people. So in Christ by the Holy Spirit, Paul instructs each one to submit to Christ, verses 22 to 24 to wives; verse 25, and following to husbands.

I realize, in talking about submission, here in our culture that's been dominated by feminist thinking for many decades now, talk of submission appears to worldly minds to be either totally outdated, outmoded, backward, and even harmful. Because of our

cultural moment, pastors are often tempted to soften or apologize for what the Bible says about submission or, on the other hand, they brace up and get too strong and try to bring down the hammer.

James Montgomery Boice, great commentator, great exegete, pastor, he acknowledged this in his commentary on Ephesians. This tendency his own temptation, in his own ministry. I found that refreshing that he admitted to that and put it in print. But he writes this, "We know there are thousands of women who rail against this and thousands of men who give them just cause. But a Christian woman will nevertheless desire and seek to live up to God's standard."

I've come to believe that as well, as I talked to Christian women. Christian women love obeying God's Word. They love the concept of biblical marital submission in the way the Bible describes. Boice continues writing this. He says, "No good woman indeed, hardly any woman at all wants a man she can boss around. She wants a man she can look up to whose judgment she can respect and whose leadership she can respond to. If she does not get this in her man, she feels cheated."

True, wives are sinners like their husbands. They'll press their husbands on the question of mastery. They'll fight for their own

way, but deep inside, what wives really want, they want a man who will take charge. They want a man who will exercise loving leadership. They want a man who will take initiative, take responsibility, make good and wise decisions and when he blows it in a decision, he'll humble himself, come back, admit his fault and ask for help in getting to the right place.

I think the bitter irony of modern day liberal feminism is that it's gotten both men and women to believe the lie that women actually want to be feminists. Listen, I think most women you get them individually and talk to them privately and you'll realize, whether they're Christians or not, you'll realize they don't want to be feminists. They, they don't want to be, they don't want to be running around in pants and going to war and fighting all their own battles. They don't want to rule everything and boss men around. They want men to stand up and be men, the way the Bible describes. They want men to take initiative and take charge the way the Bible describes, not the way some, some actor on a movie screen acts. Not, not in some dominant authoritarian way, but exercising loving biblical authority.

When you describe that to a woman of even the most worldly woman, you describe what biblical leadership looks like, like

how I want that. I want that. They don't want any man to exercise cruel, harsh self-serving authority. There are far too many examples of that. They want men to follow the example of manliness that's found in Christ. They rejoice, actually, when men practice that in their marriages, and they're so, tend to be so gracious and so kind when men blow it while they're striving to follow that example. They're gonna help them pick up the pieces and keep moving, encouraging them all the way.

That is the mercy that God promised in the context of the curse upon the woman in Genesis 3:16, "Your desire shall be for your husband;" though there's failure, though there's ruin, though there's misery and sorrow and sadness and suffering because of sin, your desire is going to continue to be for your husband, "and he shall rule over you." It's not a harsh, oppressive rule, that's not what the Bible is describing, it's the kind, gentle, caring leadership of a loving husband. Again husbands, look to Christ, that's our model.

Now, if biblical submission is the voluntary, thoughtful, active practice of lining up under the authority of one in charge in the fear of Christ, then a wife's submission in marriage is the voluntary, thoughtful, intelligent, active role of a helpmeet. A woman who helps her husband pursue the will of God out of love

and devotion to Christ. Biblical submission, a wife's submission to her husband in marriage is the voluntary, thoughtful, intelligent, active role of a helpmeet. A biblical helpmeet who helps her husband pursue the will of God out of love and devotion to Christ.

Now, as we come to verses 22 to 24, very quickly here, the pattern Paul follows in his instruction to the wife. Paul gives a command. He gives a reason to support the command and instruct the mind, motivate the will. He also makes, then a comparison to the relationship between Christ and the church. Provides an aspirational model to follow. You can jot those down as sub-points if you like: Command, reason, and comparison.

Let's start with sub-point A, the command. Verse 22, "Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord." Listen, women everywhere should be in hearing that command, breathing a sigh of great relief. Paul does not say all women submit to all men. He says wives, that applies to married women only. "Wives submit to your own husbands," not to other husbands, not to all men in general, to your own husbands, that puts you under the refuge of your husband's authority and protection and provision to be loved, to be cared for, provided for, protected, cherished by him.

