

## **EPHESIANS 5.21-6.4** Lullingstone 13/8/17

This week we continue to journey through Paul's Epistles. The last few weeks we have covered Paul's letters- teaching Christian truths, concern to build the church, and this week- concern for everyday life. Whilst looking at these letters of Paul, he isn't just giving us lessons in Godly behaviour. He isn't just telling us how to live lives that will please God. But rather, he's telling us how to live lives that will show Christian living and recommend the gospel to those around us. God wants us to show the world how great is his wisdom and glory.

In this reading Paul begins by telling us in verse 21 to "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Submission is one of those things we don't like in our modern, liberated world, isn't it? But we need to realise that there's no sense here that our submission to one another is out of inferiority; there's no sense of subordination in what he's saying. In fact you could argue that you can only submit yourself to another if you're free to do so. That is, if in fact you're an equal. If you're not free, if you're not acting as an equal, then it isn't submission, it's oppression. Submission here means giving up the rights you have in order to serve others. This is an instruction for wives, for husbands, for parents, for children, for employers and employees. And it's a very confronting, a very counter-cultural instruction in a culture where rights are so important.

But notice this is not an arbitrary rule. Rather, it's an instruction to give up your rights for the greater good of God's kingdom.

Jesus is not asking us to do something that he did not do himself. Jesus submitted his will to the Father. He yielded to the interests of the Father. Wives, in this sense are choosing to voluntarily comply to the leadership of the husband. Now it is important to note something right here. This text is not talking to husbands. This text does not say that you make your wife submit. The scriptures do not teach that you make her yield or else there will be consequences or punishments.

Paul's been telling us about how God has renewed us in his image through Jesus' death and resurrection, and part of that renewing of us in the image of God is the ending of the contest between men and women. God wants women and men to work together in harmony the way he intended it in Genesis 2; i.e. to build one another up. For example that might mean wives letting your husband make the decisions from time to time. I know that may be a radical

idea for some people. But as we'll see in a moment, the result should be that wives are in turn helped to grow in their Christian maturity. As we'll see in the next bit if the husband does his part correctly wives should be empowered to use all the gifts they have to the greatest degree so their partnership, their family, grows from strength to strength. Then the wife will be enabled to use her gifts to both grow herself and to grow the church

The Greek word used here...in both submission to Christ for men and women, and for wives in regard to their husband's leadership is "Hupotasso"...it's the same word used in regard to Church leadership...it's never involuntary...it's always voluntary. The word means to be subject to, or to yield to.

Let us now look at verse 25 of our reading " Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

A young pastor was speaking to a 32-year old single woman. He started talking to her about her hopes regarding marriage. He asked, "What are some of the characteristics you'd like to find in the person who will be your mate?" Her first answer was, "I want someone who loves me." So we should not be surprised that the most important command given to husbands is found here in v.25, "Husbands, love your wives." This is a command. To fail here is not only a sin against your wife, it is a sin against God. I would also point out that in v.33 Paul makes sure that this command to love applies to each and every husband. He says, "Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself..." No one is exempt, regardless of who you are married to. Both husband and wife are commanded to love each other, but it should be pointed out that while the wife is commanded to love her husband (philadros) once in the New Testament in Titus. 2:, the husband is commanded to love his wife at least 3 times here in this passage, verse 25, 28, and 33, as well as one more time in Col. 3:19." Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them". Perhaps one reason that men need this command more than women do is because women seem to have a greater natural inclination to love. But besides that, why would Paul make this command the most important command for husbands to follow?

Love is the fulfilment of Relationships - Gal. 5:13b-14 "but by love serve one another.<sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

Love will cause you to refrain from saying or doing anything that will hurt your wife. Love will cause you to do positive good toward your wife.

We've now looked at wives and husbands, ut Paul talks now to children. 0In Ephesians ch 6 v 1-4 "Children obey your parents...honour your mother and father". This is also the fifth commandment.

"Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you".

So, what does that mean? Is it as simple as it appears?

We owe our very existence to our parents, even though we had nothing to do with who they would be.

We didn't chose our parents, but then they didn't chose us did they.

the only exception would be adopted children.

Our parents were/are likely to have problems of their own. they weren't/aren't perfect. We as parents are not perfect. But our children and us as children are told to honour our parents.

Honour is to respect those who brought them into the world, for bringing them into the world.

The Hebrew word for honour is kabod, which means "to be heavy." The basic sense is "to treat someone with respect because they carry a heavy weight of authority.

Honour and respect them, for what can sometimes be the heavy weight of responsibility in bringing up children in the right way with the right values to lead us through our life. How many times have we felt the heavy weight of responsibility as parents. As Christians we can call upon God to help us through those times when parenthood seems so heavy, but not all of our parents were/are Christians. there is no manual that suits all, and none of us are perfect.

You are to honour your parents because of their position. You are to treat them with respect because of their position as parents over you, and as the people who brought you into the world.

This reading is not about submission, domination, control. wives over husbands, husbands over wives, parents over children, children over parents. It's about love, love for each other, as God loves us.

In this reading Paul begins by telling us in verse 21 to "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Do everything we do for each other as we would do for Christ.

