



Sunday, April 29, 2018
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Ephesians 5:25-31

After giving a lecture at the University of Chicago the prolific theologian Karl Barth was asked to summarize his whole theology in only one sentence. Without skipping a beat Barth responded, “My theology is best summarized by a song my mother used to sing to me. Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

This is the greatest truth in Scripture. Jesus loves us and has demonstrated it through His death on the cross. However, we often forget about the love of Christ. The idea has become so common that we do not reflect upon it deeply. Yet, Paul tells us that the union of Christ and the Church is a profound mystery. Despite our sinfulness Christ remains steadfast. We were chosen in Him in eternity past, He cleanses us now from sin, and He will present us to the Father at the end of time. His is an eternal love. Just as a husband loves his wife because they are one flesh, Christ loves the Church because the Church is His body. Corporately and individually Christ has died for us out of unbounded love, like a husband for his wife. He is our first love, stick with Him.

Context

Last week we discussed the roles of husband and wife in marriage. Paul connects the human relationship of marriage with the cosmic relationship of Christ and the Church. Similar to Hosea and his unfaithful wife the church is stained with sin. Unlike Hosea, Christ is able to make His bride clean. Moreover, we are to follow the leave and cleave pattern set out in Genesis 2. We are to leave the old patterns of life and cleave to the new life in Christ. Looking back to Ephesians 3 where Paul discusses the unity of Jew and Gentile the Church is made one with Christ in the same way.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Christ the Bridegroom”

Read Ephesians 5:25-31

Ephesians 5:25

“...as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her...”

How Does Christ Love the Church

- Dying for her. v.25
- Cleansing her. v.26
- Presenting her. v.27
- Caring for her. vv.28-29

How Do I Connect with Christ? v.31

- Leaving your former life for Him.
- Cleaving by faith to Him

Result: You Become One with Him

Discuss

- 1) How are you doing with your training course in holiness?

- 2) Why are we prone to forget God's love? What do we focus on instead?

- 3) What is one way you can be more captivated by Christ's love for the Church this week?

- 4) Henry Ford said that his philosophy in marriage was the same as his philosophy in cars, "Find one model and stick with it." Are there areas in your life where you are sticking to other models? Are there areas where you have not fully clung to Christ?

- 5) Pastor Denyes said that all of Christian beliefs are paradoxical. That is they can appear contradictory on the surface, but upon deeper reflection they are not. For example, we believe God is one but three persons in the Trinity. What are some other beliefs that are paradoxical? How can they be reconciled? Are there beliefs in the Bible that are confusing to you?