

Submit to one
another out of
reverence of Christ

△ Acts 2:1-13, Eph 5:22-6:9

Presenting the theme

Story 267 Marriage from World of
Stories, William J. Bausch

Submit to one another

This whole passage hinges on the
vs 21

One that we have not read today

As it belongs to the previous section
according to some interpreters

It is: Submit to one another out of
reverence of Christ

This is an easy sentence to say, but so
difficult to live out.

We already find it difficult to submit to
Christ

We all want to follow our own agendas, our
own desires, dreams and ideas

God made us into independent people

Wishing us to be dependent on him

As a matter of choice, not as a matter of nature or force

We have to choose this every minute of every day

And I do not think I do it even for a minute a day!

But now Paul says that we should do the same to each other

Submit to each other

Why? To show our reverence to Christ

Basis always

Love God above everything

Love your neighbour as yourself

How can we do that?

By submitting to others

But how do you do that, practically?

Paul then gives three areas of relationships that spoke to the recipients of this letter

Relationship of a wife to her husband

Marriage

Parents and Children

Masters and Slaves

And in a way that is good

Practical teaching

But it can also distract from the core message

It is not in only these areas, but in the

It is not in only those areas, but in the whole life of the Church

Paul therefore compares the example of Marriage to the relationship of Christ and the Church

But it also detracts from the core message

It is: Submit to one another out of reverence of Christ

Cultural differences

The other aspects of this reading is that the culture of the period and location is much different than now

There was no equality between men and women

For example in the story of the Samaritan woman

Marriage was more a business transaction between families

So

paternalistic society

Is alien to our own thinking and culture

At the end of the story when the disciples returned from their shopping

They were surprised to find him talking to a woman

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman

△ John 4:27

Arranged marriages

And often not based on romantical love

The two may well have coincided, but not always so

So the words that Paul writes here in Ephesus were progressive in his time

Even if today we find them hard to accept

With the danger that we ignore these verses altogether

As we do not like what we read

So please put away any preconceived ideas and let us read these verses with fresh eyes

Relationship Husbands - Wives

First thing to note: there is more instructions to the husbands than the wives

Clearly the men needed more correction than the women!

I hope that humbles the men a bit

Secondly: Paul compares marriage between a man and women

to the relationship between Christ and the Church

The role of wife and of the church

Wives are to submit to their husbands

and immediately our hackles are raised
due to cultural differences

Submit could be translated as respect

In the sense that we are to respect the authorities

I.e. do what they tell us to do

But the church also needs to submit to Christ

Does the church truly do that?

When we are meeting as a church meeting
how do we decide things?

Or are we listening to Christ to hear what
he wants us to do - and then do it!

There's a big challenge for any congregation!

The role of the husband and Christ

Husbands love your wives

Note, the wives are not asked to love their
husbands - just to respect

In the summary (v33) the wife has to respect her husband

Not love

Love - Agape love!

Not romantic love

How many marriages would be a lot better
if men loved their wives even if they are not
in love with them?

But nowadays if the 'in love' is missing divorce

But nowadays if the in love is missing divorce is on the cards

The Love of Christ for the Church

As example!

Christ died for the Church - husband should die for their wives

Christ made the church holy and clean

Through his words and through baptism

Husbands have to ensure this for their wives too

Christ makes the Church radiant

Husbands have to love their wives so that they become radiant

Husbands have to love their wives as themselves

Which is no different then loving your neighbour as yourself

But also means that you would not ask things of your wives you would not want to do yourselves

The two are becoming one

Does that look like having power over someone?

No it looks like mutual dependency

Summary husband-wife

It would be much easier for a wife to submit/respect her husband

If he loved her so much that he would not ask anything of her that would harm her, or go against her will or desire

This is not blind obedience, but this is enabling the other person to want to love you.

But if you still find it difficult concept then in this age of equality

These rules apply to all!

Wives submit to your husbands, husbands submit to your wives!

Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church, wives, love your husbands as Christ loves the church

You cannot go far wrong with that!

Relationship Children / Parents

Children: Based on the ten commandments : honour your father and your mother

So you receive blessing

Parents

Do not provoke your children to anger!

I am sure that our parents have made us angry lots of times!

Some of it is discipline

But provoking means to make them angry on purpose

Not because of discipline but because of wanting power over

Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

That does not mean discipline of the parents

No bring them up so that they want to have a relationship with God, and allow God to discipline them

Much harder!

Relationship Slaves / Masters

We do not have legal slavery in the West anymore

Although slavery does still occur

But these words do not apply to that situation - as that is much worse abuse than legal slavery in Roman times

But perhaps we can substitute this for Employers and Employees to make it relevant to us?

So employees obey your employers, in order to please them

Render service with enthusiasms

As if you were working for the Lord

I think your performance review would be excellent if we had all that attitude

But the Master have to do the same!

and not motivating with threats but with reason and understanding

And this is based on the parallel that we are slaves / servants / employees of Christ

And that we do our work duties like we do them for Christ

Knowing that we will be rewarded.

Also for God there is no partiality between employers and employees

This of course is also very revolutionary of the time that this was written in

This describes the ideal

That we have to work towards

It is the gold standard

But what about if this does not work

If one of the parties in any of these relationships do not play according to these rules?

Men upsetting women and the other way

Parents upsetting children and vice versa

Employers not treating employees right, knowing that they are trapped in their work

Or employees based on their collective power asking for more than the employer can afford?

I know of many people who had to divorce,

or whose relationship with their parents is not OK or even abusive,

Or for employer / employee relationships to be unjust and unbalanced

Do we accept that?

Perhaps we should consider that if neither of the parties wants to respect/love/submit to each other in this way

That the relationship is broken

And sometimes that means it should come to an end

God does not want a divorce

But neither does he want an abusive marriage, or abusive parents

Sometimes we have to choose between two evils

And that is hard

If you have been in situations like that

You may benefit from prayer ministry

Come to Jesus to let you heal your wounds and make you whole again

A Christ wants all of us to be:

to be holy, cleansed by the water of his baptism

to present ourselves to him in splendour

without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind

like wounds to scars

be they physical, mental or spiritual

That we are holy and without blemish

Christ wants this for the Church

And therefore for all of us - members of
his Church

Amen