

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world,

We were reminded last Sunday that during the Epiphany season of the church year we celebrate the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and The Light of the world. We heard that His Light shines both upon us and from within us. Now I have a question for you: Is it possible that taking out the garbage can be a celebration of the light of Christ? Oh yes! If the light of Christ fills the heart of the Christian husband, he will gladly serve his wife in their marriage, even by taking out the garbage!

Jesus is "The Light of the world." He says that His believing disciples are also "the light of the world," because in the living of their lives they shine with His light against the darkness of this world.

One of the brightest beacons shining against the darkness of our world is the Christian marriage. So may the Holy Spirit grant us understanding as we learn from our text to

LET THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINE IN OUR MARRIAGES.

I.

Our text is the most comprehensive description of a Christian marriage in the entire Bible. Prior to these words Paul describes what a "Spirit-filled" Christian is. He is a person who understands what the will of God is, who sings in his heart to the Lord, and gives thanks to God for all things in Jesus' name. Now in v. 21 Paul encourages Spirit-filled Christians to **"be submitting themselves to one another in the fear of God."**

But what does the word "subject" or "submit" mean? In Romans 13 Paul uses the same word when he commands Christians to **"subject themselves" to the government and to pay taxes.**

The word "submit" means to "completely surrender one's self." Paul is not speaking of a forced surrender. He actually says in the original Greek, **"Make yourselves submissive to one another.**

How is this self-submissiveness worked out in our daily lives? In the verses of our text and into chapter 6, Paul speaks to children

and parents, slaves and masters. But he begins in our text by addressing those who are married.

II.

The wife is to **“subject” herself “to her own husband in everything.”** In v. 22, the wife is told, **“subject yourselves to your own husbands as to the Lord.”** But the feminists of our day cry out: “If we must be subject to our husbands, then we shall lose our personal identity; we become slaves! Down with the teaching of Paul! He was a woman-hater!”

This too is garbage, and it must also be thrown out, lest it stink up the estate of marriage which God has instituted! Paul does not say that it is the husbands duty to treat his wife as a slave, or his property! Paul is speaking only to the wife. He says, “Just as you submit yourself to your Lord and Savior, striving by God’s grace to obey Him in everything, so you are to obey and submit yourself to your husband.”

Why? NOT because he is physically stronger, or it will cost you both financially if you don’t; but because this is the WILL of Him who created both the husband and the wife. It is God’s established order from the beginning, as Paul says in v. 23: **“The husband IS the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the Church; and He (Himself) IS the Savior of the body.”**

The married couple is a unity, just as God ordained it when He first brought the woman to the man, so that they might be **“one flesh.”** A unity can only have one head, even as the Church, which is Christ’s bride, can only have one head, Jesus Christ. There cannot be two heads of Christ’s Church. So also, two heads in a marriage, or the wrong head, leads to division, quarrels, and other troubles God does not want and did not order!

The headship of the husband is not only the will of God from the beginning. It is also for the benefit of the wife, even as the headship of Christ is a blessing to the Church. As members of Christ’s Church or spiritual body through faith, are any of you sisters in Christ degraded? Have you lost your value as a person because you are a Christian who strives to obey Him, your spiritual Head?

On the contrary, He is **“the Savior of the Church, which is His body.”** Through His redeeming work, **“you have been made to sit in heavenly places,”** (Eph. 2:6)! Once you were an enemy of God, but now you are His child through faith in Jesus Christ. You are not made less, but more under Christ’s Headship! So also, you become not less, but more when you submit yourselves to your husbands **“in everything.”** The Lord Himself will bless you, and you will be even more precious to your husbands.

III.

But what about the Christian husband? To him Paul says: **“Submit yourself to your wife”** – place yourself under your wife.”

But how can the husband submit himself to his wife, if she already to submit herself to him in everything? Paul explains: **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it.”**

The self-submission of the husband does not mean that he is to be “hen-pecked.” It is wrong for the wife to order her husband to do what she wants, or threaten him, just as it would be wrong for us Christians to order Christ to do something for us. The light of Christ within the Christian husband ought to move him to take out the garbage, not because his wife ordered him, but because he loves her.

The self-submission of the Christian husband to his wife ought to take the form of self-denying, self-sacrificing, protecting, and nourishing love! Notice, husbands, that Paul tells us to love our wives, **“just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.”** Christ did not make love to the Church; He loved the Church.

So also the Christian husband is to love his wife much, much more than the worldly husband loves his wife!

Christ went as a **“sheep to the slaughter”** for the sake His Church! So the believing husband is to submit himself to his wife by giving himself up for her, sacrificing his wants and all that he has to her, even his earthly life! If the wife mistreats her husband because of sin, still he is to love and care for her, even as Christ faithfully stands by everyone of us even though we sin daily against Him!

Christ sought the eternal welfare of the Church through the

cleansing waters of baptism. He wanted to nourish His spiritual body with His gospel of forgiveness so that He might present it to Himself in all its glory on the last day – **“holy and without blemish” of sin.**

All of this Jesus does for His Church because the Church is His own body.

Now read vs. 28-30 with me. . . . You see? Christ loves the Church because it is HIS BODY – part of Him. So also the husband ought to love his wife because she is part of him – part of his own flesh! So Adam said, **“For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.”**

So, however you husbands regard yourselves, you must also regard your wives, for you are one flesh with her. You are to love and cherish your wives as your own bodies, just as Christ nourishes and cherishes all believers, because they are the flesh and bones of His own body!

Paul says there is a great mystery here! The relationship of Christ to His Church is indeed a great mystery, which can only be known because God reveals it to us in his Word. Paul compares this mystery to the relationship which is to exist between the husband and the wife.

Let the unbelieving people of the world complain about their marriages and break up their marriages for selfish and sinful purposes. In their spiritual darkness and pride they will not be subject to one another according to God’s Word, because they do not have the Light of their Savior Jesus Christ.

We know that there are no “fairy tale marriages” and there is no marriage in heaven. But in this life we are to be **“light”** to the world in our marriages. May we therefore be so filled with the Spirit of Christ, that our marriages reflect the light of His forgiving grace to those around us. May others see the light of Christ in our marriages, and truly “live happily ever after” in their marriages, . . . and even after that! Amen.