

Ephesians 5

Sunday 1/1/2006

Spending the last two and a half years, which is how long our church has been in existence here, we have really focused on some great, fundamental, basic concepts that you must have to truly become everything that God wants you to be. We have spent an enormous amount of time, not only on Sunday morning, but we had special things on Thursday night, and one-on-one. I have enjoyed, over the last couple of years, an incredibly good time of laying out the Word of God with you, watching how the Word of God truly changes your life.

As you should be well aware of at this point, we take what we do very seriously because we understand that God has a job for us, not only as individuals, but it is no accident, you have heard me say it many, many times, that God has allowed us to be here together and start this church. In these last days before Jesus comes back, we need to be about our Father's business. God has seen fit, from a pastor's standpoint, to give me the greatest people in the world. I love you all and I appreciate all that you do and the way that you make things happen. You are truly a vital part of all that we do. God keeps bringing in new people who want to find a place that stands for the old values of the Bible, where the Bible is believed, taught, and held up as the inerrant, infallible Word of God with no frills, and where the focus of what is done in that church is Bible-based. That is where we are at.

I. The Defining Year and Systematic Theology

With that in mind, as we move on today, I look at this next year as a very defining year. I have watched many of you come to the place where you are growing. This next year will be a definitive year for our church, not only because of the new people who have come in and are being involved and disciplined and worked with. Whatever level you are spiritually, we have a one-on-one with you that will help you be better at being God's man or God's woman in your life. Many of you are in that, and we have some of you who have been with us from the very beginning and have come along in the first couple of years, and you are growing.

We have been systematically trying to show you how to put the Bible together. Everything we have done up to this point, we have done to that end. A couple of weeks ago, we talked about the aspect of God's systematic theology in the Bible. We talked about how God, through a system of sevens, has given us an incredible way to study the Bible that is God's way of studying it. We started studying the seven mysteries. I showed you how those seven mysteries were told in 1 Corinthians 4:1, that I, as a pastor, am to be a steward of these mysteries.

We talked about how this whole seven series of coming through the Bible—the seven mysteries, the seven judgments in the Bible, the seven baptisms in the Bible—all of these concepts, when they are put together, truly teach you and lay out for you how the Word of God goes together. We have talked about that. We have talked about how our job is to get doctrine in our lives. I do not want a church that is just filled with people who go through the motions. I do not want a church where they do not think for themselves. I want a church of men and women who understand the

Bible, know how to use the Bible, and understand that it is only to our benefit the more spiritually we grow and become more like God wants us to be.

We started our study on the seven mysteries. So far, we have come through two of them. I showed you how the first mystery we looked at was the mystery of God manifested in the flesh—God being manifested in the flesh. We talked about that. Then we talked about last week, the second part, the second mystery, which was Christ in you, the hope of glory. How does a sinless Savior live in someone who is a sinner like you and me? We laid that out. You ought to be able to see now how, as we begin to put them together, you begin to learn more about your own relationship with God, understanding who God is.

II. The Third Mystery: Christ and the Church

Today, I want you to turn to Ephesians chapter 5. We are going to look at the third mystery. I told you that the first three mysteries all kind of go together. Even though they deal with three different aspects of your relationship with Christ, they are very vital as you view them and understand them.

If you have your Bibles this morning, and if you do not have a Bible, if you just kind of raise your hand, Jimmy will get you a copy of the Scriptures, and you can take it home with you. It is yours to keep. Let us read here in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 through 33. Here is what it says:

Ephesians 5:22-33

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, we come to You today not knowing anything. Lord, we do not have any ideas or cute phrases that we want to talk about today. We come as hungry people to the Lord's table. We know that if we come with the right attitude of heart, if we look deep inside ourselves this morning and clean up our lives and ask God to forgive us for any impure thing that would keep us from receiving from Your Spirit today the word of truth and feed our hungry souls, we know if we will do that, Father, that You will lay out for us a banquet today.

Lord, that is how we grow. We grow by eating spiritually every Sunday, every Thursday, and throughout the week as we study the Word of God, either together or by ourselves. We grow and we feed and we feast on the precious Word of God, which in turn makes us strong for our service for You. So I pray, Father, that You will bless this today. May we look deep inside ourselves as we look deep inside this book, and may the Holy Spirit of God touch our hearts today with the realities and the truths that are found herein. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

III. Understanding Our Identity in Christ

This third mystery goes along, as I said, with the first two. All three of these mysteries are dealing with you and I as far as being Christians is concerned. They truly deal with the fact that you and I are children of God, and you and I understanding who we are in Christ. Without a doubt, that is the number one problem with God's people today. God's people do not understand, first of all, who God is. The second thing, they do not understand what God is to them or who they are in Christ. Because of that, the church has literally fallen on its face today.

In a world that is perplexed with problems and heartaches and tragedies, God's people ought to be living above those circumstances. If any place on planet Earth there ought to be a group of men and women that are the light to the rest of the world that has problems, it ought to be the body of Christ, the church. But in essence, the church has as many problems in many cases, if not more, and certainly the same problems that the world does. Why is that? I will tell you why, because there is a breakdown, and the breakdown comes from the fact that God's people today do not understand who they are in Christ. They do not understand their relationship and how it all goes together.

