This morning, we are continuing our series back in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is a book that is all about who we are as a church – who we are made to be as God’s people. Ephesians is all about how God has made a radical new humanity in Christ. And in Christ, God is about the purpose of reconciling all things to Himself. He is working to restore all things in Jesus.

Church isn’t just a place where we go and church isn’t something we do – the church – the body of Christ is our new identity. We have been made into God’s people and the church is to be the place where God carries out His purposes in the earth and displays who He is in His character and nature.

This morning, we are going to talk about something truly radical – we are going to talk about something that goes against the prevailing culture in our day. And it is something that is potentially offensive and potentially polarizing – if it is taken outside of the context of the purposes of God displaying His character in and through the church.

If what we talk about today is taken outside of the understanding that we are a part of His body now and we are meant to reflect the relationship of Christ and the church, it won’t make any sense and it will be a hard pill to swallow. But, if we understand that because we are members of His body, He has given us different ways to reflect Him, I believe it will give us faith to what God has called us to. And I pray that by God’s grace, He will give all of us ears to hear from Him this morning as we open up His Word.

"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Many marriages today are in trouble. Mankind is in trouble. We need help and we need hope. Help and hope aren’t found in ourselves though. We need God to redeem us and to redeem our relationships. The good news is that we have a redeemer in Jesus Christ. He came to make all things new and to redeem our relationships as well.
One of the most significant relationships that Christ came to redeem is marriage. And if we understand this Scripture and apply this Scripture, it will change our marriages for the good and enable us to reflect Christ and the church in marriage.

The passage that we come to today is fairly straightforward. But, it is not easy. It isn’t easy for wives and it isn’t easy for husbands. Both are called to die to our own desires and to live for God in marriage. At the transitional verse to this passage, Paul says...

"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 21:5)

All of the different roles in a family are to be subject, or to submit in some way, and all of the roles in a family are to do so in the fear of Christ. Everyone in a family is under authority and everyone in a family is not free to live as we please.

In the passage we are looking at today it addresses the roles of husbands and wives and in the following passages, the roles of children and parents, servants and masters will be addressed. Each of us in a family are to live in a manner that is aware of Christ – acknowledging Him in the way that we interact. (So often God is not a consideration in how we view our relationships and in how we interact with each other.)

All of these roles reflect the created order of God – how God intended for His creation to be ordered. The idea of submitting or being subject to one another and then carrying out these principles in relating to other people isn’t a popular one – at least in North America. We like our independence and we don’t like the idea of being bound to submit to others. But in the following verses, the Apostle Paul, writing inspired by the Holy Spirit, talks about what it looks like to live life together in the context of a household.

At the outset, I need to mention some things. I need to mention that this passage addresses wives first but it doesn’t primarily address wives. It addresses wives first but Paul spends 50 words in 3 verses addressing the wives. He spends more than double that addressing husbands – with 110 words and 6 verses devoted to the way that husbands are to love their wives. And then he spends two verses reiterating the meaning of marriage. And in the last verse, he summarizes the command to both husbands and wives.

So, although we are going to start with where Scripture starts - wives, please don’t check out – the husbands will be addressed and more so. And for those who aren’t married – this Scripture is for your benefit as well. You can help husbands and wives in the congregation fulfill their God-given roles. You can encourage godly marriages for the good of the church. And if God has called you to marriage, these verses are helpful for knowing and understanding what your role might be one day.

For children in the room, don’t check out either – this passage is meant to be for your benefit because in a healthy and happy home, where your parents are carrying out their roles in a way that honors God, you will thrive. But in the meanwhile, you can also respectfully help your mom
and dad love God and submit to God in their roles too. This isn’t license for you to be sassy or disrespectful, but it is license to humbly ask questions, not assuming you are correct, but to learn and it is license for you to humbly ask mom and dad how they are doing in these areas when they are struggling.

Main idea: Husbands and wives are called to reflect Christ and the Church in marriage.

