

Renewing the Covenant Household – Part Two

Ephesians 5:21—6:4

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 13, 2008

After watching “Snow White,” a little girl was asked by her mom whether or not the lady and the prince lived happily ever after. “No, they got married,” she replied. “Happily ever after” is an eschatological hope that our families are commissioned to embody and to which we are called to testify. (It’s why all the great stories follow the Redemption story and end with a wedding – that’s where history is going.) Unfortunately, our homes are often places of conflict and despair rather than havens of hope and grace. How can this change? We must learn and embrace God’s ways concerning family life. Our homes are our first schools, our first work, our first place of growth in grace. Let us be thankful for this great gift from God and rejoice in his provision. Have you seen how HUGE those bridal magazines are? Why? We are longing for Christ.

I. Trinity, Glorious Trinity

- Covenant, hierarchy, and love
- Yes, there is marriage in Heaven

II. Paul, the Contra-Culture Warrior

- He is using a new map to guide the Church against the Roman *Pater Familias*.
- His map is a three-dimensional guide from creation (how God made us), *redemption* (how God saved us), and *consummation* (how God will perfect us).
- The “*doulos*” no more! Why? Because of Christ the great husband.

III. Loving Husbands – Ephesians 5:25-29

- A. “Husband” means, literally, “the nourisher” (see John 15:1).
1. This is – first – an agricultural term that envisions a careful tending to and shaping of glorious and beautiful life. Far from being exploitive, the husbandman nourishes and cherishes the “planting” so that all grow in glory.
 2. Psalm 128
 - Husbands think their wives need their mouths and minds (and they do); but they need their shoulders and arms more than all.
- B. Head
1. Authority and Responsibility – Ephesians 1:22
 2. Source – Ephesians 4:15
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3, 11-12
 - No such usage in ancient literature isn’t preventing Paul from reframing the discussion. His map is revelation, not man’s tradition.
 3. Sacrifice – Ephesians 5:23 (note Eph. 5:2)
 4. And so –
 - Christ is the Head of Dark Powers and the cosmos by his Resurrection power.
 - Christ is the Head of the Body by his supply of grace and the Spirit.
 - Christ is the Head of his Bride by sacrificial love.
 - *Thus the husbandman Protects, Guides, Provides, and Dies for his Bride*

IV. *Respectful Wives*

- A. Subjection of the one woman to one man, not women to men. (This is a protection for the woman against the old pagan order.)
 - Middle voice – volition; the choice the woman makes. If “passive,” then a forced or coerced action.
 - Jesus’ teaching on divorce given to protect women
- B. Sharing her counsel and accepting his decision
- C. Sexual equality – 1 Corinthians 7:4 – absolutely unheard of in the ancient world.
- D. Sanctified behavior – Ephesians 5:25-27
 - 1. Modesty in Dress
 - 2. Mouths of Wisdom
 - 3. Motherhood as Honor – indeed, a GREAT honor (Galatians 4:26)

V. *The End of the Matter – Ephesians 5:33*

In short, Paul shows us the measure of the wife’s submission in v. 22-24, which is the voluntary subjection of herself to her husband’s care, and in v. 25-29 shows us the measure of the husband’s headship, which is the loving sacrifice of himself for the one he loves. In both ways the life of Christ is seen, the Lord’s Cross being shown by the husband’s wounded hands and feet and brow; the Church’s vocation to nurture and gather in the wife’s glad following.

In all of this we behold the One who left his Father and sacrificed all that he might make his Bride glorious, cleave to her, never leave her, and finally bring her to his home forever. All Glory to Jesus.