Most of you know Frank Suttle, the pastor down in Joplin, Missouri, where we go for the old camp meeting every year. We have had a relationship with Frank for a number of years. He called me last week and he had a boy that he was talking with about the Bible. He said, "This kid has some questions." He had been listening to some of our material. For the next 45 minutes, I was on the phone with this kid. This kid was whacked out on a lot of things. He was thinking he could lose his salvation. In fact, it has been a long time since I saw anybody that wanted to lose their salvation so badly. This kid was unmovable.

I told him, and in the process of our conversation, it became very clear to me, and I have said it to all of you, that here was a guy who was a saved man. No question about it, this kid was saved. But he did not have a clue how the Bible went together. Trying to explain the Bible to him would have been like trying to explain how airplanes fly to your two-year-old. It was just impossible. There was no way it was going to happen.

I thought to myself, that is exactly the way most of God's people are. Because nobody is teaching them the Bible today, because nobody is taking the time to invest in their life to really help them understand the Scriptures, they are pretty much left to themselves. They get all kinds of whacked out ideas, and they go through their life, and they never figure out or find out what kind of relationship they need to have with God, that they are sure of the true principles of the Word of God.

When I talk about the Bible being the Word of God, I am not talking about some mystical, magical manuscript someplace that nobody has ever read. When I tell you this Bible will work for you, I am talking about that this is God's book. Every chapter, every verse, every word in it, every paragraph mark, every exclamation point, every question mark, it means something. It has a reason and a purpose to it. It is filled with principles and precepts that when you learn them and you put them into your life, it builds Bible doctrine in your life. When you learn Bible doctrine, you know what your relationship with Christ should be, and you understand what His relationship should be with you. That is what is missing today.

This mystery looks really confusing, and it looks bizarre. I do not think in all of my years, and I am 55 years old, I do not think in all of my years, other than two men in my life, I have ever heard anybody explain this mystery. I do not think I have ever heard anybody other than these two guys even attempt to. That is what you get a lot of today. You get a lot of froth, you get a lot of surface stuff, but nobody is really willing to sit down and tackle the Bible and lay it out for you so you come away understanding.

Every time you leave my church, every time you leave our Bible studies, every time you meet one-on-one with me, I want you to bring with you two five-gallon buckets, and I will do my best to fill them up so when you leave, you have a full cup, because that is what the church is supposed to do. This mystery, along with the other two, shows you some incredible doctrines about you, your relationship with Christ, and how you are to fulfill that with the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. The Mystery of the Church as the Bride

Here is the mystery, and this is bizarre. How many men here love the Lord Jesus Christ? That is about 30, 40 men. Here is the mystery. Here is the problem. You are a man, He is a man. How in the world can you as a man be in love with another man? Do you see that problem? The problem is how do you and I as a man become one flesh with another man, and we are in love with this man, and we are going to marry this man, and then we are going to spend eternity with this man? That is a mystery. Within that mystery lies the key.

Not only am I in love with this Guy, but I am going to marry this Guy, and then we are going to have a marriage supper of the Lamb, and we are going to spend all eternity together. I am telling you, this mystery deals with the mystery of the church, the body of Christ, and here it is: How do I as a man become a female to be married to a man, while still staying a man? That is a mystery. I am a man, but the Bible says I am the bride of Christ. Now I am female, and as a female bride of Christ, I am going to be married to Christ someday, but trust me, I am still a man.

Someone says, "What is the answer to that?" The answer is down there in verse 32: "This is a great mystery." It is a mystery. I have told you before, in laying these mysteries out, there are two identities in the Bible. I have told you this many, many times, and we are going to break this mystery down this morning so you understand it. When you leave here today, you are going to understand how that mystery plays out in your life. That is my job. My job is to erase the confusion in your life, not because I am smart, but because God has given us the book that is absolutely true. When we just hang on to the book, you get the right answers.

I have told you this over and over again, and I am going to say it over and over again, that there are two identities in the Bible. The Bible, and all history, and everything in history, is built around those two identities. In the Old Testament, it is the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, it is the body of Christ, or the church. In the Old Testament, you find primarily the person of God. In the New Testament, you find primarily the person of Christ, the Son of God.

V. God's Fellowship with Israel

I do not know if you know it or not, but one of the driving forces in the Bible about God is the concept of fellowship. We talked on this last night for a little bit. I told you how God's desire, all the way back, the reason why God did everything the way He did, is because God has two desires in His heart. One is to be worshipped, because He is God and there is no other God besides Him. The second aspect is God desires fellowship. God wants to fellowship. So you are going to find in the Bible that the whole Bible has been around two identities, the nation of Israel and the body of Christ, and two different concepts of fellowship.

