

Some Essentials for a Happy Marriage.

Text: Eph 5:22-33

Suggested Hymns:

301, 397, 164, 839, 589

1) Guidance for husbands

2) Guidance for wives

3) An appeal to the young

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Ephesians 5:22–33, ²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.* ²⁴ *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,* ²⁶ *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,* ²⁷ *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

²⁸ *So husbands ought to love their own 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 the Lord does the church.* ³⁰ *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.* ³¹ *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*

³² *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* ³³ *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The subject on which we want to meditate on in this hour of worship is one of universal interest. It is the subject of marriage. Holy Scripture tells us that God instituted marriage.

He did not, however, merely set people adrift on the seas of matrimony, but He also provided them with a chart and compass so that they could see where they were going.

Some of the directions given to us in the divine Word for the guidance of husbands and wives in the relationship of marriage are contained in our text for today.

This particular text was chosen for consideration on this particular Sunday so as to bring the selection into harmony with the Gospel for today, which speaks about our Lord's appearance at the marriage feast at Cana.

You will have observed that here God addresses Himself through the Apostle Paul to husbands and to wives. The directions which He gives are quite simple and understandable to everyone who can understand simple language.

Let us therefore consider *Some Essentials for a Happy Marriage*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Guidance For Husbands

The Lord says, “²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*”

Look at the Love of Christ. Jesus loved. He came into this world with a heart overflowing with infinite love. He gave Himself in love.

When Jesus died on the Cross, He did not do so because He was getting a personal reward or selfish gain. Rather, He did so because He bore the sins of mankind. He gave Himself a ransom for all. He died as a lamb for sinners slain. It was the world's supreme example of unselfish love.

He did it so that He might present to Himself a Church that was without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, a Church that would be holy and without blemish. All that Jesus did in the expression of His infinite love was done for the good of mankind.

This is the sweetest story ever told. If you came to God's house this morning with a heavy heart, if somewhere there is a thorn in your conscience which is bothering you, and preventing you from enjoying inner quiet and peace of soul, then remember what Jesus has done for you.

Put your faith and your trust in Him so that you may find peace and forgiveness and be able with fearlessness and confidence to address yourself to God, your Maker and your Preserver.

But the special point to which we want to refer to today is the fact that God uses this example of unselfish love as a guide for husbands in relationship to their wives. Every husband can determine beforehand whether he intends to contribute to the failure or to the success of his marriage. He can tell from the manner in which he conducts himself to what degree he is contributing either to the failure or the success of his marital venture.

Husbands should love and cherish their wives even as their own bodies, even as the Lord nourishes and cherishes the Church. The husband's approach to marriage should be one of unselfishness. The man who gets married with the idea of getting out of it what he can for himself is already destroying his chances for happiness by the very selfishness wherewith he enters upon this holy estate.

God lays upon the hearts and souls of men certain responsibilities, to nourish and cherish their wives as the Lord nourishes and cherishes the Church. You realise without me telling you, how all of this, is so often being turned around, being turned upside down, in society of our day.

Young people today who enter upon marriage have their problems when it is so difficult to find a dwelling place, and, if they do succeed in finding some place where they can live, usually the cost of it is so exorbitant and unreasonable as to make it almost impossible for a young husband to afford.

Often young couples who desire to get married find it impossible to exist on the earnings of the husband, with the result that both go to work. No longer is the husband nourishing the wife and the wife maintaining the home. Both are out in the world of industry and commerce trying to earn a few dollars for sustenance.

No matter what the momentary situation in society may be and how great the problems, it still remains a fact that according to God's plan and purpose it is the responsibility of the husband to support the wife, to be the one who is the breadwinner and who maintains the home.

Today we also encounter situations in which husbands do not even put forth an honest effort to support his wife and family. They take for granted that the

wife should help earn the daily bread or perhaps even contribute somewhat to his support, instead of him assuming responsibility for her support.

It is one of the twisted, distorted features of modern life which are contributing to the disintegration and destruction of an ever-growing number of Australian homes.

The husband who wants to know how he should behave in relationship to his wife only needs to look to the life and ministry of Jesus and see Him on the Cross. When husbands learn to give themselves in unselfish devotion to the service of the one whom they profess to love, then they shall have become ideal husbands.

Until we attain that degree of perfection, we are struggling husbands, who are trying to do as God would have us do, for the purpose that our homes might be as happy as possible under His blessing hand. The Bible has its own principle, and it is the principle of unselfish love.

2. Guidance For Wives

Just as God has laid down a principle for the guidance of husbands, so has He also laid down a principle for the guidance of wives. ²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.* ²⁴ *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

If you believe that Jesus died for you and that He has saved you from your sins, then you love Him, then you are persuaded that He is your very best Friend, then you feel in your heart that you are deeply indebted to Him. It is out of this debt of love the Christian's love should flow.

In the life of the Christian there is no "*You must do this — you must do that.*" The Christian's heart has been touched by the love of a Saviour who has given Himself for our redemption. This puts the Christian under an obligation of love toward his Saviour. Henceforth the Christian spends his life trying to express that love.

