**Home Service Sheet Sunday 18th February 2024**

**Call To Worship                  James 4:10**

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

**Opening Prayer**

Heavenly Father, as we come before You today, we want to humble ourselves, and place ourselves in Your gracious and merciful hands. We confess that we have sinned against You and failed to live in step with Your Holy Spirit. Forgive us, we pray, and help us to live in accordance with Your ways. May we not seek to exalt ourselves, but rather lift up Your Name to bring glory to You! You alone are worthy to receive all praise, glory, honour and worship for You have made all things and sustain them. You have made Yourself known to us and opened up the way of salvation through Your Son laying down His life for us. Lord, we thank You today for all that You have done and praise You for all that You are. Accept our worship in Jesus’ Name, amen.

**Hymn                                     All to Jesus, I surrender**by ***Judson W. Van de Venter***

<https://youtu.be/kNbPpLFRuRw?si=oN5IikZcwNqyybHE>

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

**I surrender all, I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.**

All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken; take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender, make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;  
May Thy Holy Spirit fill me, may I know Thy power divine.

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee;  
Fill me with Thy love and power, let Thy blessing fall on me.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading                     Ephesians 5:21-33**

…submitting to one another out of reverence for 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 Saviour. 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 splendour, 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 profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

**Reflection**

There are certain subjects that many preachers and pastors tend to shy away from these days. Some of these subjects change over the years, whereas others remain just as controversial as they always have been. It is tempting, when reading through the Bible, to skip passages that talk about sex, gender and cultural ‘hot potatoes’. However, as I see things, if God’s Word speaks about an issue, then we should listen to it and obey, regardless of whether we personally like what it says or not. So today we come to look at the final section of Ephesians chapter 5 where Paul begins to lay out the kind of submission that Christians are called to in this world.

Firstly, I think it is important to set this in the context of verse 21, where we are commanded to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” This points us towards a kind of mutual submission between all Christians, putting the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ before our own. In turn, I think this also hints at the fact that we are to submit ourselves to God in Christ first; in other words, we belong to Jesus, and it is to Him we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Nonetheless, we are still living in this world and God has established certain patterns for us to follow. Paul goes on to write about these - the relationships between husband and wife, children and parents, slaves and masters.

Today we are just considering the verses that concern the relationship between husband and wife, although I suspect that is quite enough for me to get myself into hot water with some folk! Let’s begin by looking at what the relationship between a husband and wife points us towards, and that is the relationship between Jesus and the Church. It is not a perfect parallel, but it is nonetheless a good one, that helps us to understand how we are to behave towards God. Christians are to submit to Jesus because “Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour” (v.23). It should be obvious to us that we cannot, and should not, think that we can tell Jesus what to do. He is our Lord and Saviour, and we are to submit ourselves to Him in all things.

Even as we hear this, though, we should hear the other side of this relationship, about which Paul writes in verses 25 and 26, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her”. Submitting to Jesus is made all the easier because we can be confident that He loves us and does what is best for us. Yes, we have our responsibilities to God, but God also has His commitments to us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a two-way relationship that requires both parties, Christ and the Church. Jesus is making us more like Him, so that we can ultimately be presented before the judgment throne as pure and holy, innocent of our sin. If nothing else, then we should take away this wonderful message of encouragement today!

Now we come to the more controversial parts of this passage! Paul writes, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (v.22) Some people would say that this does not apply today because we live in a very different world where this is not how things generally are between husband and wife. I would, however, like to suggest that what Paul wrote here, in its entirety, went against the grain of his own time. He follows this up by writing “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (v.25). In other words, this does not see wives as a possession of their husband, but rather as his most cherished and beloved companion for whom he should be willing to lay down his very life.

Paul sums up the relationship between husband and wife really well at the end of the chapter, where he writes, “let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (v.33). This is what marriage is supposed to be like, where husband and wife become “one flesh” (v.31). It also points us to the wonderful reality that we as Christians become one with Jesus, just as He and the Father are one (see John 17:20-24). What a wonderful, hope-filled image this is – praise God! Amen!

**Prayer**

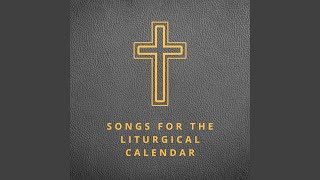
Heavenly Father, we thank You for our homes and families and for the wonderful way that You have designed the different roles of husbands and wives which bring glory to Your Name. We lift up all Christian marriages today and pray that in Your grace, many wives may see the beauty there is in godly submission to their own husbands. Also, we pray that men may reflect the great love for their own wives that Christ has for the Church. As we recognise that the Lord Jesus, out of love for us, gave Himself for us may we be filled with gratitude to You. We pray to for Your Church throughout the world. May we all be one with each other and with You Lord Jesus, just as You and the Father are one. This we ask for Your sake, amen.

**Benediction**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen!

Attachments area

[Preview YouTube video I Surrender All](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNbPpLFRuRw&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

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