The whole paradigm for marriage that the Apostle Paul is writing about is the model of Christ’s love for the church and the church’s submission to Jesus. When Adam and Eve were made one, from the very beginning, it was meant to be a picture of the relationship that God intended for mankind. Because man sinned though, our relationship with God was lost and marriage and relationships in general became all about us and this has resulted in a whole lot of mess.

But Jesus has come to redeem a bride, a people, the church, to Himself and to reveal that the purpose of marriage is to show His love for His bride. So, Christian marriage is meant to reflect the marriage of Christ and the church. And the first place where we see this reflection of the relationship of the church with Jesus is in verse 22, when it speaks to the wives.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22)

1. Wives are called to be a picture of how the church relates to Jesus

Pictures are meant to function – to point us to something. To tell a story. And pictures can create a longing for something. I have never been to the islands of Hawaii but I have seen their beauty in pictures. And the pictures of the lush jungles, the volcanoes and beautiful beaches create a desire for me to go there someday and to explore the beauty and enjoy it for myself.

In a Christian marriage, the wife is to be like a picture of how the church relates to Jesus. And this picture creates a desire for others to know Jesus and explore His beauty – to explore a relationship with Him for ourselves. But this relationship that a wife is called to in marriage is not primarily about her husband – it is about her relationship with Jesus, lived out in the context of her relationship with her husband.

Women are created fully equal in God’s image. Women and wives are no less and no more free and responsible than men or husbands are free and responsible moral agents. So, when Paul talks here about the order of families based on the created order of God, he is talking about a voluntary submission of the wife to the husband.

And this command is from God through His Word to our wives, not from us to our wives for a reason. Husbands – you are not called to make your wife submit – or to yell her into submission or to threaten or force or coerce her into submitting to you. Too many men act like “Jabba the Hut” and order their wives around, throwing verses on submission at them, demanding that they be treated well, when they have no right to behave this way.

In fact, this kind of behavior is outlawed and clearly prohibited in just a few verses. But wives, the command here is to submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Submission is not because your husband has earned the right for you to submit yourself to his leadership. It also doesn’t
mean his leadership is perfect – if that were the prerequisite, then no husband would ever qualify.

But, wives are called to submit as unto the Lord in the same way that Scripture tells us in Colossians 3:17 “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus”. This is a voluntary submission as part of her submission to Jesus Christ and it is not to be understood outside of this.

Now, let me draw attention to a very important point – it says “as unto the Lord” – like she submits to the Lord – but it does not say that she is to treat her husband like the Lord. This isn’t saying that the wife submits to her husband over submitting to the Lord. This also isn’t calling the husband the Lord of the wife. It is a way that a wife serves the Lord by submitting to her husband.

But this submission can never be contradictory to what Christ commands. If a husband asks the wife to disobey God or to do something immoral or illegal or something that violates her conscience, this is not a license for the husband to demand the wife goes along. No, the wife is primarily accountable to God for her actions and if ever her husband calls her to disobey God, or to do something immoral or illegal or harmful or abusive or that violates her conscience, she is not to submit to him in those things.

And at times, sadly, there are many who have ungodly husbands. So what about wives in this situation? Submission is primarily about an attitude and a disposition. Scripture is not talking about slavish obedience. I think the way that Kent Hughes put it is helpful when he said...

“The fact that a wife wants to honor her husband’s leadership, if possible, does not mean she will sit in mute silence. Questioning his reasoning or acquainting him with his error is not evidence of a rebellious spirit, but rather of love. Refusing to support his moral folly is not sin. A Christian wife can stand with Christ against her husband with a humble, loving spirit which indicates her longing to honor his leadership.” - Ken Hughes

If you are married to a difficult man – our hearts go out to you. Our concern is with you and Christ’s concern is with you. You are in a difficult place and are faced with tension and difficult decisions every day. But God will give you His grace as you desire to be the wife He is calling you to be, even if that may look like lovingly confronting and lovingly disagreeing with your husband out of an attitude of humility. And I believe that you will have a greater reward in heaven for your labors.

But this is not a license for a husband to act like he is the lord of his wife and domineer either. This is a God-given way for the wife to honor God’s created order and submit to Christ. And verse 23 gives the motivation.