The Christian doesn't work because he must work, he works because that gives him an opportunity to use his energies, his talents, his time, for the service

of God and his fellow men, as an expression of the love that fills his heart. Whatever he does, whether it be a deed of kindness for someone who needs his help, or whether it be an arduous task in some other area of life, it is always because he loves God who has first loved him.

This gives you the basis for all of life, for all of your daily conduct, and not only in the relationship of marriage.

If you do what you do because you must, because someone says: *“Thou shalt, thou shalt not,”* you have not yet found the Christian level for living. When you live on the Christian level of life, the motivation of life is the power of love, the love of God in Christ for you and for your fellow men.

When the Lord addresses Himself to women, He reminds them of this particular relationship, and He points it out to them as the example which they should follow in the fulfilment of their duties in holy matrimony. ²² ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord ... just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.***

The words “submit” and “be subject to” has stirred a spirit of revolt in the hearts of many women. The fact is, of course, that Christians are subject to Christ, but they are not subject to Him as one would be subject to a cruel taskmaster. The subjection of the Christian to Christ is one of love, of appreciation, and of gratitude.

God said advisedly, ***“Wives, submit to your own husbands ... just as the church is subject to Christ.”*** It is a subjection in love. The woman who has a faithful husband, who is striving to live for her happiness and the happiness of their children, has a gift in life for which she has every reason to be thankful to Almighty God. Let this be indelibly written in the hearts of all women.

It is not an uncommon thing for some women to be unappreciative of the love and the faithfulness of their husbands. They have an attitude of selfishness toward life which prevents them from appreciating the love which they are receiving. It would appear as though womankind of this particular day are in a special danger from that point of view.

So often there are situations in which a home could have been saved, a marriage could have been a happy one, had there been a fuller measure of

appreciation on the part of the wife of the love and the faithfulness which was shown to her by her husband.

When a woman is selfish, when she takes for granted that what is coming her way is her due, when she refuses to assume the responsibilities of motherhood and wifehood, when she either wants no children at all or only one child, and moans and groans as though all of her life is cruel to her because she has some work to do, such a woman is not going to make for a happy home, and it is not likely that hers is going to be a happy marriage.

That is not the attitude of the Church to Christ. The Church is not moaning and groaning because it has an opportunity of doing something for the Lord. No, it rejoices in the privilege of expressing the love that it feels toward Jesus who has done so much for its happiness. It is such a feeling of joy, of love, of appreciation which should express itself in the life of the woman.

Every woman will do well to take her guidance from the pages of Holy Scripture rather than from the selfishness which she may observe among her own kind out in the world at large, or as she reads about it in modern books or observes it in the modern movies.

Let God be your Guide, and your life will be richer, your heart will be happier, and your home to you a place of sacred nobility and glory.

When a woman has this happiness and her heart responds to the love which her husband is showing her, she should express it by doing the things she can to make him happy and by looking up to him as the head of the house. ²² ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*** ²³ ***For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church.***”

The Bible knows nothing about happiness for the woman who wants to occupy the place of pre-eminent authority in the home. It is a strange but universal truth, that again what the Bible says, is in line with what all that women feel and experience.

It does not matter who the woman is, she can find no happiness in life if she cannot look with respect to her husband as the head of the house. If she and her children cannot respect husband and father, that woman is an unhappy woman.

So there is something here for women to think about, and if you do not want to destroy your own happiness, ruin your own chances for well-being, for a peaceful, rich, and beautiful family life, then listen to the voice of God, and not to the misleading voices of people who do not know and do not understand.

Food for Thought

We are talking about things today which are very, very serious, and which have such a large bearing not only on the temporal happiness, but also on the eternal well-being of immortal souls. May God give to each of us light and understanding.

Here is a subject concerning which we must pray many prayers. Every husband here this morning can but hang his head in shame when he listens to the words which God has outlined for him and then considers how far he has fallen short of measuring up to the divine ideals.

The same thing applies to the women. Every woman present here who listens to what God has to say to her and who calls upon her to pour out her life in the spirit of unselfishness, will feel that she has not done all she might have done under God.

Now, as we go to our respective homes and in all sincerity have that mutual understanding and each will try, what a difference it will make!

Many hearts are heavy and many homes and marriages are tottering on the brink of destruction. However, you have a right to feel sure about your home only if you let God be your Guide and gives you the principles by which you seek to live.

3. An Appeal to the Young

When you young men and young women go out into life to, find that one individual who should be your mate and with whom; you intend to spend the rest of your days here on earth, please; listen to these principles!

Let God be your teacher. Don't flout what He has to tell you. Let Him help you. Make your choice of partner according to the principles which He has given. There lies your fullest hope for happiness in marriage.

And one of the things never to be forgotten is the fact that marriage is so intimate a relationship that husband and wife are: either both happy or both

unhappy. It is not possible to have one happy and the other unhappy. The very intimacy of the relationship precludes any such possibility.

“²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” “Wives, submit to your own husbands” — not as unto taskmasters and slave drivers — but as the Church in the spirit of love is subject to the Lord.

May this spirit prevail in all our homes. Our homes will be happy and the children who grow up within them will enjoy the blessings of an atmosphere of love, harmony and peace. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.