Are there other men to whom you must submit? Yeah, we already talked about that. The institutions of government authority, church authority. Listen, we all submit to authority, but the most fundamental institution, the sphere in which you live your normal daily life. It's in your own, it's your own husband, not your father, not your mother; it's your husband, not your children, grandchildren; it's your husband, not your pastor, not your congressman, it’s your own husband to whom you must submit.

Second thing to point out in the command, this is no ordinary man. This particular man has a privileged role, that is, he is in the unique privileged position of being your husband, isn't he blessed? Did I hear of an Amen? I didn't hear one Amen out of that. Of course he's blessed, he’s husband to you. It means he's been specially chosen by God to be your leader, to be your intimate partner. He is your chosen gift from God to bless and benefit you. This is no ordinary man, he's your man. You’re his woman.

God chose this particular man to be a blessing to you. To be specially designed, prepared for you and you for him; he is the unique one. You match as his compliment and he as yours. You were specially designed and most fitting to him this particular man as his helpmeet. So, if God has granted you the gift of

marriage, you ought not to take that for granted. You've been given the gift of participating in this creation institution for your shaping, for your formation, and you for his. It's for your maturing in Christ and his maturing as well. The way that happens is through your practice of voluntary, thoughtful, intelligent submission to your own husband in a context of intimacy and joy in marriage. It's a gift.

Third thing about this command, biblical submission to your own husband involves voluntary, thoughtful engagement of the intellect, the will, the affections are involved, all this is in the context of an intimate relationship, one flesh relationship of marriage. Don’t ever make the mistake that biblical submission means walk on me, I'm a doormat. It doesn't mean turn off my brain, do whatever my husband says. That's obedience and you may obey and line up and just do whatever is told. That's not biblical submission. You're commanded to something higher, something that acknowledges your mind, your intellect, your will, your emotions, your affections.

So women don't turn off the heart, don't turn off the brain, don't turn off the intuition, don't turn off all the experience, don't turn off your perspective on life, this is good, this is what God designed. This is all in the context of a one flesh

relationship in marriage. Does submission involve obedience? Of course it does. All of our submission involves lining up and obeying in some way. Sarah obeyed Abraham, 1 Peter 3:6, that was an outworking of her submission as she put her hope, not in Abraham, but in God who is over Abraham, we said earlier, though mere obedience is not biblical submission. Biblical submission involves obedience, but it's far more.

A child can do what his father tells him without understanding why he told him to do it, an employee can do his job without understanding the strategies and strategic goals of the executives above him, but you know, you could say a soldier can do his job without knowing the general strategic plan for the battle, for the war, but biblical submission isn't like that.

Biblical submission involves the understanding. It's about the intellectual engagement of the heart, the mind, the will. Submission means that the person lining up under authority strives to understand the thinking of the person in authority. What does that demand? Relationship. It demands communication. It demands intimacy, relational intimacy. By understanding the one in authority, the one under authority can better embrace and help the one who's in authority, help to realize his goals, to be a good fitting helpmeet.

So while you can't perform biblical submission without obedience, biblical submission is far more than mere obedience, it demands the mentality of a helpmeet. When a woman gets married, she has voluntarily made a choice, hasn't she? At least in our time, there's no forced marriages here, at least not yet in our church. As I see the singles multiply and not getting married. I might institute, the elders are talking about this, trying, okay we're going to match you and you up, and we're going to. No, we can't do that. That's outside the bounds of our authority. Just kidding, but it's a temptation. So.

But when a woman gets married, at least in our society, in our time, in our place, she's making a voluntary choice, isn't she? She's making a voluntary commitment. She enters into a covenant before God to become the wife of a certain man. She chooses to enter into that married state to become a wife. You don't get to define the definition of wife, God does. So when you see the definition of wife and accept God's definition of wife, God's design for the wife and his will for the wife's role.