Stay with me. I am going to break a lot of complex things down for you. In the Old Testament, God let everything happen the way that it happened. When it happened the way that it happened, God said, "You know what, I am going to call Me out a nation, and that nation is going to be My nation." He calls out a man from Ur of the Chaldees back there in Genesis, whose name was Abraham. God says from Abraham, "I am going to bring a seed and a nation." In fact, He takes Abraham out one night and shows him the stars of heaven. He says to Abraham, "Abraham, someday your seed is going to be like those stars of heaven." The stars of heaven that He was talking about was the nation of Israel. When other places say your seed is going to be like the sand of the seashore, He is talking about the nation of Israel.

In the Old Testament, God called out the first identity, the nation of Israel. He said about that nation, "They are Mine. They are different than any other nation on the face of this planet. I have called them out, I have chosen them, and they are Mine. They are nobody else's. I am going to be their God, and they are going to be My people." God desires worship, so He set up a system by

which they would worship Him. Then God desires fellowship, so God enacted a plan that God could fellowship with them. God fellowships with a nation. That nation is totally different than any other nation on the face of this planet. God gave promise to them historically, monetarily, and blessing to them that He gave no other nation on planet Earth.

You want discrimination? The buzzword today in our society is racism. You want racism? You want discrimination? Just look at the nation of Israel. God discriminated against every other nation on planet Earth and said, "Out of all the nations, this one is Mine. I am going to be their God." Then He had the audacity to say, "All the other nations, if you want to get anything from Me, you have to get it from them." That is why the world hates the Jew today. That is why the world hates the Jew. God gave them an ability to survive when nobody else could survive. That is why the Gentile nations, they see that. They see that peculiarity of Israel. They see their ability to survive.

They are the only ancient nation in the world today. The Babylonians are dust under your feet. The Egyptians, you cannot find them anywhere. You think the Egyptians over there now are the Egyptians of the Bible? I do not think so. The Phoenicians? Where are they at? The Hittites? They are gone. There is only one nation today that has survived the coils of history: the nation of Israel. There is only one ancient language today: it is Hebrew. Nobody speaks Babylonian. Nobody speaks Hittite. Nobody speaks the Egyptian of the Bible. Even the Greek in Greek today is not the Greek that the Bible was written in. There is only one language that has survived today, and that is Hebrew, because those people are special.

We as Gentiles see that. We do not understand it, so we do not like it, so we are against the Jews. Jews had an ability in 1920 through the 30s when a depression hit in Europe. Everybody in Europe was starving to death. When it took in Germany 50 million Reichmarks to buy a loaf of bread, the Jews were buying up property. They had enough gold to put in their teeth, and they had money everywhere. The Europeans saw that, and they hated it. They have always hated that Jew. Why? Because that Jew was given by God the ability to survive when nobody else can. Then God had the audacity on top of that to say about that Jew to all of us, "You bless them, I will bless you. You curse them, I will curse you." If that is not discrimination and racism, I do not know what it is, but I like it because it is in the Bible.

The standard joke is this: Mahalia Jackson got up and sang "Amazing Grace," and 50,000 Catholics became Protestants. Bing Crosby got up and sang "Ave Maria," 50,000 Catholics now became Protestants. Eddie Fisher got up and sang "There's a Gold Mine in the Sky," 50,000 Jews joined the Air Force. That was not that funny, but it was when I heard it. I guess you had to be there. But that is my point. The point is, there is something about them. They will make money when nobody else does. I remember when the Jaws movie came out. Remember that movie? How terrifying it was? Well, it was a sequel to Jews. It was about loan sharks. That worked a little better.

There are many ways to study God's fellowship with the nation of Israel in your Bible. Every one of them is important. Every one of them will give you a different understanding of what the Bible is and the subjects of the Bible. God did it this way: He broke them down into composites.

That is the way I teach you the Bible. I follow the same line that God does in His Bible. God breaks things down. If you want to study the nation of Israel, God will give you seven or eight ways to study the nation of Israel. One of the ways, if you want to, and their own natural way, something that any common man could get. It is when you get educated beyond your intelligence that you have problems.

God says, "You want to understand the nation of Israel?" Deuteronomy chapter 32: Israel, My relationship with God, Israel is like a mother eagle fluttering over her young chicks. That may not sound like a profound doctrinal teaching in the Word of God. You could run that a lot of places and get a lot of information. In Exodus chapter 4, God says Israel is called God's son. So you can study it that way. You will find throughout the Old Testament that the nation of Israel is likened to a literal, visible nation called out through Abraham. You can study it that way. You will find when you get into the tribulation period, the nation of Israel is likened to virgins, plural, ten of them in Matthew chapter 25. Five are wise, five are foolish. That is Israel in another aspect.

Then you are going to find another way to study it, and you are going to find the nation of Israel is likened in the Old Testament to God's wife. Now here is how it works. You are going to find in Deuteronomy 24:1, 24:3, Isaiah 51, and especially the book of Hosea. In the book of Hosea, you are going to find detailed and laid out for you Israel as a picture of the wife of God.

