

Spirit-filled Husbands

Ephesians 5:22-33

Halifax: 31 August 2008

Introduction

Today in our Ephesian sermon series, we come to the topic of *Spirit-filled Husbands*.

- This will be our third message from Ephesians 5:22-33.
 - Last week we looked at the topic of *Spirit-filled Wives*,
 - and two weeks before that, the topic of *Spirit-filled Marriage*.
- It was back in Ephesians 5:18 that the Lord commanded us to be filled with the Holy Spirit rather than being drunk with wine...
 - When you are filled with the Spirit, the Spirit reveals Christ to you as He is presented to us in the word...
 - You come to clearly see you need of Christ and you come to appreciate more and more what He has done to save you and you take confidence in it.
 - More and more you see the height and breadth and length and depth of His love,
 - and you gain assurance that what He has done cannot possibly fail to accomplish its purpose concerning you.
- And in verses 19, 20, and 21 Paul is showing you the affect that the filling of the Spirit will have upon you in three areas of life...
 - Each verse begins with a participle showing a different characteristic that will be yours if you are indeed filled with the Spirit.
 - In verse 19, it shows that you will be filled with true praise to the true God—not with songs that you make up, but with the songs that the Holy Spirit has given us in scripture...
 - In verse 20, it shows that you will be filled with true gratitude for everything, rooted in an ever refreshed appreciation and grasp of what Jesus has done to save you...
 - In verse 21, it shows that you will submit to one another when you are filled with the Spirit...
 - The phrase “submit to one another” means “line up under each other”—
 - in other words, take the place that God has appointed for you as a loving leader or as an obedient follower.
 - You will do this when you are filled with the Spirit because you will see the kind of leadership Christ exercises...

- Following Him, you will cheerfully follow those He has placed over you...
 - And following Him, you will pattern the way you lead after His example.
- I have shown you that from verse 21,
 - Paul begins to talk about three specific relationships in which submission must take place...
 - The first one is marriage, and that is the one we are looking at now.
 - This is what Ephesians 5:22-33 is about...
 - And today we want to look in particular at the Spirit-filled Husband.

We have seen already that the husband is the head of the relationship of marriage.

- The question is not, then, whether a man is the head of his home or not...
 - That is already settled—
 - If he is married, he *is* the head.
 - The question is,
 - What *kind* of head is he?
 - Is he a selfish head?
 - a responsible head?
 - a bone head???
- Husbands, the Scripture tells you right here what kind of head you ought to be...
 - A loving head...
 - That is it.
- If, I say *if* you are filled with the Spirit of God,
 - you **will** be a loving head of your home because you will be a man who is beholding Christ as your own head—
 - You will more and more see His great love, and He will be your hero...
 - You will want to imitate Him, and all the while God's Spirit will be working in you to enable you to do just that...
 - As we saw in Psalm 127, the Lord Himself will build your house.
 - He will shape you and your wife and your children into a godly household, and you will lead the way as the head of that house...
 - And as head, you will be the one who leads the household to be a loving household.

- Husbands, I am addressing you in particular this morning...
 - You need to give special attention because this message is directed at you...
 - But there is much here for the rest you too...
 - Some of you may become husbands some day—and you need to be preparing yourself for it...
 - In fact, I would stress that for you single men.
 - You don't suddenly learn how to do this once you marry—you are to be diligently preparing yourself for marriage...
 - You are to love your future wife now by preparing yourself to lead.
 - Of course, many of you will never be husbands,
 - For example, all of you who are women!
 - But you can benefit this morning by looking at what Christ is as a husband...
 - If you belong to Him,
 - That will be a great encouragement to you...and help you to be all the more devoted to Him...
 - If you do not belong to Him,
 - It will be huge encouragement to you to stop messing around and turn to Him at once.
- My main outline consists of only two points this morning, both addressed to husbands.
 - First, we will see that you are to love your wife as Christ loved the church...
 - Second, we will see that you are to love your wife as you love yourself.
 - You see, it's all about love...
 - So let me begin with the first point...