What Paul is saying is wives continue volunteering. You continue that voluntary lining up spirit. You continue to define your marriage and your role the way God defines it and designed it. You continue in submission, practicing the wifely role,

which is why, number four, Paul connects a wife submission to her husband with her submission to the Lord. End of verse 22, "Submit your own husbands as to the Lord." Your thoughtful heart engaged submission to your own husband is an outworking of your thoughtful, heart engaged submission to your Lord and Savior.

Brings us to the reason for submission. Sub-point B, the reason. Verse 23, "For," what's it say? "the husband is the head of the wife." He's the authority. "Husband is the head of a wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself it's Savior." Just as God chose, you would enter the world as a woman and not a man. Just as he designed and equipped you for your role with your unique gifts, joys, privileges. Just as God chose you to live in the world as a wife joined to a husband, partnered with him for mutual intimacy and pleasure and joy. God also chose the husband to be the authoritative head in the domestic relationship and for you to line up under that authority, that is God's perfect good design for marriage.

The husband is the head. He's the authority in the marriage and the wife lines up under his authority. She's designed to be his helpmeet. She operates best at her maximum potential and capacity when she is acting as a helpmeet and they do their part to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and exercise

dominion and all the rest. It's all God's infinite wisdom. It's how he conveys his wisdom, his goodness, his blessing through marriage, that first formative institution out into the rest of the world.

So first, part of the reason Paul gives to wives for submitting to their husband. He starts by appealing to their intellect, reminding them the husband headship, his authority, that's by God's, good, perfect wise design. So it means a wise woman is going to open up her Bible, turn to Genesis 1 and 2, read the text, recognize the all-good, all-wise, God created marriage precisely this way, and she'll work out her sanctification and glorify her God who redeemed her in Christ, turning away from any sinful, fearful impulse and embrace the authority structure God put in place, submit to her own husband.

The second reason we see here second part of the reason that Paul gives for wives to submit to their own husband is the hope of intimacy and the hope of affection that God built into the design for marriage. This brings up a, another sub-point, sub-point C: the comparison. Comparison between the husband's headship in marriage and the headship of Christ over the church. Verses 23 to 24, notice the comparative language, "But the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of

the church, his body is himself its savior. As the church submits to Christ," more comparative language, "so also wives should submit to in everything to their husbands."

What Paul writes to wives, it foreshadows the instruction he's about to give to the to the husbands, which is heavy on this comparative, between marriage and Christ's redemptive relationship in the church. Verse 25, "In the same way, husband should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it," comparative, "just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body."

Ladies, I hope you like the sound of that to have your husband loving you as himself. Recognizing that God took Eve from Adam's rib and Eve always wants to come back. And the man wants to bring her back, bring her close, under the armor, close by his side. To understand that God designed your husband to cherish you, nourishing and cherishing your marriage.

This isn't about you submitting to some cold, indifferent principle of authority submission that God put into the world. This is about Christ, your Savior. The one who died for you, the one who set an example for your husband as well, to give himself up and even die for you. It's not about suffering under the

oppressive rule of some foreign hostile power. This is about your husband. This is about the one who looks to Christ as his authority, looks to his life as his authoritative example.

So verses 23-24, Paul prepares the wives to see that. See thay Christ himself is the one who commands the conscience of her husband. He is by nature, the example. She trusts him already. You as a wife can trust Christ already because he's died for you. He's done everything for you. He's secured your eternal salvation for the glory of God. How will God not also with Christ, freely give you all things? Christ put his life on the line for you.

There's an intimate, vital, organic connection that exists between Christ and his church, by the Spirit, by the Word. He did it all. He suffered to the extreme. He proved his love when the bride was most unlovely. Savior like that who exercises his authority over us just like that. What could keep us from loving lining up under his loving authority? What could stop us? Only our sinful impulses, right? Only our sinful distrust. Only the only prevention is the fear and anxiety that is not merited because of him. It opens up our sin and reveals that to us. There's no reason for distrusting God; there's no reason for trust in Christ.