Here is what happened. Here is the story. Here is the long and short of it. God chose Israel just like you choose a wife. He took Israel and He called Israel out and He nourished her and He cherished her. He was everything to her that God needed to be to His wife. Then she went after other gods. She left God and went after other gods. God tried to deal with her on the Sabbath, and she refused His hand of chastisement. So finally, the Bible says in the book of Hosea that God gave her, under the Old Testament law, a bill of divorcement. In 606 BC, which is commonly in the theological world called the times of the Gentiles, a time when God ceased to deal with the nation of Israel and turned His attempt at the nation of Israel temporarily, God left the nation of Israel and said, "You know what, you have got some hard lessons to learn and I am going to let you learn them."

Now God is going to wait Israel out, and in the process of time, He is going to restore the nation of Israel back to Him as His wife. Then you know what is going to happen? Throughout the rest of eternity, they are going to have fellowship together. I just gave you a major piece of your Bible puzzle. I just in five or six minutes laid out for you a major component that covers over half of your Bible. In its simplest form, that is what you have. Only two identities. God has His wife, the nation of Israel, you know about that now.

VI. God's Fellowship with the Church

Then we come to the New Testament. I already told you in the New Testament, God manifests Himself. We have already studied in the first two mysteries. He manifests Himself as the Son of God. Jesus Christ was as much of God as God ever was. God was manifested in the flesh, and God came down and took on the body of a man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the

visible appearance of an invisible God. When He showed up on planet Earth, God said, "I have got My wife. I need to get a bride for My Son because in eternity, I am going to have the nation of Israel that God the Father is going to fellowship with. I need to have somebody for My Son to fellowship with," and He chose a bride.

If you are here this morning and you are a saved man or a saved woman, male or female, the moment you got saved, you became part of Christ's body. This is why Ephesians chapter 5 talks about that a man leaves his father and mother and the two become one flesh. You become one with Christ. When you become one with Christ, you now have a relationship with Christ as the bride. You are going to find that this is called the mystery of the church, never revealed in the Old Testament because God is focusing on Israel. But when the New Testament comes, He needs to have a bride for His Son because in eternity, His Son wants to fellowship with somebody that is part of His body. That truly is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. This bride is called a chaste virgin in 2 Corinthians 11:2 that is espoused to one husband, that husband is Christ.

Just like there are many ways to study the nation of Israel, compositely, to get the overall complete picture, the church is the same way.

- If you want to find out about your relationship with Jesus Christ, then you study your relationship as His son.
- If you want to understand the concept of worship in your life, then you study the concept as you, as the church, as the temple of God.
- If you want to understand your work as a Christian, then what you are supposed to do for God, then you study the Christian as the priest of God, and the eternal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek found in the book of Hebrews.
- If you want to understand the concept of the church, not old paths, the real church, the church that you were born into the day you got saved that made you part of Christ's body, then you study the concept of Christ's body.
- If you want to understand how to stay pure in your Christian life and not be defiled with the world, then you study the church, Christians, from the aspect of being a virgin, singular. It is just that simple.

If you want to study your intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is a buzzword today. In His being, intimacy has nothing to do with relationship. Intimacy has to do with that bottom line that you and Christ in your relationship with Him are so intimate that everything in your life is His, and everything in His life is yours. If you want to study the aspect of intimacy, if you want to study and you want to learn about how to have the most intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that you can have, you do not study it as a son. You do not study it as the priesthood. You do not study it as a temple. You study that as the bride of Christ. Do you see how it works? That is how it works.

VII. The Mystery of One Flesh

Here is the key, and here is where the real mystery is. Look back into Ephesians 5:31. Here it comes:

Ephesians 5:31

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Now, there is the mystery. That is a tough one. I am going to do my best to lay it out for you, but I am going to tell you going in, it is tough. It is probably the toughest of all of them, but if you get it and you understand it, there lies your intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mystery number one, we talked about God being manifested in the flesh, the incarnate Christ. Mystery number two was Christ in you, the hope of glory. How does a sinless Savior live in somebody that is a sinner like you and me? Those were easy. You never hear them preached today, but they are easy. When you lay them out and you understand them, it forms the basic foundation of biblical doctrine in your life. But the third one, the third one is how do you and I, male and female, at the time of salvation, become one flesh with the Lord Jesus Christ? Yet He likens it in the aspect, Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 through 33 is the great marriage chapter. Whenever you marry somebody, they always throw in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 and 33. That chapter is for time and eternity, but I have never heard it explained in the biblical side spiritually as it applies to you and to me. Only two men in my life.

Now, how does this happen? That is a hard concept. Let me ask you a question. If you are married today and you are sitting with your wife, the Bible says you are one flesh. If you get up and go to the nursery or go get a drink of water or go someplace else, he is still sitting here. You are one flesh, but when you leave, are you not one flesh anymore? If you think being one flesh would be like Siamese twins. I bet they have a tough time of it. One wants to go here, you want to go here. What do you do? Could you imagine an argument between two Siamese twins? How do you win? Who goes where? You spend all your life just in one position. Married couples do that in the same way. But anyway, that is another story.

