

Outline

I. Introduction

- Big Idea: Every relationship in its perfect state points back to the redemptive work of Christ
- Relationships guided by Holy Spirit become living portraits of Christ's love
- Ephesians 5:21-33 as brushstrokes of divine beauty

II. Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:22-33

III. Christ's Model of Leadership in Human Relationships

A. Shared Submission (v. 21)

- Key verb: *hupotassō* ("to arrange oneself under")
- Grammatically middle voice indicating voluntary submission
- Born out of reverence for Christ
- Not subservience but mutual deference springing from love
- Applies to all believer interactions, not just marriage
- About maintaining and restoring relational peace

B. Loving Relationships: Christlike Headship (vv. 22-30)

- Complementary callings, not competing claims
- Key verb: *agapaō* (intentional, other-centered, covenant loyalty)
- Christ "gave Himself up" – voluntary sacrifice
- Headship models sacrifice and stewardship, not superiority
- Leadership becomes blessing through righteousness

IV. Four Qualities of Righteous Leadership (vv. 25-27)

A. Cleansing – Removing What Corrupts

- “Washing of water with the word”
- Full bath, not surface rinse
- Truth as cleansing, not crushing
- Grace washes away weakness without shame

B. Nurturing – Bringing to Maturity (v. 29)

- “Nourishes and cherishes”
- Agricultural language requiring time and attention
- Cultivates gradual transformation
- Creates safe place for development

C. Sanctifying – Setting Apart for God’s Purpose

- Aligning life with God’s calling
- Seeing people as they are meant to be in Christ
- Reinforcing identity, not just correcting behavior
- Provides spiritual clarity and strengthens identity

D. Elevating – Toward Wholeness

- Christ presents church “without spot or wrinkle”
- Bridal imagery showing radiance
- Aims at maturity and beauty, not just maintenance
- Lifts trajectory beyond current limitations

V. The Mystery of Union: Becoming One Flesh (vv. 31-33)

A. Earthly Marriage Mirrors Divine Union

- References Genesis 2: “naked and unashamed”
- Perfect unity existed through righteousness

B. Genesis 3: Sin Fractured Perfection

- Five consequences after the fall:
 1. Distrust replaced transparency
 2. Fear replaced intimacy
 3. Self-defense replaced self-giving
 4. Desire for control replaced spiritual cooperation
 5. Shame replaced glory

C. Christ Redeems Lost Harmony

- Reverses Eden’s curse within relationships
- Restores spiritual unity, voluntary love, covenant faithfulness
- Church as new Eve, born from Christ’s pierced side
- Blood and water imagery: redeems soul and renews bonds
- Marriage as living testimony of Eden’s lost love found in Christ

VI. Life Change Challenge: Three Steps

1. Practice one act of voluntary submission – echo Eden’s harmony
2. Lead one person through love, not control – mirror Christ’s cross-shaped leadership
3. Speak one word of redemptive truth – wash someone with grace

VII. Conclusion

- View struggling people not through ruins of Eden
- See them through beauty of Christ restoring all things