“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” (Ephesians 5:23)

The head of the marriage is meant to be the husband and this is seen at the very beginning of humanity. When God created man and woman, he created man from the dust and then woman was created from man, to be a helper or support to what God had called him to. So, in marriage,
the husband is called to be the head or the leader of the marriage and in this sense is the head of the wife.

Now, this is a hard thing for a lot of women to hear. And it is primarily hard because men have so failed at loving their wives. It is hard because there are so many men who are hard to follow and so many men who are domineering and abusive and poor leaders. There are so many men who are lazy and selfish and have caused such difficulty and pain for women and so, when a wife with this kind of husband hears these things, she naturally balks and understandably so.

But the kind of headship that the Bible is speaking of here is in the way that Christ is the head of the church, His body and is Himself its Savior. It says, “as Christ is the head of the church and is Himself its Savior.” The husband has responsibility for his wife but he is not his wife’s savior. Christ is the Savior of the body not the husband. But as the Savior came to die for the church, so husbands are called to be the head in a similar, self-sacrificing way.

This is a different kind of headship. A dying kind of headship. A self-giving kind of headship. It is a headship that is defined in the context of the headship of Christ the Redeemer. And Jesus expressed His headship over the church by serving the church, by giving Himself up for the church, by loving the church and by dying for the church as we will focus on in a few verses. And this has some serious implications for what the husband is called to in marriage.

"Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.” (Ephesians 5:24)

We submit to Jesus because His love is compelling. We submit to Jesus voluntarily and willingly, freely giving our lives to Him because He gave His life for us. There is no fear that Christ will abuse the church. There is no fear that Christ will not provide for His bride. There is no fear that Christ will abuse His bride. No – He gave everything for His bride the church to rescue the church and save a people for Himself. And although we must submit to Jesus’s headship to receive salvation, we submit freely to Jesus because we know He has our best interests.

So, in the same way that our submission to Christ is to be free and voluntary, so a wife’s submission is to come from her and be voluntary – it cannot be forced. But think with me for a moment about how the church submits to Christ. The church gladly submits to the kind and beneficial rule of Christ, who is the Chief Cornerstone on which the whole building of the church is constructed.

Jesus is the one who fills and empowers the church and builds the church up in Himself. He is the one who give us gifts of His grace and it is His boundless love that we strive to comprehend. He gives us gifts and enables everyone to do their part until the whole body is built up and the goal is that we might be built up into the measure of the fullness of Christ.

In doing so, we all are to imitate His love for us in the way that we treat each other and we are to seek to please the Lord in all things by living holy lives and seeking to understand His will for us. We are to seek to grow, to understand, and enjoy and experience His love and respond to His love for us, as Ephesians has been explaining all along.
This is the kind of attitude that the wife is urged to develop towards her husband. It is not an unthinking obedience that is being spoken of here, but it is a glad submission because it will ultimately lead to blessing and rewards from God. And this type of submission is to be present in every area of life. And it is not based on whether a husband is qualified to lead or even whether he leads well or only if a husband is loving.

This is not license for a husband to control, but it is saying to wives that in everything — every area of life is to be marked by a submission to your husband out of submission to Christ. Remember, it is all in the context of the fact that the husband and the wife have been joined together as one flesh — one body.

What an anomaly it would be if a body had two heads — it wouldn’t function very well. But when a man and a woman are joined together in marriage, God makes the two one. And so, the husband and wife both are to seek the good of their mutual flesh and in this context, the wife is to submit to her husband. It is meant to make the husband and wife together more effective in functioning together as one flesh. And it represents God’s intention to bring all things together again in Christ.

But like we are expected to be responsible for ourselves and think and act for ourselves as we submit to Christ, so this command isn’t meant to stifle the wife’s thinking or acting. It is not demeaning — rather it finds purpose in God and His good desires for us. We don’t find it demeaning or stifling or degrading to submit to Jesus — it is freeing and liberating and joy-filled and we find rest and great satisfaction in subjecting ourselves to Christ. So, the wife, if she does so willingly, will not find Biblical submission stifling or demeaning, but it is meant to be a protection and bring freedom in who God has called her to be.