So wife, when your savior, when he lovingly calls you to line up under the authority of your earthly, limited, flawed, sometimes mistaken, very imperfect husband, can you yourself all the same things earthly, limited, flawed, imperfect, as a wife, can you submit to Christ? Can you trust him? When you submit to your husband, can you submit to him in verse 24 as it says in everything? Of course you can. Yes, you can. He commands what you are able by the Spirit and by the word to do. And I'm telling you when you do it, you rejoice in doing it. You're thrilled to be obedient to him, because God, who is the one who "works in you, both to will and to do according to his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. This is his good pleasure. His revealed will that you live in submission to your husband in everything.

4th century Pastor John Chrysostom, he said that when wives are in harmony with their husbands, quote "Children are well brought up and the domestics are in good order, and neighbors, and friends, and relations enjoy the fragrance, but if it be otherwise, all is turned upside down and thrown into confusion." Folks, that's what we're seeing today. Just like you can imagine a tornado coming through the grocery store or coming, men, coming through the hardware store and mixing up all the nuts,

and bolts, and screws, and nails, and everything is all mixed up.

That's what we're seeing relationally in marriages today, families today. Wives and husbands forsaking the good order of the authority submission structure, and the love and respect commitment that should characterize the marital relationship. And we're suffering for it, aren't we? Individually, socially, collectively, culturally we're suffering.

Through marriage, through Christian marriage in particular, listen we get to practice glorifying God's redemption in Christ. Just taking up our roles, just following this instruction, modeling and portraying the relationship between Christ and his bride. Christian wives, you have the unique privilege, a special role, given to you by God to bless your husband with your intelligent submission through your wise informed counsel with diligent, hard work when you do that, you set an example for your children to follow, you shape young boys, you shape young girls, growing up in your home and watching this portrayed before them, all be it imperfectly. But God's grace covers a multitude of sins, doesn't it?

God shapes, through your marriage, your boys, your girls to embrace that authority submission structure that God designed

for our good and his glory. Extending outward from the family, you know what else your submission does? It provides instruction to the church. When we together, when we watch a wife in submission to her husband, she sets an example about how we're to live in submission to authority. I've seen some difficult, difficult marriages. I've seen a dear Christian woman married to a very harsh unrepentant non-Christian man, who was petulant, silly in his forms of irritation, and agonizing his wife, and annoying her and I watched her sweetly line up and submit to this man. Until God ended it taking his life. It was instructive to me as it's instructive to all of you.

We as a church watch and we learn and we see what lining up under authority looks like, even in the worst of circumstances it brings glory to God. It teaches us as a church how to line up under the authority of Christ, who is none of that. He's good, he's not bad. He's kind, he's not harsh. He's gentle, he's tender, he's loving in his exercise of authority. All this resounds to God's glory glorifies the redemption that God put in place from long ages ago. Being accomplished, fulfilled in Christ and through the church.

So much more to say on this subject and so many points to expand upon. I know so many questions arise in your mind, and they're

good questions that you have, but we have to cut it off here just for the sake of time when we come back next week, we're going to look at verse 25, "And husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church." And if you hear nothing else, husbands, "gave himself up, gave himself up."

Let's pray. Our father, we rejoice in this structure that you built into marriage from the very beginning. And were it not for the redemption that we find in Christ, were it not for the clear instruction of the word, were it not for the power of the spirit, were it not for a regenerated heart, a new nature that you have given us, were not for salvation, were it not for your redemption, this pattern of authority and submission in marriage would be nothing, but a source of frustration, agony, irritation, annoyance, it'd be something that we turn away from. And yet, because of you and your love for us in Christ, and making us new creations in Christ, you've given us a new nature. You've taken out the heart of stone, put in a heart of flesh. You've given us a new nature, you've put in, put your Holy Spirit within; teach us to walk in your ways, and obey your commands. So there is great, great hope in fulfilling our purpose, to glorify you in and through our roles in marriage.

I pray that you would help us as a people to have an instinct toward submission, an instinct toward lining up under authority, to speak well of authority to, to demonstrate that in and through the church, and I pray that we would be a people who, by good order and proper hierarchical structure, your word would go forth, do its good work. And that we would be at people that's known for our love for one another, the way we line up under your authority. We love you and thank you so much for what you're teaching us in this series, we prayed that you would give us the ability to obey by your spirit, by your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.