

Wake Up! (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)

17-Dec-2017

G'Day everyone

Please have your Bibles opened and turned to Ephesians chapter 5 - verse 21 and we're going right through to chapter 6 verse 9

There's an outline in the bulletin to make notes if you wish

Let me ask for God's help before we begin...

Intro/Relationships

Before we begin - let me tell you about this guy

[Powerpoint 1-Simeon Stylites]

Saint **Simeon Stylites** - a monk who lived a life abstaining from just about everything - withdrawing from the world, living a life of poverty - avoiding material possessions and physical pleasures - and devoting time to prayer and fasting - living on top of a **pillar** (tower) for **68 years**

People would send up food and notes with questions on

But basically he spent his whole life up a pole?

Somehow Simeon thought that living such a life - would make him more spiritual, make him closer to God and living a life pleasing to God

Really?

(pause)

Is that what God would want us to do - withdraw from the world completely?

(pause)

How does that spread the message of Jesus?

(pause)

[Powerpoint 2-Relationships]

Remember - God created us as **relational** human beings

We are meant to have relationships with other human beings and a relationship with God

Adam and Eve - before they sinned - lived and talked with God in the Garden

Once they sinned - that relationship was broken - there was still contact with God from that time on but the relationship - had a separation about it - and Adam and Eve were removed from the garden

We then inherited that sin from Adam and Eve - and there is a brokenness in our relationship with God and brokenness with our relationships with each other

Why?

Because we still sin

However - God still wants a relationship with us - and He wants it to be a loving one - so He sent Jesus - as Romans 5:8 says:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us

When - Jesus came to this earth

He not only fixed the broken relationship between God and us - with His death on the cross

But He also taught us how to live lives pleasing to God

He's **summary** of God's commands was for us to **love God** - and **love others** (John 13:34)

He also gave us examples of how to have relationships with people

Throughout the *Gospel* we see Jesus have relationships with rich and poor, young and old, children, officials, those who were outcasts and even with those who were his enemies

Jesus always handled his relationships with love and grace and humility

Jesus is the model for us to imitate and have success in our relationships

And that's basically what the Apostle Paul is talking about in this section from Ephesians

Paul looks at human relationships and sees that - just as God has order in His creation - God also wants order in human relationships

So ultimately our relationships - need to be Christ-centred by imitating Christ...

So let's look at these relationships in detail:

Relationships in General (5:21)

Firstly relationships in **general**

When you're driving and you see a sign that looks like this:

[Powerpoint 3-Bridge]

What does it mean?

It means the bridge is narrow - and can only fit one car on at a time - so no matter which end of the bridge you are approaching from - you need to consider cars coming from the other direction

[Powerpoint 4-General Relationships]

That's what verse 21 means when it says: *submit to one another out of reverence {or respect} for Christ*

So because of Christ's love for us - out of respect for his sacrificial love - we should "give way" as it were to each other -

There must be a willingness in our relationships to serve anyone, to learn from anyone, to be corrected by anyone, regardless of age, sex or status

We must have a voluntary attitude of giving in - an attitude of cooperating - an attitude of respecting the other person as a Christian brother or sister - and being gracious and respectful to their needs - and not always wanting our own way!

At the same time, we must also recognize that God has a pattern and order to relationships - with Christ as the head and us as his body of believers

And we must also realize that God has ordered relationships in such a way - that there are going to be times when there is someone in authority over us - and we

need to submit to that person in authority - out of a respect for Christ and God's perfect order

For example - even though I'm the minister here, if I was in the choir - and Chris is the musical director - I submit to her authority as the musical director when I'm singing in the choir - and she submits to my authority as a spiritual leader in the church - in matters not related to the choir

(pause)

Wives and Husbands (5:22-33)

[Powerpoint 5a-Header]

Paul then looks at specific relationships - starting with wives and husbands - from verse 22 to 33

Marriages can be tricky can't they?

There's the story of a young newly married couple

And the young husband decides that he needs to be a bit more assertive with his wife - so he reads a self-help book on 'how to be more assertive in marriage'

Then one day - he decides to try it out at home

So he storms in the house after work - pointing his finger at his wife - and says:

"From now on I'm the boss round here - and my words are law! I want you to prepare me a gourmet meal and run my bath every night. Then, when I've eaten and finished my bath - guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair!"

His wife replied "The undertaker!"

(pause)

That's **not** the pattern of marriage that Paul describes here in Ephesians 5...