Notice, that as the section changes from the command for wives to submit to their husbands, the command to husbands in not to be over their wives. The counter to wives submit is not husbands lead and rule over your wife (even though it is clear that husbands are to lead and function as the head), that isn’t the command here. In fact, nowhere in Scripture are husbands commanded to “exercise your headship” or “rule as the head over your wife”. The command here is for husbands to love and it is a command that is given often and it is all-encompassing. Husbands, your call to love your wife is daunting.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," (Ephesians 5:25)

2. Husbands are called to reflect how Jesus relates to the church

It says love your wives. And you might think — “ok, that’s easy, I can do that, I have a great wife and I do love her”. But not so fast! It says how. It says love your wives, “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. Now, let’s think for a moment what that looked like.

God the Son was perfectly happy, perfectly content, perfectly fulfilled at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. He had no need, no want, no lack and no deficiency. He didn’t have a man-shaped hole in His heart and didn’t crave the affections of man to be satisfied. But, God so
loved the world – those who were hostile and dead-set against Him – that God sent His Son to the earth to become a man.

Jesus so loved you and I – He so loved those the Father had given to Him that He willingly gave up His place of glory and He took on human flesh for all eternity. He so loved mankind that He identified with mankind and became man Himself. Talk about coming down to our level! It would be far greater than us becoming ants to save some ants because we really loved them.

And then, Jesus knowingly subjected Himself to all the trials and difficulties and pain and suffering and loss and death of humanity – out of love for us. He endured the mocking and abuse and ridicule and physical abuse of men to save His bride. He put up with arrogant people who rightfully should have bowed to worship Him wherever He went – but instead they sought to use Him or mocked Him and plotted to kill Him.

Jesus willingly allowed Himself to be captured and submitted to an unjust trial with trumped up charges. He was beaten and whipped for His church. He endured ridicule and a painful crown made of thorns. Then, He carried a tree that He had made and the Creator of all allowed Himself to be hung on a tree He made, set up as a curse for all. He did all of this, so that He might save the church. He did all of this so that whosoever believes in Him might have eternal life and be saved from their sins and the wrath of God that we all deserve. He laid dead in the grave for three days and then rose to life again, so that we can have hope for eternal, resurrection life with Him.

Now, He prays for His church and intercedes for us and strengthens us and it says that nothing can separate us from His love. So, when Paul says, “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” it means everything. It means that husbands, our love for our wives is not conditional and based on whether they earn it or merit our affections. Our love is not to be based on whether our wives ever return our affections or love us the way that we love them. There is no way we could ever love Christ the way He has loved us! Our love is not meant to be a self-serving love - no! Christ humbled Himself and gave Himself up for us. Christ did everything for us. All of His work was for our good and on our behalf.

So, husbands, do you have your wife’s best interest in mind in everything that you do? Do you desire to provide for her and care for her needs? Do you work hard for her good out of love for her or do you begrudge working for her benefit? Are you glad to give everything up for her? Do you endure and are you patient with her when she fails, as Christ is lovingly patient with us when we fail?

Sadly, I know that I do not live up to this kind of love. So often, to my shame, I think of my own convenience and my own good ahead of my wife’s. Gentlemen, it is easier for us if we have a godly wife who submits to our leadership but we can be lazy. Instead of getting up and getting something for her and caring for her needs and serving her, it is easy to let your wife care for you and serve you. It is easy to let her get up and get a snack for you two when you’re watching a movie – I even tell myself it’s because she can find things better. But even thought that is partially true – I need to check my motives and make sure it isn’t just because I am being lazy. Men, before you spend money on your hobby or spend time doing what you want to do apart from your wife – consider instead how can I serve her and spend time with her. How can I do
what is best for her good and enjoyment? How can I lavish my love on her? Christ didn’t wait to be served. He washed His disciples’ feet. He was patient with them and cared about them, even when they were proud and argued about who was greater right after He told them that He was going to die for them.

