

Renewing the Covenant Household – Part One

Ephesians 5:21—6:4

The Third Sunday of Easter

April 6, 2008

I. *A Quick Review of Where We Are in Ephesians*

II. *Some Preliminary Points*

- A. Faced with Scripture vs. culture, private opinion, and conventional wisdom, we can do no better than the fathers and the reformers and Isaiah who said, “To the law and to the testimony,” (Isaiah 8). Scripture trumps man-made tradition, culture, and private judgment every time. The train isn’t leaving the station if we keep confusing the caboose with the engine.
- B. The Church looks a lot like the culture right now. That’s good *and* bad. It is good if the Church is winning the world and the pews are filling with refugees. It is bad if it means the Church has capitulated to the world and we are filling the pews with the putrid philosophy of the world.
- C. There is pain in the pew this morning. Here today are abased, abused, and abandoned women and children, the victims of deadbeat dads and tyrants; feminized men; confused children; baffled and fearful singles; and thus, understandably, everyone gets a little nervous about this subject. *Elbows should be safely stowed for this sermon.*
- D. I will offer you today:
 1. 2 Personal Reflections
 2. 3 Points of Trinitarian Theology
 3. 7 Exegetical Conclusions
 4. 3 Sage Gems of Pastoral Counsel.... in 23 minutes or less.

III. *Personal Reflections*

- A. Weddings are a scream: “I didn’t write that!”
- B. My wife is in love with another Man, and I could not be happier.
 - *Knowing the Truth doesn’t mean you are Doing the Truth*

IV. *Trinitarian Theology*

- A. Covenant, Hierarchy, and Love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- B. Equality in being and relationship does not eliminate hierarchy in order and life.
 - Heresy Hunters please note: I am not teaching the eternal subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, but rather the primacy of the Father in the origin of the intra-trinitarian relations and the hierarchy of persons in the work of redemption.
- C. Distinction in vocation is no reason for rebellion against the Maker of the vessel.

V. *Exegetical Conclusions (to be explored next week)*

- A. **Submission** is the fruit of the Spirit’s filling and is the life of all Christians: Ephesians 5:18-21.
- B. **Authority** is absolute only in God. All other authority is delegated, regulated, and temporary: Romans 13:1 ff; Acts 5:29. (One cannot obey God by disobeying God: the husband who demanded his wife break the law in the name of submission.)
 1. Authority *from* God is given *to* those under authority: Matthew 8:9.
 2. Authority is *for building up* not tearing down: 2 Corinthians 13:10.
 3. Authority *transfers* from parent to husband: Ephesians 5:31 – can’t “cleave” if you don’t “leave.”
- C. **Wives** are to submit themselves to their husbands as to the Lord (yes, even if they are unbelievers – 1 Peter 3:1).
- D. **Husbands** ARE heads of wives – it’s an indicative, not an imperative, a state of reality not a command to be obeyed: Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

- E. **Headship** means *Authority, Responsibility, Source, and Sacrifice*: Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23. Wives who want their husbands to have sacrificial love without acknowledging their authority are in rebellion against God. Men who want authority over others without laying down their lives in service are in rebellion as well. Christ defines a new kind of authority – Matthew 20:28. Those who deny “source” because of ancient classical usage must contend with Paul’s usage, which includes *both* hierarchy and source precisely because he is informed by the Trinity and not by Roman culture.
- *“That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam:
She was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved ... Marriages are made in heaven (it is said); we are sure this one was, for the man, the woman, and the match were all God's own work. He by his power made them both, and now by his ordinance made them one.”*
- Matthew Henry, Commentary on Genesis
- F. **Foolish Husbands** alone do not love their wives this way: Ephesians 5:28-30.
- G. The **Central Issue** is *showing the life of heaven on earth*: the covenant family anticipates the ultimate family in heaven, bound up into the Trinity: Ephesians 5:31-33; Deuteronomy 11:21.
- The **Family is God’s creation, not ours**. We do not “define” the family; God, the author of life, does so in Scripture through Jesus Christ (attention polygamists: He has ONE wife.).
 - The **human family is NOT ultimate; only GOD’S Family is ultimate**.

VI. Pastoral Counsel (for the next week)

- A. **Ask** for forgiveness from God and your family.
1. Husbands and Dads: from wives and children
 2. Wives and Moms: from husbands and children
 3. Children: from parents and siblings
- B. **Bow** your knees: you can’t change yourself apart from God’s grace and you can’t change your spouse or your children by quoting Bible verses at them. So knock it off, and make time to *pray for one another and together*. Shut up, unless you’re talking to God.
- C. **Commit** to the Bible
1. We are not wiser than God.
 2. His unchanging love and standards will see us through to wholeness.