



Series: Rooted & Fruitful (Part 22)

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INTRODUCTION

Following last week's sermon, we continue exploring the theme of marriage—not only as the union between husband and wife but also as a symbol of the union between Christ and His Church. In the book of Genesis, God created marriage as a covenant through which a man and a woman are united, becoming one flesh.

Paul refers to this as a “profound mystery” in Ephesians, linking God's original perfect design of marriage in Genesis to the union between Christ and the Church. It is a picture that declares the message of the eternal, covenantal love that Christ has for His Church and serves as an example of what a perfect marriage between a man and a woman should be: loving, self-sacrificial, and united as one. Just as a husband and wife are called to leave their parents, to cleave to and weave themselves together, we are meant to leave our sinful lives, to cleave to and weave ourselves with Christ.

DISCUSSION

1. Create or draw a symbol that represents you and explain to your group why you chose it. *For example, the symbol of a 'chef hat' represents me. I like to cook and feed people. I enjoy hosting people at home.*

2. In Ephesians 5:28-30, Paul writes that husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, feeding and caring for them just as Christ does for His Church.
 - a. For those who are married, how can you apply the love that Christ has for His Church to your marriages in order to preserve God's intended design for marriage?
 - b. For those who are single, how does the concept of sacrificial love apply to you?
3. Read Ephesians 5:31-32 and Genesis 2:24. Paul writes that a man will leave his parents and be joined to his wife, becoming one flesh. Paul refers to marriage as a "mystery" because its deepest meaning, revealed in verse 32, is that it symbolises the relationship between Christ and the Church. The roles of husband and wife are rooted in the roles of Christ and His Church. Just as a husband and wife are called to leave their parents, to cleave to and weave themselves together, we are meant to leave our sinful lives, to cleave to and weave ourselves with Christ.
 - a. Share with your group some of the things you left behind when you decided to follow Christ. How did you hold fast and cleave to Christ, especially when times were tough?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:17 says, "But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit." What does it mean to weave ourselves with Christ or be one with him in spirit (read Matthew 22:37 and Deuteronomy 6:4-5)?
4. Read Hosea 2:16. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness in pursuing other gods, God declares that He will be called "husband" rather than "master".
 - a. What does God's desire to be called 'husband' rather than 'master' reveal about His nature?
 - b. Some of us may be serving God out of a sense of obligation, viewing Him primarily as a "master". What challenges can arise when we serve God without truly knowing Him as our "husband"? What steps can we take to align our hearts and cultivate a deeper relationship with God?

WHAT WILL YOU DO

The union between Christ and His Church serves as the model for how a husband should love his wife. In marriage, God unveils a profound mystery—the mystery of Christ's covenant love for the Church. Just as a man leaves his parents and cleaves to

his wife, becoming one flesh, we are called to leave behind the things of this world to hold fast to Christ and unite with His Church. Let us strive to reflect the love Christ has for His Church in our marriages and relationships in daily life.

We should also love God intimately as our “husband”, not just serve Him dutifully as our “master”. God desires your heart, not just your hands, because when He has your heart, He has everything.

MEMORY VERSE

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” - Ephesians 5:31-33

An Each 1 Reach 1 Reflection

Matthew 17:14-27

Sharing the gospel with non-believers can be challenging and disheartening, especially when the outcome is not what we hoped for and we feel responsible for the results. In the miracle healing of the demon-possessed boy, Jesus teaches that all it takes is faith the size of a mustard seed. The focus is not on how great our faith is, but it should be on the greatness of our God! As E.M. Bounds said, “Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer can move God.” Prayer is the expression of that faith.

If you are reaching out to someone and feel like you have hit a wall, leading to discouragement, ask yourself, 'Am I relying on myself or on God?' If you are disappointed with the outcome, it is likely that your focus is in the wrong place. We are called to share the gospel to the best of our ability, conveying the message of love and redemption and praying fervently for our loved ones who are not yet saved. Let us trust God with the outcome.

Let us pray.