

## SERMON NOTES AND QUESTIONS:

### 1

#### The Gift of Marriage God has Given Us:

Verse 31 of Ephesians 5- reminds us of the Genesis account of God's solution to loneliness. -

**2:18ff The Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him... "**

#### **Here is Matthew Henry's Comment:**

The woman was made out of the side of Adam; not out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled on, but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved by him.

#### **Marriage is for Companionship**

#### **Is your spouse your best friend?**

**Marriage is for most but not for everybody** - some choose to be celibate; some are called to be celibate. I know people who are celibate because they are same sex attracted. Those I know personally have fulfilled lives and many friends.

In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul the apostle, is encouraging us Christians to live like Christ in all of our relationships, including husband and wives, and he starts with these words:

**21" Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."**

We will discover what this means in marriage as we look at the text.

**Ephesians 22 -24. Some will say encouraging wives to submit to their husband as if they were the Lord is patriarchy/oppression! In the time Paul was writing many saw their wives as their property and were treated as second class citizens. For Paul to even mention wives in such a honourable way as in this text and to say how a husband should treat his wife was countercultural then and is now.**

**Some husbands may look at this and say, "I'm the boss".** There is no human boss. But there is one Lord we obey. And He is Lord of our marriages. Jesus is to be the centre of our marriage. When He is the centre it will be seen in how spouses treat each other.

Paul says a **"wife must respect her husband"** v33. But that is not just for wives. How important for both husband and wife to respect and honour each other. When a spouse loses respect for his or her spouse - there is trouble.

The overarching principle is, **"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."** Out of obedience and respect for Jesus we are willing not just to think of our own rights but of what kind of mutual attitude and responsibility we have to each other.

Paul, unlike the negative way some view marriage today, exalts and honours it by likening it to Christ's relationship to the church. Moreover, he uses Christ's relationship and attitude to the church as a metaphor to illustrate how this mutual submission in marriage - giving and receiving, works.

#### **Marriage is about Giving and Receiving**

**“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**

Jesus demonstrated His sacrificial love for His church by dying on the cross for every individual sinner who believes in Him so they could be part of His Church.

There is a lot of emphasis on romantic and erotic love in the media have their place in marriage and are pleasurable. **But someone said romantic love lasts for two years so what kind of love does a couple have after that?** One woman told a friend of mine, “I no longer love my partner and we are splitting up”. **What kind of love is that?**

The love mentioned here is agape love, **sacrificial love.**

**Marriage is not boring; it can be fun - where you can laugh at yourself and each other.**

**Is there still fun in your marriage? What can you do to introduce more fun in to your marriage?**

However, James Dobson said: (of Focus on the Family) **“Life nor marriage is not made primarily for pleasure but for learning sacrificial love’ What do you think?**

**Marriage is for learning how to love sacrificially**

**Husbands are to love** their wives with that same sacrificial love that Jesus loves His church. To go out of our way to bless our wives. **Although the text does not say it, it goes without saying wives are to love** sacrificially also. That is why **we can promise** to love each until death parts us as this love is not dependent on what we feel.

**A gentleman was telling me recently how** he had nursed his wife with Alzheimer’s disease. That can be hard work as well emotionally tiring - some times. 24/7. Against the advice that he needed to sleep in a separate bed in order to get some needed sleep. He slept alongside his wife to keep her company even though she didn’t know it. **That is sacrificial love!**

**How does a marriage where both demonstrate sacrificial love become a witness to the love of Christ to others?**

**In what other ways did Jesus manifest His sacrificial love?**

**Eph 5:25-28 The Message**

**Marriage is about bringing the Best out of our Spouse. How do we bring the best out of our Spouse?**

**Ephesians 29-33 The Message**

**You treat you spouse as you treat yourself - with loving care.**

I and Cath made promises in front of a church full of witnesses like many of you:

“I take you as my lawful wedded wife/husband to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, **to love and to cherish, til we are parted by death and to this end I give you my word.”**