So Paul speaks to wives first

And v22 - can send wives into a tail spin - when it says

Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands

[Powerpoint 5b-Wives submit]

It can be misunderstood that wives are inferior, it can be misunderstood as male dominance and superiority - but that's not what Paul means here

We must read the rest of v22 - and verses 23 and 24 to get the complete picture

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

The motivation for the wife to submit to the Lord is not because she is inferior but as it says at the end of v22 - submit ***as you do to the Lord***

[Powerpoint 5c-serving the Lord]

The wife's response to her husband is part and parcel of the way she serves the Lord - part of serving the Lord is for the wife to understand that the husband is the head of the household

Why is the husband the head?

Well it goes back to the beginning of the Bible

[Powerpoint 5d-Gen 3:16]

In Genesis 3:16 - when God says to Eve - *Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you*

[Powerpoint 5e-Order]

It's part of God's order and design for husband/wife relationships

And let's not forget that God gave Eve to Adam for a reason

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

So Eve, as a wife is a suitable helper -

[Powerpoint 5f-Helper]

Now God could have given Adam another man to help - but giving Adam a woman was more suitable - not because Adam was superior to Eve - but because together male and female - working together - was the most suitable option - male and female - **equal but with different roles** - roles that complement one another as they work together - ruling the earth - being fruitful - and having children

[Powerpoint 5g-Headship]

The husband is also head of the household because this headship is like the headship of Jesus and His church

[Powerpoint 5h-Picture]

God has designed human marriage to be a picture of the marriage between Jesus (as the bridegroom) and the church - the body of believers (as His bride)

And so in the same way that Jesus is head of the church - the husband is head of the wife - and in the same way that the church - submits to the spiritual leadership of Jesus - the wife submits to the spiritual leadership of the husband

[Powerpoint 6a-Heading/Love]

Which brings us to verses 25 to 33 - which explains the role of the husband

See v25 - the husband is to love his wife - like Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church

We need to understand what it means by the husband **loving** the wife

There's two other Greek words that could have been used for love here

One of them is **eros** - which is sexual passion - where we get our word erotic from

And the other is **phileo** - which is an affectionate or brotherly love

But Paul uses the word - **agape** - for love here

Agape love is a love that is sacrificial and totally unselfish - a love that doesn't seek its own satisfaction. **Agape** love has its standard and model in the love of Jesus Christ for His church

How did Jesus love His church?

He loved sacrificially - and even laid down his life for His church

In the same Paul is saying the husband must love his wife like that

Sacrificially - always having in mind what is best for his wife - never being selfish - always wanting to do her good and never harm - always seeking to meet the wife's needs as Jesus sought to meet the needs of the church

Jesus also showed his love for the church by teaching the church and leading the church along righteous paths - following God's rules

In the same way - the husband's role of loving his wife is to teach and lead her in God's Word - so that just as Paul says in v26 - the wife is made holy and cleansed by God's word

And so that - in v27 - just like Jesus presents the church without stain and wrinkle before God - the husband can present his wife before God as holy and blameless - because the husband has modelled Jesus love and teaching to his wife

[Powerpoint 6c-response]

If the husband loves his wife like this - modelled on Jesus' sacrificial love - the wife will not be able to help herself but will submit to this wonderful love - and follow her husband to the moon and back!

If on the other hand the husband - treats his wife like - a tyrant or dictator and his wife as one of his subjects - she wouldn't want to follow him to the clothes line and back!

And nor should she!

Husbands are you loving your wives modelled on Jesus?

(pause)

Before we explain the husband's love for his wife further - in verses 28 to 33

We need to remind ourselves of God's intention in marriage

Genesis - 2:24 says this about marriage:

[Powerpoint 6d-Marriage intention]

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

This paints a picture of a new family starting up

Mum and Dad are left - not forgotten about - as there is a commandment to honour your father and mother

But Mum and Dad are left - so the husband and wife - can be a new family unit - and that new family unit is now the priority - not their parent's family unit

And it's useful for both the parents left - and the children leaving to get married to recognize this new priority

And note - the husband and wife become one flesh

Literally it means stuck together - like super glue

And very very difficult to break apart again

That's what marriage is - in its ideal form - a life-long union of a man and a woman

Now we can return to Ephesians 5 from verse 29

If the husband and wife are to be one flesh as ordained by God - Paul's instruction is to care for the husband's body just as Christ cares for his body - the church

So what Paul is saying is the husband - as well as looking after his own physical and spiritual needs - he also needs to feed and care physically and spiritually for his body - which includes his dear wife - v29 - as they are now one flesh

Because as Paul points out in v32 - human marriage is a mysterious model of the marriage between Christ and his church -

So human marriage needs to model and be based on Christ's marriage and love for His Church

[Powerpoint 6e-love and respect]

Notice too that Paul finishes his section on wives and husbands - with a summary statement in v33 for all husbands to **love** their wives - and remember it's the **agape** - sacrificial love - and notice Paul doesn't tell the wives to love their husbands - but instead to **respect** and show reverence to their husband as spiritual leader of the household. And again that will be easy enough for the wife to do if the husband is fulfilling his **agape** - sacrificial loving of her!