I. Husband, you are called to love your wife as Christ loved the Church.

- Verse 25 says:
 - Eph 5:25: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

A. Wow! That's quite a standard isn't it?

1. You know how great the love of our Lord Jesus was for the church!

- a. There is no love like it in all the universe...
 - 1) His love is seen in that wonderful statement that “He gave Himself for us.”
 - 2) He, who was the Son of God, gave Himself to be an offering for our sin—to be cursed and to be rejected by the Father so that we might be pardoned.
 - b. He became our head by covenant knowing that in doing so, He would be associating Himself with a sinful bride...
 - 1) knowing that all our sin would be imputed to Him...
 - knowing that it would bring Him to the cross.
 - 2) I have been preaching about this on Sunday evening...
 - He who loathed sin with a loathing that goes beyond our understanding became sin because He loved us, His bride!
 - He bore all the shame, not of His own, but of our sin...
 - He bore the pains of Hell so that we might be released forever.
2. This is so different than the kind of headship we see in the world!
- a. When we hear the word headship and authority, it has negative connotations for us...
 - We are used to authority that is exercised for the benefit of the one who is in authority rather for those who under him.
 - The more authority a person is given, the more selfish they become.
 - There is example after example of kings who, upon taking the throne, use their authority to execute all who may be a threat to their reign.
 - b. We are all familiar with abuse of authority in the domestic realm as well.
 - Many of us have had fathers who did not really love us...
 - We have seen selfish husbands who use their authority to order their wives around for their own pleasure...
 - As head, they use the household income for their own selfish purpose—for their beer or for their hobbies.
 - This kind of headship has been exercised all through history and it is a shameful thing.
 - It gives headship a bad name.
- TRANS> But the headship that is called for here is a refreshingly different kind of headship.
- It is headship that involves the Son of God using all His authority and all His greatness for the blessing of those under His care...

- It is about Him totally giving Himself for His people, even when they were so unworthy.
3. With such an example, as your standard, slackness is not an option!
- a. You are to give all diligence to exercise your authority for the good of your household.
- 1) There is no room for excuse making:
- “Oh it’s just too hard for me... my background...”
 - “I’m just not that kind of person.”
 - I agree with you about that!
 - But is there no God in heaven to be obeyed here?
 - Is there no Holy Spirit to help you put off the old man and put on the new man?
 - You are just being a selfish sot!
- 2) There is no excuse for whining either
- “Oh but my wife is so hard to love. You don’t know what she is like. Even when I try, she always complains.”
 - Where do you think she learned that from?
 - Christ has a lot more reason to complain about you than you do about her—
 - but He went to the cross.
 - All His disciples complained and objected, but He went ahead and did anyway—then they understood.
 - There are so many whiny husbands out there—it is despicable...
 - Parents, when you see it in your boys, deal with it!
 - I have marriages torn apart by whiny men.
 - I have seen whole churches torn apart by whiny men.
- b. Husbands,
- Loving your wife is something you are to fully give yourself to without reserve, even as Christ did.
 - The question is not whether it is hard for you or not...
 - The question is,
 - “Has God called you to do it? or no?”

- B. There are many ways you are to use your God-given authority (your headship) for your wife...
- I will list some of these in a moment...
1. But first I want you to see that the exercise of your authority for the sake of your wife must have a proper goal or objective.
 - a. The objective of Christ for His Church is clearly expressed in verses 26-27.
 - Here, we are told the reason that He gave Himself for her:
 - Eph 5:26-27: that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 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.
 - 1) One way to say this is that He exercises His authority with a view to making us all that God would have us to be.
 - This is such a wonderful thing!
 - When everything is all said and done,
 - the Church of Jesus Christ, His bride, will be fit for communion in God's house!
 - She will have no guilt and she will have no remaining corruption.
 - She will be beautiful—perfected in pure love and holiness—restored to the perfect image of God!
 - a) Already the Lord Jesus has offered Himself as a sacrifice to take away her sin...
 - He applies this work to each one of us individually by calling us to be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word.
 - This speaks of our baptism, symbolised by the washing with water by accomplished by the baptism of the Spirit who opens our hearts to receive the gospel.
 - When this washing occurs, we come to Him for cleansing of our sin and are made righteous by faith in Christ's work on the cross.
 - He comes to us and shows us what He did for us—
 - And He calls us to come and receive the complete remission of sins.
 - Covenant children are called from their earliest days...
 - others are called later in life.