**I love all those words but what stands out for me is: to love and to cherish, - to cherish something, is to treat our spouse as special.**

**One wife complained to her husband that he never told her he loved her. "Well, he said, "I told you I loved you on our wedding day. I meant it and i have not changed my mind"**

All of us like to hear those words, **"I love you"** from our spouse"

Life was very busy for Cath and I - having three boys, being a pastor, she a teaching assistant. But we realised we needed to have time just for us - a meal on our own, watch a film together - time to talk. And, at least once a year we would go off for a couple nights and stay in a hotel courtesy of Tesco voucher. Friends looked after our kids, and the church was happy for us to do it. **We took time just to be with each other.** It is hard to do it when you have a busy life style but it is important to make time for each other.

Life continues to be busy even when you retire. There's the grandchildren. You love doing your bit for them, and some times it can be a big commitment as well as a lot of joy. Then there's the things you do for the church or in other ways.

**When do you really make time for your spouse?**

**If your single, you can be very busy indeed, do you make time for yourself? Doing something you like to do to relax perhaps with friends?**

Someone wrote:

**"..children will become emotionally handicapped by parents whose primary investment is in their children rather than each other, in other words, you may do yourself a favour by taking some quality time alone with your partner."**  
**What do you think?**

**What can you do to better your marriage?**

**Keep Jesus at the Centre of our Marriage**

Praying and Reading Scripture together helps us, as well as worshipping together and serving the Lord together

**If your spouse is not a Christian, it can be difficult not being able to share Lord who is precious to you.** Be encouraged God hears your prayers, he sees your loving action towards your spouse and God desires him or her to know him. I knew one guy who gave his Christian wife a hard time for many years. She prayed and prayed along with others and eventually he came to the Lord. Don't give up!

**Marriages are not perfect, because we are not perfect**

We have moments when we fail each other - we are sinners

One guy was sharing with a friend. When my wife and I get into an argument she gets **historical**. His friend said, "You don't mean historical, you mean hysterical." "No!" He replied, "Historical - she reminds me of everything I have done wrong"

**Do you get historical when you are having disagreement with your spouse?**

Some of us will have our verbal battles but the important things is Knowing how to make up, and as Christians we can do it well because of Jesus

Ephesians 4:26,28

**26 "...forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you.**

It takes a submissive attitude to Christ and to your spouse to acknowledge you were wrong and say sorry and to forgive your spouse but that is what Christ wants of us - and when we do, it is always beautiful - the heavy cloud disappears and the sunshine breaks through!

**A happy marriage is made up of two good forgivers.**

**How do you get on at resolving conflict in marriage?**

**Who or what do you turn to when you have trouble in your marriage?**

**Sometimes if there is trouble in our marriage, we cannot handle Christian counsellors can help. If you needed to would you be willing to seek help?**

**Marriages are to be a blessing to others**

**What can you do as couple or family to show the love of Christ to those on their own?**

**Final Questions:**

**What is the Lord asking you to do to make your marriage better?**

**What do you think about a Marriage Course or a Baptist Expression Marriage Encounter weekend?**

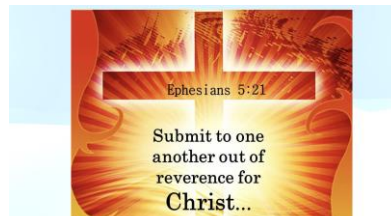
**Baptist Expression Marriage Encounter Details:**

**Is your marriage important to you and your family?...**

- would you like more joy and romance in your marriage?
- to have more fun and laughter in your married life?
- to be happier and closer as a couple?
- to have a lifelong adventure together?
- to learn to love one another in a deeper and happier way?

**... then a Marriage Encounter Weekend could be an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life! How do we bring out the best in our Marriage?**

**<https://www.beofme.org.uk/contact-us/>**



**AS IT IS THE GENERAL ELECTION TIME WHY NOT ASK THE POLITICAL PARTY CANDIDATES WHAT THEY ARE DOING TO STRENGTHEN MARRIAGE?**