When you look at this thing, there is the mystery. How can you and your husband be one flesh, but you can get up and leave or he can and you still sit here? The Bible says, "I am already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." How in the world can I be seated in heavenly places up there? He was not just talking frivolously. It was not a thing where he was just curving over the fact that "I am going to say something really spiritual here." In Christ Jesus, you are all... No, if you would walk into heaven today, you would look over in the grandstands, if there are grandstands in heaven, and you would see Bob Alexander sitting there. You would also see everybody else in this room sitting there that is saved. You would see everybody who has ever been saved sitting in that grandstand. Yet some of those people, all of you, are still alive. You are in here. How can you be here and how can you be there and still be one flesh? It is a mystery.

The answer to it is that it is a spiritual thing, not physical. Here is where you begin to understand it. I have given you before the great passage in Romans chapter 1, verses 19 and 20, which says:

Romans 1:19-20

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

I have already told you how the things that God made represent in some fashion the things that we cannot see and understand. When you understand the things that He made, then you understand the spiritual truth that you cannot see. It is the physical things that God made that help reveal to you what God is doing in a spiritual sense. The same way with this.

There are a number of reasons why God gave marriage to men and women. We are not going to get into those today. There is no point in it. But let me just say this: We know that marriage was by God's design. Marriage was not something that people came up with in civilized society. Marriage is a concept based on God wanting to, His Son wanting to have fellowship with you and me. So the key to this one-flesh spiritual thing is found in the physical side or the physical concept of marriage. This is where the two go hand in hand. Marriage on Earth between men and women, saved men and women, 1 Corinthians chapter 7, was given by God to show us something we have coming in eternity with Christ. So God allowed us to experience the joy of marriage, which is physical, but it is also a type of what we should have with Christ spiritually. The way that you know how to have the right relationship with Christ spiritually is based on the physical right relationship you have physically. It is just that simple.

We will have an eternity in a spiritual sense what I have, what we have in some kind of physical sense. Christians today have no clue of this. They have no clue that there is a direct relationship between their relationship with Christ and the relationship with their husband and wife. They just do not have a clue today.

Now I do not grasp all of this myself, and I will be the first one to tell you this, because the depth of this is way beyond most mortal mindsets. But I will tell you this: If I understand the Bible the way I think I do, then everything down here that is physical in my life as a Christian is some representation or some type or some picture of something that is up there that is spiritual. Even though in this world it may be flawed because we live in a world of sin, to some degree it is flawed. But when you look at it and understand it through the light of the principles of the Word of God, you see it in its perfect way that God wants it to be illustrated.

I am telling you, trying to have a relationship with God, trying to have a relationship with God and build a relationship with God, without understanding how it fits into your life, it is impossible to try to make the thing work. Right now, in an earthly sense, if you are saved, God has something that He wants you and me to do individually. In some of your cases, He gave you a help meet. You are told in the Bible that that help meet is a weaker vessel. But that help meet, even though it may be a weaker vessel, it is only weaker because of the design that God has for that part of the union versus the male counterpart of the union. Weaker does not mean inferior. In many cases, it means superior, because without women, where would we all be? You cannot get

life without a woman. That was called Eve because she was the mother of all living. That is how God's program takes care of itself.

Yet in a spiritual sense, my mission, my relationship with God now that I am saved, here it comes: I am the bride. I am the weaker vessel. God is my espoused husband. He is my strength. He is my sustainer, and my success is now based on my working relationship with Him physically and spiritually. Physically, your wife is your help meet.

Now I understand within all of this the ramifications of the single factor because some of you here today are single. Some of you here today were married and either got divorced or were just never married. I am taking in all the equations today. I am not focusing on one concept. You are going to see how this thing lays itself out down here, and you are going to see that if you are ever going to build a relationship with God, no, take that away. If you are ever going to do anything for God, you are going to have to understand and implement this mystery or you are not going anywhere. It is as simple as that.

When you understand it, you realize that your wife is your help meet. She is the weaker vessel. When you realize in the spiritual that you and I are Christ's help meet, and you and I, male or female, are the weaker vessel, the two are connected together spiritually. Marriage is the key to understanding the complete concept of ministry. God gave Adam a help meet, and it was not a helpmate. That is what animals have. It was a help meet, M.E.E.T. Do you know why? She was to help meet Adam's needs to fulfill the plan that God had for Adam. I as a man, you as a man and a woman if you are saved, we are Christ's help meet. That is why God gave the concept of marriage, that you and I might understand the spiritual concept of you and I being God's help meet to accomplish what Christ wants as the weaker vessel.

I am telling you, the beauty of this mystery is the key to any successful marriage, and it is also the key to any successful completion of the mission and the plan that God has for you. Marriage is three things, and I am not going to get into them today. We will get into them when we get into it down the line. Marriage is three things. Only three things.

1. Marriage has a physical part.
2. An emotional part.
3. And a spiritual part.

Your relationship with Jesus Christ, whether you are male or female, is three things. The same three things. You have physical needs, you have emotional needs, and you have spiritual needs. The success of you being the right kind of Christian and doing what God wants you to do is you getting those three needs met in your life by your espoused husband, you being the weaker vessel. The success of your marriage in a husband-to-wife relationship is your husband, as a type of Christ, fulfilling those same three things in his wife's life. It is as simple as that.

