

“Enduring Love”

Ephesians 5

13th Sunday af. Pentecost

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Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

August 22, 2021

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father,
and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

[Introduction]

[1] Brain research –

Brain research – such a science, such a study.

[2] Brain research – it demonstrates

what humans have observed for thousands of years:
men and women *THINK* differently.

Generally speaking...

[3] Men primarily process information with the left side of their brain,
giving them an advantage in spatial relationships.

On the other hand...

[4] Women process information with both sides
and are more aware of feelings
and are better at the emotional side of human relationships.

You see...

[5] God prepared the man to protect the home physically

[6] and the woman to protect the home emotionally.

[7] It was there in the garden of Eden that the LORD instituted marriage.

You see, God had created everything

AND Adam was very lonely.

He looked throughout the world.

He even looked among the animals for a mate, but he found none (verse 20).

[8] Then God put Adam to sleep,

took out one of his ribs

and fashioned a woman, Eve (verses 21-22).

When Adam woke up,

[9] God presented Eve to him.

And what was Adam's response?

Was it the calm, cool, and collected,

"Now this is bone of my bones"

that most Bible translations give (verse 23)?

No! No, I am afraid it was not!

You see, the Hebrew word translated as "now" is pa'am.

It's meaning is far more intense than a casual "now."

Pa'am means to "impel" or "move."

And Adam was moved, all right,
at the sight of Eve.

He was a skyrocket in flight —

It was an afternoon delight!

"now" might be better rendered "wow"!

Adam was exuberant.

He thought Eve was all that and a bag of chips.

He thought Eve was all he needed to be happy,
that she was the answer to all of his problems.

You see, God had created everything

He created man,

He creates woman,

And he created marriage.

[*Marriage*]

God has designed marriage, but the reality is, it doesn't always work.

[10] The very first marriage broke down because of human selfishness.

And divorces happen because of human selfishness.

[11] Adam complained to God, "That woman that you gave me."

[12] Eve complained to God, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The very first he said, she said – finger pointing!

[13] So, in our Epistle reading, Paul describes the paradigm for marriage.

He sets us straight!

[14] It is the one God intended and

the one made possible through the Gospel.

[15] MEN

According to God's Word husbands have authority and headship.

The Lord authorizes husbands.

He vests them with headship.

What is the authority and headship?

Is it a manly kind of power to lord it over his wife and family?

Manipulation? Control?

Not hardly! Here's the authority and headship of the husband.

Listen: ***“Husbands,”*** the text says, ***“love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her ... In this same way husbands out to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church ... each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself.”***

Better hear the first part again: “Husbands, love your wives.”

How? Here's how:

“as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

There is your authority, men!

Husbands you are vested with the authority in holy marriage to be a “little Christ” to your wife!

Jesus died for His bride, the church. Husbands, you too are to die!

Die to your sin! Put the old sinful Adam to death! Every day of your life!

This means to stop living for yourselves, men!

Instead of serving yourself,

the Lord has authorized you to serve your wife sacrificially!

To serve — not to be served!

To give your life for her!

To be strong for her.

To listen to her.

To rescue her.

To put aside your needs for the sake of hers.

To set aside your own passions and desires.

To do only good for her.

This is why you work and have a job!

This is why you earn an income!

All you do as husband is to be for her! For her sake!

You are to live for her! That is your authority! That is your headship!

“Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

More than that,

Men, part of your being a “little Christ” to your wives
includes taking care of your wives’ spiritual wellbeing.

Let me be blunt guys!

This means taking your wife to church to hear God’s most holy Word!

You don’t stay at home! You don’t do anything else!

You bring her to church so that the Lord Himself
through His Word can make her holy!

Sanctify her! Wash her! Cleanse her! Spiritually!

That’s done as Jesus speaks His Word of forgiveness to her in the absolution, the sermon and the Lord’s Supper! So that she stands before the Lord radiantly, without stain, wrinkle or blemish!

[16] Now what about the wives?

Ladies you are to be the “little church” in the marriage.

The husband gives his love. You receive his love.

He is the head. You are the body in the marriage.

There are two verbs applied to the wives in the text. “Submit” and “respect.”

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”

“The wife must respect her husband.”

I know.

You all hear the verb “submit” ladies and you’re very uncomfortable.

Are you clenching your teeth and fists?

Are you getting ready to walk out of here and never come back?

After all, you hear the verb “submit”

and you automatically think: “possession,” “slavery,” or “property.”

Not hardly! “Submit” simply means to order your life in a certain way, a certain order! So ladies, when you gave your “Yes” to your man’s proposal for marriage, you willingly decided to order your life in a certain way! What was that? As wife to your husband!

As wife you live like the church!

You do that by receiving all the love your husband gives you.

You do that by denying all your selfish desires by loving and serving your husband as a “little Christ” to him.

Living sacrificially for him just as he does for you.

You “submit” or order your life as wife to your husband “as to the Lord.” “As to the Lord” because the Lord is hidden in your husband’s vocation of living sacrificially for you ladies! Isn’t that amazing?

The other verb was “respect.” “The wife must respect her husband.”

You learn how to respect your husband, ladies, when you cultivate tender thoughts and behavior toward them.

You know, Philippians 4:8 kind of thoughts: *“whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.”*

Think about things like:

his wonderful smile,
his strong shoulders,
his kind gestures

or anything else that is true, noble and admirable about him!

The things that you love about him!

[17] Brothers and sisters, being a husband and wife is hard work.

Probably the hardest tasks in the world!

Especially when God gives children to the marriage!

When you add our sinful natures into the mix,

holy marriage becomes an explosive powder keg!

Husbands and wives will destroy each other!

And tear apart what God has joined together!

[18] That’s why Jesus is who He is!

He is the Mediator between us sinners!

He stands between husbands and wives

with His bloody and wounded crucified Body!

Yes, the very Body and Blood offered on the cross for the salvation of the world!

His Good Friday Blood that purifies you from all sin!

His Good Friday Body that bore all your sin and all its damnation!

“In this is love, not that we loved God

BUT THAT HE LOVED US

AND SEND HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS,”

(1 John 4:10).

You love each other because God loved you to death – the death of His Son Jesus!
Your love for each other is expressed in many ways.

But one of the best way to love
is to say and make very clear to your spouse who sins against you:
“I forgive you. Jesus died for you. Your sin is forgiven.”

For those of you who are sitting smug, confident, or indifferent,
know this applies to you too!
You might not be married, but you can be “little Christs” to each other.
Each of us are to love our neighbor!

[Conclusion]

[19] Brain research can show us why men and women are different.
Psychology can tell us what men and women need.

But the love of Jesus Christ
declared in the Gospel
empowers us to submit in loving service to each other.
to our spouses,
to our neighbors.
That is enduring love. Amen.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