Christ’s love involved for His church a response of the will as well as an emotional and physical response. It involved everything, His love for the church is all-encompassing. It is not limited. It is not conditioned on the church. Jesus loves His church with everything and every part of His being.

Husbands, we are commanded to love as a response of the will – as an unwavering commitment to our wives and their good. We are commanded to love our wives emotionally and care for them when they are emotional, like we are from time to time. We are called to love them physically and show them affection, care, respect and seek to protect them. Husbands, we are called to take the initiative in loving our wives, as Christ took the initiative to love us first.

Jesus set His face towards Jerusalem, the place where He would give everything up for the church and we are to set our face to resolve to love our wives at the greatest cost. This love removes any options for abuse – for misuse, for being domineering, for manipulating our wives. This kind of love says it is not ok to victimize your wife or to demand that she serve your every whim. This kind of love says we must get up off our duffs and do things for our wife that will show our love and bless our wife. This kind of love means we must sacrifice our interests for her interests, for the good and welfare of our wives. If husbands love like this, there would be no concern for being overbearing.

But all areas of marriage should be lavished with forgiving love and merciful love. It is love that gives up our own physical needs for the physical needs of our spouse. This kind of love demonstrates the power of God to change fallen humanity, which is dominated by the rule of sin and self-centeredness and seeks to get for itself. This kind of love is motivated by a goal too. Verses 26-28 tell us that our goals is for husbands to love their wives this way...

"that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," (Ephesians 5:26)

The goal of our love is not to be loved in return. The goal is that we might help her be sanctified. And the way that we help her and love her this way, is to cleanse her by washing her with the Word. This means that we are to love our wives by giving them God’s Word – not to beat them or control them or even necessarily to correct them, although it is loving to bring correction from God’s Word. We are to love them and seek to wash them metaphorically with the Word.

Notice, that there are three goals in these verses. To sanctify her, the present her to himself in splendor, and to enable her to be holy and blameless. And the first goal – that he might sanctify her – means to help set her apart for God – to point her to a deeper and exclusive relationship with God.

In Ezekiel 16, God speaks of Israel and how He found her in her nakedness and he spread His skirt over her and covered her nakedness.
“I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,’ declares the Lord GOD. ‘Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.’” (Ezekiel 16:8-12)

Husbands, we are to love our wives in a way that helps them grow and set aside unclean ways and sin. Christ died for the church, to make her holy, by cleansing her – Jesus removed the sins of the church and made it possible for the church to relate to God. We are to seek to adorn our wives with our love and treat her like our queen. We are to lavish her with the word of the gospel that makes her clean and remind her of her forgiveness in Christ. And the second goal of our love as husbands is seen in verse 27...

"so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," (Ephesians 5:27)

One day, Jesus will present us to God in full splendor. He will present us with absolutely no blemishes – no spots, no defects, no blights, no wrinkle, no imperfections. And when He makes all things new in eternity, we will be presented as perfect and complete, beautiful in His sight. In the same way, our goal is to care for our wives in such a way that we show the love of Christ to be wonderful to them and point them selflessly to be found in Christ and made new. And the third goal of our love is not for our own benefit – it is so that our wives might be holy and without blemish. “that she might be holy and without blemish.”

"In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." (Ephesians 5:28)

In the same selfless, self-sacrificing, giving, dying way that Christ gave Himself for the church for the good of the church, husbands are to love their wives for their wives good. Men, you don’t have any lack of love for yourselves. You see to your needs, you protect yourself, you feed and clothe yourself and a lot of you buy nice things for yourself.

You are aware of when you are tired or hungry or grumpy or achy or in pain and some men are even aware of when they need to take a bath. It wouldn’t be natural for you to harm your body but it is natural for you to care for yourself. And in the same way you show so much attention to your needs and mood and desires, you are to love your wife.

Really, it is a direct application for husbands to fulfill the commandment for us to love our neighbor as ourselves with the closest neighbor we have – our wife! And then, Paul says, after all, loving your wife is loving yourself, because you two are one flesh!