A husband will never give his wife what the Bible calls in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, "due benevolence." What a word that is. Due benevolence will talk about all those three things and more. He will never give his wife due benevolence until he first understands and realizes and knows how to have the right relationship with God. A woman will never understand how to love

her husband and give to him the due benevolence until she knows the right way to love God. As you both grow, you both not only understand your own role, the woman as the wife, the husband as his relationship, but here is the beauty of it: You also understand and lay out each other's role because you understand it, because you have those same roles in your own individual relationship with Christ.

Every woman here today ought to know what kind of husband she ought to have because she has it in Christ if she is doing what is right. Every husband here today ought to know what kind of wife he should have because he has already got the model by what he ought to be to Christ. It is so simple, and I am going to tell you, in the New Testament church, there is no excuse for divorce. There is not any. Now somebody says, "Are there reasons?" You bet there are. Do you know what the only reason for divorce is in a New Testament church? One or the other will not do what is right. That is the only excuse. You give me two people, I do not care how bad their marriage is. You give me a man who will start to do what Christ says he is supposed to do, and I will show you how I can fix the marriage. You give me somebody that will not. Marriage is over, and do not blame the woman for it. But that is what we have got today in our churches.

VIII. The Husband's Responsibility and the Church's Protection

Let me tell you something. Do you know what this church does outside teaching the Bible? This church is every woman and every man's protection. When you bring yourself under the authority of this church, this church has an obligation from the Word of God to protect you. Your husband beats you. You say, "Well, I called the sheriff, I called this, I called that, put a restraining order on him, I put him in jail, and he still..." You know what? If that happens and you cannot, you have an authority within this church that the whole church would stand behind that woman and say, "You know what? She is doing what is right. She is trying to be the right thing. This guy is out of line." But today, no, no, no. We do not want to get that detailed in people's lives. We want to make one blanket thing that if you do not do what is right, we just throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Let me tell you something, I am going to get real graphic here now, so just bear with me. You say, "I do not like the way you talk." You are going to like it less before I get through, but this is the way that it is. Now guys, I am a guy. I am a husband. I want to talk to you for a moment. You better listen to me because the success of where you go in that relationship with God is not based on how well you know the Bible. It is not based on how good you deal with people. You might be able to sit out and win somebody to the Lord in 30 seconds. It is not based on that. Your success as a man, as a Christian man, is going to be based on your leading your wife the way Christ leads you. It is as simple as that. And wives, your success is going to be based on following that leadership.

I am going to be very honest with you. I can say this, you see, if I would say this the other way, I would be labeled as a woman hater or whatever it may be. I am going to tell you right up front. I know that in life, and I have been around the block a couple of times, I got hit with a truck once,

but I am going to tell you this, there are not too many bad women in life. There are some bad women in life. There are some women in life that you meet, you better stay away from them. There are some really bad women in life, but even the bad women were made that way by bad men. I am just telling you the truth.

When that Bible says in Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," that says it all. There is nothing else to say. If you understand your relationship with Christ and all of the good things that Christ has given to you, the time that He should have whacked you, but He did not, how dare you treat your wife any way other than that? Then when she does not respond the right way, or you kill whatever she had inside of you, why in the world, you know what the Bible says? The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." Do you know why? Because you have no right to be bitter. She turned out exactly the way you trained her to be.

Do you know why God gave you and me children? Do you know how God wants your children to find God? He wants your children to find God in a godly husband and wife relationship, that a little kid growing up who does not understand the concept of God, who has no idea of the spiritual things that go on in there, who looks at the Bible and sees maps in the back and says, "Oh, directions." He cannot concept God. Those little girls down there, those little kids down there that are yours, they cannot have a concept of God outside of seeing God in mom and dad. When they see God in mom and dad, mom and dad are the only view they have of God. When they grow up in time, if you are paying attention, you transfer that love and that devotion from you and mom and dad to God Himself. When a kid grows up without that concept, you have problems.

I am telling you, husbands, the responsibility is on your shoulders. It also says in verse 22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." I am not going to read that. But I am going to tell you right up front, that may be true, but the bottom line is, pal, it is on you. It is on you. You were to give unto her due benevolence. She finds God in her satisfaction with God through your life and the strength she draws from you. That is why the Bible says in 1 Peter that husbands dwell with your wife with knowledge. You are supposed to know this. You say, "Well, nobody ever taught me." If you have the right kind of relationship with God, nobody needs to teach you. It is real simple. Do the good things for her God has done for you. Has God ever belittled you? Do not belittle her. Has God ever whacked you? No. Do not whack her. Has God ever verbally abused you and threatened you? No. And do not do that to her. Simple.

Nothing shows the lack of spiritual maturity in a man's life more than how he treats his wife. Nothing. You see, I know how it is today. Most churches look at what you can do for them. I could care less what you can do. I do not care about your abilities. I do not care how well you manage. I do not care how well you preach. I do not care how well you sing. I do not care how well you do anything. I am going to look where it really matters: two areas, your wife and your kids. Because everything else is just a game show, pony dog show. I do not have time for it. I am 55 years old, ladies and gentlemen. I do not have a lot of time left in life. Not only is the Lord coming, but the older you get, the more you realize some things about life. The time you do have

left becomes very precious. You know, you are getting old and it is bad when every morning, the first thing you do is look in the obituary to see if your picture is in there or who you know.