TRANS> And then, after we have had this initial baptism, this washing away of our guilt through His blood...

b) He then works in us by His Spirit to wash away our remaining corruption.

- The Spirit gives us a delight in God's law as we see it fulfilled in Jesus Christ...
- And we follow Christ our husband with devotion,
 - being shaped into the bride that He wants us to be...
 - as it says in verse 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.

2) You see then that there is a very clear objective and goal.

- He is using His authority with a clearly defined purpose.
- He is exercising His headship to accomplish God's purpose in us who were lost and undone.
 - It is not the kind of love that is delighted with us as we are, but the kind that helps us and transforms us.

b. Now husband, you are also to use your authority to accomplish God's purpose for your household... for you and your wife together.

1) Your authority is to be used to promote godliness.

a) Now of course you cannot offer yourself on the cross to take away your wife's sins...

- You are not fit to do this—you need Christ to do this for you...you are no better than your wife in this respect.
- Nor do you need to do it because Christ has already done it and His work is perfectly adequate.

b) So are you to do? What can you do?

(i) You can use your authority to continually point your household to Christ and His cross...

- You can set the example as the chief repenter in your home...
- You can be the first in confessing your sins and in seeking God's forgiveness...
- And when your wife sins, you can insist that she do the same.

(ii) And not only that, but you can also make use of the means of grace to promote growth and sanctification in your home...

- You can initiate family worship where you use the word to keep before your wife what God has done...
 - And you can, as it says in Gen 18:19,
 - Command your household after you to keep the way of the Lord that they might do righteousness and justice that the Lord may bring on them what He has promised.
- You can see that your family attends church and that they pay attention to the word, that they pray and seek the Lord.
- You can speak about the love of God in all the affairs of life...
 - You can speak about how we are to love Him...
 - “How can we glorify God in this situation with the complaining neighbour?”
 - You speak about how much He had loved us...
 - “Look at all the blessings that God has given to us sitting here on this table.”

2) When you don't have the right purpose in the exercise of your authority, you will go wrong...

a) A man who loses sight of this purpose will have some other agenda—and any other agenda will be harmful both for you and your household.

- It may be an agenda for worldly success and honour—for riches or for great things in this world...
 - but if it is not for godliness, it is a destructive agenda...
 - And I must emphasise—there is always *some* agenda.
- Even men how abandon their families lead them into their agenda...
 - They lead their family to run away from problems...
 - That is how they lead their family.

b) You can't escape from the responsibility of headship...

- What you are going for as the head of your home, you are directing your wife and your children into whether you like it or not.

- If you are worldly, you are leading them in worldliness...
- If you are selfish, you are leading them in selfishness...
- If you are cold toward God, you are leading them to be the same.
 - They do not have to follow you, but you are responsible for being a stumbling block to them—
 - you are making it difficult for them...
 - you are leading them because you are the head...
 - and you will have to answer to God for it!

TRANS> Having a clear objective of godliness, as Christ did, is essential for the proper exercise of headship.

2. Okay, so what are some of the ways you are to exercise your authority to accomplish this objective.

- What are some of your responsibilities?
 - a. First, you are responsible to provide encouragement toward godliness...
 - This I already referred to—but it bears repeating because it is the most important thing...
 - 1) You are to keep before them the encouragement of what Christ has done to take away their sins...
 - 2) You are to lead the way in giving thanks for it
 - 3) You are to encourage them to seek grace for obedience, to lead in prayer for help to live a godly life.
 - 4) You are to bring them comfort in sorrow that God is working out His gracious purposes.
 - b. Second, you are responsible to exercise a ministry of correction
 - 1) You are not only responsible for your sins, but also for the sins of your household...
 - Job offered sacrifices each day in case any of his children had sinned.
 - The principle of headship is that if you see sin in your household and do not address it, you, as well as the one committing it, become responsible for it.
 - This is something that has conveniently been forgotten, but the scriptures are clear...
 - Eli is charged with his son's wickedness because he did not address it...
 - Likewise, David is charged with never saying no to his sons.

