



Series Title: Mystery in Ephesians

Sermon Title: *The Mystery of Marriage* – Ephesians 2:21-33

Introduction to Series:

The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians while he was in prison in Rome around A.D. 62. Paul visited Ephesus on his third missionary journey in A.D. 52-57 (approx). Ancient Ephesus was a famous and wealthy port city on the west coast of Asia. In the letter of Ephesians, we are considering the theme of *mystery* as it relates to the union of **God with man** in salvation, the union of **man with man** in the church, and the union of **man and woman** in marriage in the home. The incredible motivation and purpose behind these unions is the immeasurable riches of God's grace showered upon his people through the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus. Imperfect people are reconciled to God through faith that they may be instruments and expressions of God's grace to one another and the world. This week we are considering the union of man and woman in the home. Marriage is a mystery because it is the uniting of two very different people to become one in the essentials of faith, purpose, and life. Like the church, marriage is a smaller subset that reflects the demonstration of love, the self-emptying sacrifice, and the mutual submission modeled by Christ that should exist between all believers.

Sermon Series Week 3 – July 24: Mystery of Marriage – Ephesians 5:21-33

By Bob Rao

Series Review (adapted from sermon): The mystery of salvation in Ephesians 1 brings about a myriad of blessings through the death and resurrection of Christ for the believer. Essentially, man can have a relationship with God and know him as Father and friend and Lord. Yet the Christian life is never intended to be a solo journey but a sanctifying and transforming journey developed in the context of the Church and the home. We must seek to emphasize the eternal things that bind us together and to deemphasize the human things that divide us. We must also be aware of the ensuing challenges and conflict that comes with imperfect people in relationships. Therefore we must not be ignorant about the forces of spiritual and relational attack waged by the evil one and our selfish tendencies as it relates to our relationship with God, the church, and the home.

Three Timeless Principles in Marriage – Ephesians 5:21-33

- I. **A Healthy Marriage Demonstrates Mutual Submission (v21)**
 - a. We are called to submit to one another
 - b. This kind of submission is described by a life of being considerate, thoughtful, mutual honor, mutual value, seeking the benefit of the other, etc.
- II. **A Healthy Marriage Demonstrates Male Leadership (vv22-30)**
 - a. Christ is the head of the church and has always been (v23a); throughout history people have tried to circumvent the authority of Christ – governments, presidents, tyrannical leaders, ministers – but Christ is and will always be the head of the Church
 - b. In the same way men are called to be the spiritual leaders of the home (v23b). Leading does not mean domination, but a self-sacrificial cultivation that result in the growth and benefit in the home for the glory to God.
- III. **A Healthy Marriage Demonstrates Oneness and Unity (v31-33)**
 - a. Two very different people are called in marriage to come together and have unity.
 - b. This must be an outworking of God in the lives of both people to achieve this kind of unity in marriage.

Tying the Truth Together:

1. There must be a balance of mutual submission & male leadership

Beware of the “sameness philosophy” or “male domination” that the world adheres to in marriage.

2. Understand the different roles and spouse’s needs

When we selfishly ignore roles and needs of one another we go into a “crazy cycle”. But if we seek to be a student and caretaker of one another we can go into a “energy cycle” that stimulates mutual satisfaction and edification.

3. Pursue effective communication

Sometimes it is easy to speak the *truth in un-love* to hurt or breakdown the other person or to *tell a lie lovingly* because we are afraid of provoking the other person. We must pursue and practice communication that speaks the *truth in love*.

4. Begin to develop these marriage principles in singleness

5. Seek the Lord together in prayer first. Be willing to seek out marital counseling if you are struggling in marriage.

6. Let God work unity in the body and unity in the home.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things that can stress and tear the moral fabric of a nation? (state things other than marriage as well; see article "Breakdown of the Family" <http://www.leaderu.com/issues/fabric/chap03.html>)
2. Why do we call marriage a sacred institution?
3. What things threaten the institution of marriage today?
4. What does it mean in Ephesians 5:21 that we should "submit to one another"? What biblical models do we have to understand this command?
5. What does it mean for a husband to be the head of the wife? Do you struggle to keep Christ as the head of your life? How does the church struggle to keep Christ as head?
6. Jesus Christ is our model for perfect humility described by "emptying himself" in Philippians 2. What does it look like for us to empty ourselves in order to demonstrate the grace of God to one another?

Work Your Mind: Memorize Ephesians 4:1-3

¹I therefore, as a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Our Mission is E³ = Exalt » Edify » Evangelize

- i. Consider a way this week to worship through some form as a group (song, prayer, testimony, sharing praises, etc.)
- ii. Begin planning for monthly group outreach

Resources to Digging Deeper:

To listen:

John Piper on “Marriage: Forgiving and Forbearing”
<http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/MediaPlayer/2000/AudioExcerpt/>

Matt Chandler on “Defining Masculinity (Part 4)”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IH2WX-VWpU&feature=PlayList&p=5E7970DB0A2DD9FA&playnext=1&index=7>

To watch:

Matt Chandler on “Having a Personal Walk [with Christ]”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vns2iXKS0Y0&feature=related>

To read:

Dr. Tony Evans on “Marriage God’s Style”
http://www.tonyevans.org/site/c.feIKLOOpGIF/b.2065703/k.EE52/Marriage_Gods_Style.htm