But I am telling you, there is no time left to waste. I am not interested because I know it will not work. Somebody said, "Would you buy a car without an engine?" No. "Why not?" Because it will not work. "But look how nice it is. It is in great shape." It will not work. "But it is a great deal." I do not care about the dollar. It will not work. I do not care how it looks. I care how shiny it is. If those two areas are not, and that is why I have spent the last year, and I will tell you something. When we get into marriage, building a biblical marriage, it is not going to be marriage enrichment. It is hard to enrich a corpse. All you do is enhance the stink. No, it is going to scrape out the foundation and go back to the foundation and let you understand biblically why, how, and brother, I will tell you what, I am going to retain a lawyer on call because going to this class, it needs to have a warning label on it. It will cause you more problems than it will help you if you are not willing to do what it says because it is going to expose men and women to the game we like to play. I do not know what else to tell you. I told you next year is going to be a defining year.

Now you may be here today and you may be a husband. You may not like what I just said. Well, let me tell you something. I have got to be honest with you. I am a husband and I am a man. I do not like it either. You think I like the concept? I do not. But so what? That is the way it is. I have found 35 years of my dealing with people, and brother, I have been in every situation that there is. You know my policy. I do not care where you have been. I do not care what you have done. I do not care what disasters you have had in your life. I could care less about that. Anytime you want to line up with everybody in this church and list disasters, you will probably come out seeing yours were not too bad. I do not care where you have been. I do not care what you have done. I only care what you want to do right now.

Some of you have gotten a false rap. Some of you got shunned out when you had problems in your life and you had problems in your marriage. You got hung out to some third stringer someplace instead of the one guy that ought to be able to do something in your life when your marriage, and because it did not work, you got blamed for it. Come on over. Come right here. Sit next to Pam. I may know not a lot of things, but do not pretend you are going to teach me anything about this book. I have spent 30 years in it. I have been through it 75 times or more. I may know not a lot of it. My car may break alongside a road and I have to sell it. My lawnmower stops in the yard and that is where it stands. I do not know how to fix a light. I do not know how to fix a fan. I do not know how to fix a car. I do not know how to do anything, but I know one thing in life, and you are not going to fool me on this, and I am telling you, this church needs to be the protector of the weaker vessels, and that is why as men and women, that is my job. I protect you.

Some of you men come in with problems in your life. My job, because you are the weaker vessel, is this church protects you. Women in this church who have dingbat husbands, not that we have any, but in this church we have dingbat husbands, who abuse you and mistreat you. I am telling you, you have the protection of this church as long as you are going to do what is right. I

do not know what else to tell you. That is the job of the church. What church would kick out the person that wants to do what is right and keep the idiot? An idiot church.

For 30 years, I know men. Do you know how I know men so well? Because I am a man. I know men. Men, when it comes to their relationship with their wives, fall into two categories. I have got to leave these on because I find print here. Two categories:

4. They are either selfish, proud, self-centered, egotistical. They are either come to the place where they are non-caring and it is all about them until they want something. I will tell you, guys, if you think a woman does not see through that in 15 seconds, you are nuts. You are not deceiving anybody but yourself. I have seen guys that were all about them. They are going to have everything. They are going to do everything. But if the wife wants to do something, "Oh no, no," because it is all about me. That dog will not hunt. I have seen them and I have seen marriages destroyed because the man will not be Christ to his wife.
5. Then you have the other side. I call them the little boys with their toys. They are 20, 30, 40, 50, but they have never grown up. Life is a big game. They have gotten married. Sometimes they even have kids. But they are not going to accept responsibility for that. No, no, no. When it is playtime, it is playtime. "Sorry about your needs. Sorry about you have a child. Sorry about you have to work and you have a child and leave the house. Do not you understand? I have worked all day too. And I need my playtime." That dog will not hunt either.

I can say those things because I am a man. Ladies, if I had to get up here and I said the problem with the ladies, you would all be mad at me. I see it right now. I am going to get a hundred thank you cards this week. Now, guys, and you know what? Right now, I am going to be with you. Some of you do not like what I just said. But I do not know what else to tell you.

Let me give you a little insight. Learn this. If you go out of here with anything else, learn this, learn what I am about to say. You can scrap everything else I said, though it was good. You can forget it. Get this. I will give you a little insight in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Gospels. I am going to tell you something. You read those four accounts. You will never find one woman that ever rejected Christ, not one. There is not one woman in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that ever rejected Christ when He showed up.

Do you want to know why? Do you want to know why that every woman in the New Testament accepted Him when the men did not? Do you want a little Dr. Phil's class on how a woman thinks? I will tell you why it is. It goes right along with Ephesians: the physical and the spiritual. Christ represented everything that a woman is looking for in a man. Everything that a woman dreams about. All the way back to Genesis, when Adam came home and he walked in the house and Eve had already got in sin with the devil. He took the forbidden fruit and Adam came down the road coming from where he was coming from and he is whistling, you know, it is a nice day in Georgia or whatever, and he is looking at all the animals and he is looking around and he is saying, "Wow, things are a little different than when I left this morning. Huh, wonder what is going on."