- 2) You are to make sure that everyone in your home is reconciled,
 - both to God and to each other...
 - And if they are not, you are to address it so that bitterness will not grow up.
- c. You are responsible to give direction
- 1) As the head of the home, you are to direct the service and work that you and your wife do.
 - whether she works outside the home when children come...
 - whether she helps out with needs in the community and church...
 - whether you will school your children at home.
 - 2) You are to direct the way the money is spent—
 - you are to see that there are tithes and offerings,
 - you are to see that there is generosity to the poor and needy, etc.
 - you are to decide whether you will go into debt and in what way
 - 3) You are to direct the activities that are done—
 - the events that are attended,
 - the movies that are watched,
 - the books that are read,
 - the education that is received.
 - 4) You are to direct the place where your family worships and how they worship—
 - and whether they go only once a week or twice—
 - Often men allow their wives or children to make this decision, but men, you are still responsible for whatever decision is made!
- d. You are also responsible to protect your household
- 1) From enemies, from false doctrine, from temptations that come.
 - 2) It is your responsibility to decide what influences you will have, to guard your household in the way of godliness.
- e. You are responsible to provide for the physical needs of your household
- The Scriptures teach that a man who won't provide for his own household is worse than an unbeliever.

TRANS> So that is an outline of some of the things you are responsible for as the head of your home...

- You are to love your wife and to give yourself to these things for her sake...
 - even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.
 - It is a very high standard.
 - Perhaps you look it and say,
 - “Who can love like that?”
 - And of course I will tell you that it is our hope that God, as He works in us by His Spirit, will at last enable us to be just like Christ,
 - even to love as He loved...
- But certainly you have not yet attained to it... so long as you are in this life...
 - so for your encouragement, you are also given a second standard of measure for your love...

II. Husband, you are called to love your wife as you love your own body.

- Eph 5:28: So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.
- A. It is very interesting that once again you are called to love, but that this time it is your own love that is used as the standard!
1. This is very convicting...
 - a. This is showing you that you already know how to love according to God’s requirement...
 - You already know how to love as Christ loved because you know how to love yourself that well.
 - It’s not at all impossible for you to have this love...
 - All you have to do is include your wife in the same love that you already have toward yourself.
 - b. Now I know that some people will argue that they do not love themselves.
 - 1) And I will grant that in a certain way, that is true...
 - For example, Jesus calls us to hate our own life in following Him,
 - In Revelation, those who gave themselves to a martyr’s death are said to have not loved their lives to the death.

- Also, when a person violates the commandments in doing what is forbidden to themselves, it can be called an act of hatred...
- for example, suicide is a violation of the sixth commandment and could be in that respect called self-hatred.

TRANS> So I will grant to you that in a certain way, you can say that some men do not love themselves.

2) But if you look at it another way, you can say, as the apostle does here,

- that
 - Eph 5:29: “no one ever hated his own flesh but nourished and cherishes even as the Lord does the church.”

a) The idea here is that we are very much committed to secure our own happiness...

(i) The reason a person commits suicide is because he thinks it will be better for him—that he will be happier—dead.

- I have had people argue with me that they definitely do not love themselves...
 - but these same people usually turn out to be some of most self-centred people I have ever met—
 - They are so concerned about their own happiness that they don’t care about anyone else’s...
 - Their self-hatred is really nothing more than complaining and whining because things have not gone the way **they** want.
 - They many not be happy with what they have achieved, but they definitely care about themselves and about what is done to them or not done to them.

(ii) And look at the martyr...

- The reason a martyr is willing to die is because to him,
 - is it far better to suffer for Christ than to live on without Him.
- The martyr is not actually doing something that he believes will make him miserable in the end—
 - He is doing what he rightly believes to be best for himself.

b) When you look at it this way, self-love is an excellent standard of the kind of devotion a husband ought to have for his wife...

