

Love and Marriage- God's Way

Eph. 5:22-33

Introduction:

- This week, across America millions of Americans will attempt to be romantic towards their significant other while celebrating Valentine's Day. Like most holidays, it has become a big commercialized event. But, for many people, it represents an opportunity to express love towards their significant other.
- I read an interesting article: What NOT to buy your wife:
 - Don't buy clothing that involves sizes. The chances are one in seven thousand that you will get her size right, and your wife will be offended the other 6999 times.
 - Don't buy jewelry. The jewelry your wife wants, you can't afford. And the jewelry you can afford, she doesn't want.
 - Finally, don't spend too much. "How do you think we're going to afford that?" she'll ask. But don't spend too little. She won't say anything, but she'll think, "Is that all I'm worth?"
- We know that there has been a gross misunderstanding of what love actually is. If we want to understand love we must look at the source- God Himself
- I John 4:16: And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
- Here in our text we see a great description of God's design of true love and Christian marriage
- This is a message that can be a help to everyone- because all believers are commanded to love. However, my main focus this morning is on Christian married couples. We have to recognize that Satan is on the attack when it comes to Christian marriages. Many in our congregation are married and so how can we help strengthen this important relationship? Many perhaps may have marriage on the horizon- what should they look for as they prepare?

- I. What is True love?
 - a. V. 25 teaches us that true love is sacrificial- I Cor. 13:4-7- Giving, serving
 - b. Lust (love's opposite) is selfish- what can I get out of this?
 - i. Lust is an emotional feeling, desire in our body- i.e. Samson (Judges 14:1-3, 16:1-4) "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well."
 - ii. A lot of what is called love sounds a lot like lust!
 - c. Love is not a feeling! It is a choice!
 - i. "I fell in love." "I've fallen out of love." This is actually foolish talk!
 - ii. Love is choosing to be committed and devoted to one person
 - iii. The problem with feelings is that they are always changing! Feelings are so fickle! They can lead us astray!
 - iv. The world of Disney, and Hollywood has confused many in regards to love. It has left many with unrealistic expectations- knights in shining armor riding in on horses, who always say the right thing every time, live happily ever after etc.
 - v. Love is not the absence of conflict- it successfully overcomes each conflict
 - vi. It is not just physical attraction, it is companionship! Gen 2:16-20
 - vii. The fact is, a healthy biblical marriage is not based only on our feelings.
 - d. Consider the example of Christ- Eph. 5:25
 - i. We know that while praying in the Garden of Gethsamane he did not necessarily "feel" like dying on the cross. He prayed for any other possibility "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."
 - ii. This choice cannot truly be made apart from God's grace and power
 - iii. Love is sacrificial
 - e. Marital love is a covenantal love
 - i. Like a promise- but much more. A commitment- "till death do us part!
 - ii. Christian marriage is not a contract that if both parties don't hold up their end of the bargain we can terminate/divorce

- iii. This covenant is not made with man and wife- but with God
 - iv. Pictures salvation. Thus divorce ruins the depiction of God's covenant relationship with us Mal 2:14-16
 - v. By the way- I love the divorced couples in our church and I want to do my best to help strengthen their current marriage so that it never happens again!
 - f. It is a continuing love- v. 25. Jesus' love does not end when we sin against him- and thank God for that! "charity suffereth long..."
 - g. It is a constraining love- II Cor. 5:14
 - i. The love of Jesus ought to stop us in our tracks! It is hard to sin against this type of love
 - ii. The sin of adultery is far too common today! God calls you an adulterer because of your actions or even your thoughts! (second look, fantasize, etc.)
 - iii. When you said "I do" to him/her, you said I don't to everyone else!
 - h. All of the wild stories that have been coming out of Hollywood, politics, media prove that a departure from God's principles never helps us it hurts us as a society. Years ago, our culture decided to discard wholesome biblical values- marriage, family, etc. Now we are reaping the fruit of that!
- II. For Wives
- a. Finding our biblical roles in God's design- v. 22-24
 - i. Submission is a dirty word or idea in our culture today
 - ii. The godly wife will be submissive to her husband. This submission isn't a reward for the husband's good behavior; but simply because God commands it.
 - b. God Himself has established institutions of authority in our world (marriage, parenting, government, etc.)
 - c. Every well-ordered society rests on two supporting pillars- authority and submission. Without this we have anarchy, chaos, and confusion

- i. Even within the mystery of the Godhead there is authority and submission (I Cor. 11:3- the head of Christ is God)
 - ii. Homes without biblically defined roles are full of tension, frustrations and expectations that are never met
 - iii. Submission never implies inferiority (i.e. the Trinity)
 - d. Nothing exalts a woman more than this biblical teaching of the key role she plays in the home! Comparing it to the role of the Church, the Bride of Christ!
 - e. This is attractive- I Peter 3:3-5
 - f. Practical explanation: Women desire love, men desire respect: illustr- case study: woman who watches soaps, etc. man who is a hero everywhere but his home
 - g. Serving with gladness (the right attitude)
 - i. Sometimes it's not what you do, but how you do it (or say it!)
 - ii. The church doesn't have to serve Christ- we get to!
 - iii. It's a pleasure to serve my family in this way!
 - iv. Prov. 31:28- Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
 - v. Avoid the pitfalls of envy, bitterness, etc.
- III. For Husbands
- a. Loving husbands
 - i. There should be regular expressions of love within a marriage- true love is not in word only! Rom. 5:8
 - ii. Causal love- We love Christ because He first loved us!
 - iii. If the husband loves his wife, this love causes a wife to be glad to submit! No wife would mind being submissive to a husband who loves her as Christ loves the church.
 - iv. I Peter 3:7 Dwell with them according to knowledge: understanding- know your wife! Illustr- don't buy her power-tools!

- v. Giving honor: A godly husband knows how to make his wife feel honored (holding the door, surprising her, etc.). Though she submits to him, he takes care that she does not feel like she is an employee
 - vi. When a woman submits, she doesn't go down she actually goes up to 1st place. She can be treated with honor
- b. Biblical roles-Spiritual leaders- v. 23-24
- i. The husband has been entrusted with a great responsibility! Don't be negligent! Lead your home! Don't listen to Hollywood!
 - ii. God has given spiritual **headship** to the man in the home
 - iii. In many marriages these roles have been blurred and muddled and so there is much confusion. The wife criticizes and questions decisions and so the man becomes pensive and unsure. This makes the wife even more critical and etc.
 - iv. This is to be through servant-leadership. Christ ministers/serves us! How humbling!
- c. The essential principle of unity- v. 31-33
- i. Two different people coming together in a relationship isn't always easy. God's formula is $1+1=1$ - Unity!
 - ii. Marriage is not 50/50- it is 100/100! Each spouse should commit to meeting the needs of the other! Love is committing to do this, without expecting anything in return!
 - iii. A godly husband lives in unity with his wife. He doesn't merely share a house, he shares a life.
 - iv. Strive for oneness! There is a physical implication- but really it is about your married life! Communication, finances, plans, etc.
 - v. Leave and cleave- loyalty to each other above anyone else!
 - vi. Working couples spend only about 12 minutes a day talking with each other!

Conclusion:

- A word to believers with unsaved spouses:
 - I Peter 3:1-2 principle
 - Be the best spouse you can be for the Lord!
 - Not so ideal circumstances? God gives grace!
- Let's strive for God's description of love. Let's strive for Christ-honoring marriages and relationships in our homes!