

THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE

Ephesians 5:29-33

Bernolakovo, 8th February 2015

Eph 5:29-33 ²⁹ Οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ³⁰ ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. ³¹ ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθῆσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. ³² τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν· ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. ³³ πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἣ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

Eph 5:29-33 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This is **a great mystery**, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

OUTLINE

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- 0.1. THE WORD "MYSTERY" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
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1. THE MYSTERY OF UNITY

- 1.1. PUZZLING → HARD TO UNDERSTAND
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2. THE MYSTERY OF SUBMISSION

- 2.1. GETTING SUBMISSION BY SACRIFICE
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3. THE MYSTERY OF MEANING

- 3.1. REPRESENTING GOD
- 3.2. RESEMBLING GOD

4. TO REMEMBER**0. INTRODUCTION: BUILDING IDEAS OF MARRIAGE**

- marriage: „...and they lived happily ever after...“
- the modern enemies of marriage: (1) individualism, (2) violence, (3) hedonism

[CHAMBERS]...marriage and money form the elemental constitution of personal and social life. They are the touchstones of reality, and around these two things the Holy Spirit works all the time. Marriage is one of the mountain peaks on which God's thunder blasts souls to hell, or on which His light transfigures human lives in the eternal heavens. Jesus Christ faces fearlessly the question of sin and wrong, and He teaches us to face it fearlessly also. There is no circumstance so dark and complicated, no life so twisted, that He cannot put right. The Bible was not written for babes and fools, it was written for men and women who have to face hell's facts in this life as well as heaven's facts. If Jesus Christ cannot touch those lives that present a smooth face but have a hideous tragedy behind them, what is the good of His salvation? but, bless God, He can. He can alter our disposition, and He can alter the dreams of our dreams until lust no longer dwells in them.¹

0.1. THE WORD "MYSTERY" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- **Mk 4:11** To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in PARABLES,

¹ CHAMBERS, O. *Studies in the sermon on the mount*,

- **Rom 11:25** I want you to understand this **mystery**, brothers: a PARTIAL HARDENING has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.
- **1Cor 2:1** Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you **the mystery** of God.
- **2Thes 2:7** ...the **mystery** of LAWLESSNESS is already at work.

0.2. A PARABLE OF BUILDING REPAIRS

0.2.1. START WITH GENERALITIES

- To address a sensitive issue (emotional) it is advisable to start with something seemingly unrelated...
- David and Nathan → when it is too sensitive to talk about the concrete problem...

0.2.2. BUILDING-BLOCK IDEAS OF MARRIAGE

- repairing marriages ~ repairing buildings/bridges etc.
- a metaphor: constant repairs falling constructions → check the building materials and design (concrete, steel, design...)
- check your building-block ideas of how a christian marriage should look like: (1) unity, (2) submission, (3) purpose

0.2.3. THE RULE OF GOD

- plurality in the Bible → united in God
- theocracy in the Bible → diffracted through plurality (elders, prophets, king)
- **1Cor 15:27-28** For "God¹ has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that **God may be all in all**.

1. THE MYSTERY OF UNITY

- **Gn 2:24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

1.1. PUZZLING → HARD TO UNDERSTAND

- **Pro 30:18-19** Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: ¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin. (love is uplifting – love makes you dexterous/quick – love gives you sure orientation)

1.2. HIDDEN → SPIRITUAL

- **1Cor 6:16-17** Or do you not know that he who is joined¹ to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes **one spirit** with him.
- spirit ⇒ trust; intuition; identification

2. THE MYSTERY OF SUBMISSION

- **1Cor 11:3** I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife¹ is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ⇒ God in the centre!
- (**Eph 5:21** Submitting yourselves **one to another** in the fear of God. Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ,)

2.1. GETTING SUBMISSION BY SACRIFICE

- motivation: Christ died for the church...
- I am *free* when I *submit*... [I am created that way – the head, to which I submit, gives herself completely to my best interests]

2.2. SUBMISSION THROUGH ADMIRATION

- "It is good for me"
- **John 14:15** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

3. THE MYSTERY OF MEANING

- **Gn 1:27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; ^bmale and female He created them.

3.1. REPRESENTING GOD**Gn 2:15** בְּנוֹ-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ

- develop creation (עבד)
- protect creation (שמר)

3.2. RESEMBLING GOD

- creativity
- fellowship
- compassion
- ...

4. TO REMEMBER

- The mystery of marriage is in the hidden and paradoxical realities of spiritual relationships.
- To build/repair marital life we need good “building-block ideas” of what is unity, submission and meaning in marriage.
- The purpose of marriage is to represent God and to make Christ’s relationship to the Church the ultimate model for the marital relationships.