- You constantly nourish and cherish your own body.
 - If you are hungry, you look for something to eat—you nourish your hungry body...
 - unless you have something you think is even more important than eating to do—and then you do that.
 - If you are cold, what do you do—you look for a way to get warm...
 - This is what the word cherish means—to warm up...
 - If you have a sliver in your eye,
 - you don't decide you will remove it tomorrow when you aren't so tired...
 - You get to it right away!
 - There is no hesitation!

TRANS> This love of your own flesh is so strong that Paul is able to say that if you will love your wife with that same love, you will have met the Lord's requirement concerning her!

- That you might attain to this love,
2. You need to realise that you truly are one flesh with your wife by covenant.
 - a. She is your flesh because God has made you one with her through the covenant of marriage...
 - She is one with you by covenant even as Christ is one with the church by covenant—
 - It is a oneness that God has established by His institution and therefore, because it is established by God, it is a true oneness.
 - You can see this in verses 30-31 with reference to the oneness of Christ and the church...
 - Eph 5:30-31: For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."
 - b. And because she is now your flesh, you will love her as much as you love yourself if you are wise.
 - The end of verse 28 is very pointed in this regard...
 - Eph 5:28-b "He who loves his wife loves himself."

- If you regard your wife's happiness as important as your own, you will have the proper love for her...
 - And if you are filled with the Spirit,
 - you will yearn for her to know Christ and to be like Him even as you yourself yearn to know Christ and be like Him.
 - You will love her with the same love you have for yourself.
- B. Now husband, when you realise that your wife is truly one flesh with you, it help you to see two things...
1. First, it will help you to see that you are responsible for your wife...
 - You are as responsible for her as you are for yourself...
 - a. You are to give as much attention to her sanctification as you do for your own, because it is your own...
 - Christ, in having become one with us,
 - considers our sanctification as important as His own.
 - He will not have an unholy member in His body when His work is all finished.
 - This is why it is right for a husband to say,
 - "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
 - He is responsible to see that it is done and to take no rest until it is being done.
 - Husband, if there is something in your household that is not right before God and you do not address is,
 - you are responsible for it.
 - The one who is committing it is responsible also, but so are you.
 - You can't pretend that it has nothing to do with you.
 - b. This means that you must not go on being a wimp!
 - You must not be a man who is afraid to confront your wife when there is wrong in her...
 - You must not be a cowering excuse of a man who is unwilling to stand up for what he believes to be right in his home...
 - I tell you, such a man is trying to avoid conflict...

- but he will have more conflict for not addressing matters than he would if he had gone on and dealt with them.
- Every weed that is left in the garden will only grow and multiply.
 - It is much easier to pull them up when they first appear than it is to wait until they have taken over.
- Your wife may not like it at first if you take her to a church because you believe it is sound and is best for your household...
 - She may quarrel with you if you address her about her bad attitude or about her selfishness...even if you do it with meekness and wisdom...
 - She may put up a big fight and resist you...
 - but my brothers, you are still responsible to do it.
- In God's way of working it is usually the case that if a husband does this with gentleness and wisdom and if he does it consistently,
 - and if he applies the same standard to himself (or a higher one)
 - his wife will come to appreciate his leadership...
 - She will see her husband's love in taking on this responsibility even when there is opposition.
- She knows when her attitude is not right and she carries guilt for it...
 - Her strong reaction, at first, is to be expected—
 - especially if you have never confronted her...
 - She is defensive, but she will get over it if you stay at it and don't wimp out.
 - If you demonstrate a true commitment to her for her best,
 - and she sees your love toward her increasing...
 - and if she sees a consistency in you...
 - and if she sees you becoming more and more godly...
 - she will more than likely come to respect you like never before and to deeply appreciate your taking up your responsibility as the head of your home.
- A lot of husbands wimp out before they have a chance to gain their wife's respect...
 - I did that in my first year of marriage...
 - I did not take my responsibility in leading...
 - I did not address things that needed to be addressed...