“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,” (Ephesians 5:29)

Our love is to be nourishing and cherishing of our wives. To nourish here, is to feed and nurture and in the same that Christ nourished and nurtures us, providing for our needs and growth. And in a similar way, we are called to wholeheartedly and tenderly cherish – holding our wives dearer than anyone else and any other person – to romantically pursue and value our wives.
And then, in verse 30, Paul says that the reason wives and husbands are to treat each other this way, is "because we are members of his body." (Ephesians 5:30)

3. We are called to different roles in marriage because Christ has made us a part of His body

In the body, every role is different. In the body, every role is equally important. In marriage, we have specific parts to play. Because we are cared for and loved by Christ. Because we have been redeemed and made a part of His body. Because He has called us and all of our hope is in being a part of Him now. Because of this, we are to treat each other the way that Scripture tells us. Because we ARE members of His body – not to earn membership in His body.

"within the flow of the paragraph, the relationship between Christ and his church is presented not simply as the ideal model for a husband and wife in their marriage. It is also the reality in which they and other Christians are included. Husbands and wives , like other believers, are profoundly indebted to Christ because they know what it is to be loved and cherished by him day by day. This text serves to remind 'husbands and wives of that which they have in common, as "members" of the body of Christ'. Let the husband, then, who understands Christ’s tender affection and nurture follow this example in his love for his wife." -O’Brien, Peter T.

Then, Paul points to the basis for all of what he has been saying – he points back to Genesis and the created order. And he quotes Genesis 2:24, where it says...

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31)

In the context in Genesis, the woman was taken from the side of man, in order to be his companion and a suitable helper equally made in God’s image and then the narrator in Genesis says, this is why "a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

But Paul says that this joining of a man and woman in marriage wasn’t just pointing to the union of a husband and wife. He says, when God did this, He wanted us to see something significant and profound that we wouldn’t fully understand until Jesus came for His bride.

"This mystery is great ; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:32)

This mystery of marriage is great but it ultimately speaks of the union of Christ and the church. When the first Adam was joined to his wife Eve, they became one flesh. Now, when Christ – as the last Adam – or the new, replacement representative of a new race, restoring God’s intended design, and Christ functioning in this way as this Adam – when He is joined to the church, the two become one flesh. And it is Christ’s love for His bride which is the model for marriage and the motivation to reflect a godly marriage. Because now, the purpose of marriage is to be a model of the love that Jesus has for the church.

We are to reflect the same relationship of love and point to the relationship of Christ and the church in our marriage. A Christian marriage is a picture of Jesus loving His responsive church
and through everything it is to point to the good news of Jesus who came to redeem us and transform one of the most difficult of human relationships and show that God is making all things new and is working to unite all things in His Son.

1 Corinthians 6:16-17 says “For, as it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him”. This is profound indeed. Then, Paul closes out the exhortation to husbands and wives and says that this isn’t just a bunch of vague commands for others.

"Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." (Ephesians 5:33)

The theology of marriage is profound but it is also meant to be seen simply and practically, so Paul reminds us in a brief summary of what God commands us to. He says everyone who is a Christian is to love his own wife as himself and the wife is to respect her husband.

The husband is to love his wife like he loves himself. Now, this doesn't mean taking your wife fishing or sitting down to a football game with her – unless she herself truly likes those things. But it means, looking for her interests and looking for ways to care for her like you already do yourself. Your authority is to be carried out by loving and self-giving.

And the wife is to respect her husband’s calling as the head of their marriage in her attitude and actions. And this kind of marriage is meant to deepen our own love for God and our own enjoyment of the fact that we are one with Christ and then encourage us to share this with others through our marriage.

As we close, I want to say that all of us has failed at living like this. There is no one here who can say that they have perfectly obeyed God, or perfectly submitted or perfectly loved. But amazingly, we can have hope to live this way, because Jesus has washed us and made us clean. He is making us into His image day by day. He in enabling and empowering us. And when we fail and fall short of this – because we will, we can rest in His forgiveness, knowing that He has already made us clean. We can trust in His enabling because we are one with Him.