On the other hand - the wife will have trouble respecting her husband if he is a bully, a tyrant or chauvinist!

Children (6:1-3)

Then in chapter 6 verses 1 to 3

[Powerpoint 7a-Children]

Paul turns his attention to children

And says they must obey their parents in the Lord

So part of a child's Christian walk in a Christian household - out of respect again for Jesus - a child is to do as they are told

The motivation for obeying parents is two-fold

Firstly - because it's right - literally righteous - in keeping with God's rules - basically because God said so - that's why!

Secondly - because the 5th commandment - which is quoted - in v2 - has a promise - that obedience will mean things go well for the child and they will enjoy long life on the earth - so obedience will be followed by things going well for the child
Clearly disobedience will result in things not going well for the child

[Powerpoint 7b-Consequences]

There's always consequences for disobeying parents

Like - being grounded - privileges revoked - sent to their room - sent to bed early

These consequences can spill over into school and community - if disobedience goes unchecked at home - and then our community will not go well either...

Children are you obeying your parents?

Fathers (6:4)

[Powerpoint 8a-Fathers]

Then Paul looks at Fathers, in their role as spiritual head of the house, Fathers must not exasperate (frustrate) their children

Instead, Paul says the Father should train and instruct the child about the Lord - so that will mean reading and teaching the Bible and God's rules to the child

This must be done in a Christ-like manner - in love - not as a dictator or tyrant - not in a way that will frustrate the child - with unnecessary rules and regulations - and petty corrections over the slightest thing which will just discourage the child

[Powerpoint 8b-frustrations]

Some of the things that frustrate a child are:

1. Parents not keeping their promises
2. Parents telling children not to do things that are wrong - but the parents do those same things themselves
3. Parents not listening to the child - and already having their mind made up
4. Parents making mistakes and not admitting them
5. Parents interrupting children all the time and thinking nothing of it - but when children interrupt - the parent goes off!
6. Parents being inconsistent with punishment
7. Parents playing favourites

Parents are you frustrating your children?

Slaves and Masters (6:5-9)

The last section is slaves and masters - chapter 6 - verses 5 to 9

In Paul's day - some households had slaves or servants

[Powerpoint 9a-Employees]

If we think of it today in terms of employers and employees

We see that employees (slaves) are to respectfully obey their employers

(masters) by having an eye on the real master - Christ

So when you're working for a boss - don't just do the bare minimum - just to get by - but imagine you're working for Jesus - and work with a smile and a good attitude - realizing that no matter who is giving the orders - you're really serving the Lord - and the Lord will reward you for that attitude

Personally I found having the attitude of working for the Lord helped me get through tough days with harsh bosses

[Powerpoint 9b-Employers]

And then finally there's a word for the employers (masters) in verse 9 - to behave in a Christ-like manner towards their employees - realizing who the real boss is - the Lord - and He's the real master over both employers and employees - and He doesn't play favourites - the real master sees the employers and employees as equals

Conclusion/Challenge

So we've looked at Christian relationships

And we've seen that Christ must be at the centre of **all** relationships - that's God's proper order and design for relationships

What about non-Christian relationships?

Well - we can't expect non-Christians to put Christ at the centre of their relationships - because they don't believe in Jesus or know Jesus

But by us modelling Christ-Centred relationships - non-Christians may find our relationships attractive and want to know more - and imitate us - imitating Christ

[Powerpoint 10a-Conclusion]

So let me leave you with 2 challenges today:

1. Are your relationships Christ-Centred? Or do you always want to be right?

Do you want your own way all the time? Do you think of yourself all the time?

in all your relationships - is that loving? Remember - Paul says in 1

Corinthians 13 - *love does not boast, and is not proud - love is not self-seeking?* Do you look at your family member or friend when their talking to you? Do you respond when they make a statement (or just grunt)? Do you participate in conversations - or leave it to the other person to do all the talking? Are your relationships showing **agape** love - sacrificial, selfless love for others? Are you asking yourself WWJD as you take part in relationships?

[Powerpoint 10b-Conclusion]

2. What corrections do you need to make in your relationships with your husband or wife, or with your parents - or with your children - or with your family and friends? What will make those relationships more Christ-centred?

Let's pray...