- And the Lord had to deal with me about that and show me my responsibility.
 - Once I understood, our relationship turned completely around.
- c. What a difference it will make in your home if you will begin to take full responsibility to see that everyone is living unto Jesus Christ...
 - That you and your wife are filled with the Spirit...
 - That you are rejoicing in what He has done to save you and are full of gratitude for it...
 - That you are looking to Him for grace to make you into a home that glorifies Him in every way...
 - That instead of complaining, you are looking at your sufferings as sent by God to help you grow and are responding to Him.
 - That when there is sin, you make sure that everyone goes to Christ.
 - Oh what a difference it will make if you take responsibility for your household as you take responsibility for your own flesh!

TRANS> So that is the first way it will help you to recognise that you are one flesh...

- You will stop being a wimp and start taking responsibility for the state of your own household.
 - Now some of you women may be thinking
 - “Oh no—you don’t know what my husband is like!”
 - “He will be wielding his authority around and coming to all sorts of convictions and imposing them on us...”
 - “He will soon have me dressing like a Muslim...”
 - “He will decide that we have to go on some weird health food diet...”
 - “There’s no telling what he might do!”
 - But if he understands that he is one flesh with you,
 - He will not be so foolish...
- Husbands, if you realise that you are one flesh with your wife you will not only be responsible,
- 2. You will also see that you need to be sensitive.
 - a. What I mean is, you won’t come after her with some new conviction that you have come to and impose it on her as if she has no feelings—
 - as if she is a non-person or something.

- You are one flesh with her!
 - You are to nourish and cherish her as you do your own flesh!

- b. Do you see what that means?
 - It means that if you have to confront her, you won't come at her as if you are a drill sergeant...
 - You won't drop it on her like a bomb...

 - You won't come at her after a reading a couple of articles and hearing a couple of sermons about a husband's responsibility and say,
 - "Wife, from this day on, things are changing around here...
 - We've been doing it all wrong.
 - From now on, I am in charge and there will be no back talk."
 - "God has ordained it and that is the way it's going to be around here until I die or the Lord returns."

 - That is the way of the bonehead who does not realise that he is one flesh with his wife.

- c. If you realise that you are one flesh,
 - you will take time to understand her when there is something new...
 - You will find out where her fears are and you will attempt to relieve them...
 - You will find out what her concerns and objections are and you will take them into consideration...
 - You will labour earnestly to gain her understanding and favour before you launch out.

 - That is what you do within yourself, isn't it?
 - You wrestle and struggle and address your fears and your concerns before you embrace some new doctrine or some new practice...
 - You are very patient with yourself.
 - You give yourself a lot of time to work through the matter...
 - You are kind to your own flesh...

 - So why should you be less kind to your wife is your flesh?
 - Why should you expect your wife to embrace something the first time you present it to her—
 - just because **you** presented it!

- You did not even accept it yourself at first!
 - Why is there this double standard?
- I tell you my brothers,
 - A good husband will do everything he can to win his wife's approval and agreement...
 - He will not just come in with some new agenda to woodenly impose on her.
 - He will gently work with her to help her understand.
 - And He will be thankful to discover it if in his interaction with her she helps him to see that he was wrong in what he was about to do.

TRANS> Sadly, it sometimes seems that there are only two sorts of husbands left in the evangelical church today...

- wimpy heads and bone heads...
 - The majority are wimpy heads who take no responsibility for their wives...
 - They just leave them to themselves and act as if they are not even married...
- But then there are those few that realise their responsibility and take it seriously...
 - But sadly, the majority of them seem to be bone heads...
 - They come in with a hammer to impose their latest version of righteousness on their household—while everyone's eyes are rolling!
 - They give the doctrine of headship a very bad name.

Conclusion:

- My brothers, let us rather strive to be spirit-filled husbands...
 - Let us look to Christ for our example of love that we may learn to give ourselves for our wives even as He has given Himself for us...
 - And let us look to Christ for our example of leading our household in the direction of godliness, for any other direction is an abuse of our headship...
 - And finally, let us realise that we are one flesh with our wives so that we will love them as we love our own flesh, taking responsibility for them with sensitivity.
- This is what you are called to do...
 - This you can only do by the grace of God... by looking to Christ...
 - And as you live this way, you will see more and more of the glory of Christ.