He walked into that house. "Hi, honey, I am home. Hey, honey. Eve." She comes around the corner. He says, "Whoa, what happened to you? I left this morning with Snow White. The seven dwarfs been here?" That is a private joke found in the Bible. You have to get it out on your own. "What happened to you, honey? You look sick. You are not white anymore. You are kind of that. Did you? What is going on?" She said, "Well, the devil deceived me." He said, "You ate of that tree?" She said, "Yes, I did, honey." "You ate of the... How come?" She said, "Well, he deceived me. He is so subtle, and he deceives everybody, and he came in here and he talked about, and I do not know what to tell you, Adam, the moment he said, 'If I took this, I can know everything.' I just took it." That is a woman for you. Just kidding.

Now, Adam had a choice. The choice that Adam makes sets what a woman looks for in a man for the next 6,000 years. Adam is standing there. He has got God and God's Word over here. It says, "Do not eat the tree." He has got a wife that just ate the tree. Do you know what he did? He looked at Him, looked at her, looked at Him, looked at her, looked at Him. You see, she got the seed. Adam made a full, conscious, willing choice. He said, "You know what, Eve? I am going with you." He took the fruit, and he was already dead when Adam got home. The moment he took that fruit, the Bible says, "In a day you eat thereof, you shall surely die." Adam died. From that time, the moral, the thing that a woman wants to know in a man is, "Do you love me enough to die for me?" That is where it starts.

I love Christ with all of my heart, with all of my mind, and all of my soul, because He loved me enough to die for me. That is why. Do you know why every woman in the New Testament never rejected Christ? I will tell you why. Because He represented everything a woman looks for. Strong in character, strong spiritually, cared about the little things in her life. Read sometime the woman at the well. Read how the Lord sits down and reasons where she is at even when she does not know where she is at. He was so kind and patient and spent the quality time with that woman that when she is trying to say what she wants to say and does not even know how to say it, He helps her say it. That is what she is looking for. Because sometimes they have a tough day and what they feel.

You see, women and men are two cultures. I learned this at a football game one time. Raytown South. I live right up around the corner of Raytown South. That was an afternoon, in the fall. It was a nice day and I could hear them playing up there. So I went up there, and I just thought they had nothing to do, a little break, and I went up and sat down, and they were playing football. The kid that was a quarterback, he was a good kid, good quarterback. I do not know a lot about quarterbacks, but he looked pretty good throwing the ball. Better than I can do. His mom and dad were sitting, I knew it was his mom and dad because they had his jersey on with his number on it. That was my first clue. Second clue was they were screaming and yelling every time he did something great.

I am sitting there, and I learn something wherever I go. I do not care where I go, I will learn something that God wants me to see. God taught me a great lesson that day. I am sitting down there and I am watching this kid and he is really good. Here comes the play. They snap the ball. He runs out, the fake this way, and the play must break up or something. I do not know, but he knows he has got no choice. So he runs to the other side. He is coming toward our side right

now. I will tell you what, this kid is running to try to get the first down, and three big tacklers just come up and just sandwiched him. Helmet popped off, clobbered him. I was sitting 50 yards away and I could hear like, I love that on TV too. I love those mics down. I do not know if they wear them in their helmets or they wear them in their shorts. I like when you hear they hit. God, I hope that there are no mics and that is really that loud. That hurt.

Anyway, this kid runs left and they blamed him. Now here are his mom and dad sitting in front of me. His dad stands up and says, "Where did he go, son?" His mother stood up and said, "Oh, my son." I said, "There it is." There is the difference between how a man sees it and a woman sees it. A woman is a different culture. A man is a different culture. Do you know what our problem is, men? Do you know why we never get the relationship with God that we need to? Because God is a different culture than we are. If you are not willing to transcend from your culture into God's culture and become like Christ, you will never have a relationship with Him. If you are not willing to transcend your male culture into the wife's culture and the wife back to the male, you will never have a relationship together in marriage. It will not work. The two are connected, one flesh. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning your idiot husband." Oh, I mean, I speak concerning the church. Excuse me.

I am going to tell you, Christ was a strong character. He was strong spiritually. He cared about the little things. He took the time to get into her world. Someone that was their best friend, someone that never ridiculed or abused them, but always accepting them where they were. Someone that was honest, someone that was trustworthy, someone that was upright, someone that was pure, someone that met the emotions and the physical and the spiritual need, someone that was mature, someone that was a leader, someone that was the guardian of her soul.

Now, guys, you give your wife those nine or ten things. Your problems are over. Your problems will be over. I dare to say, you give her those nine things, you can do whatever you want to do. But you see, you are either so proud, it is all about you, or you are such a baby that you cannot grow up to do what you do. So that is where they fall. That is where it breaks down.

IX. The Personal Relationship with Christ

There is only one thing I want from Christ. There is only one thing I want from Christ. I want to know that I am the only thing in His mind. I love you. I do not care about you. When it comes to my relationship with Christ, you have yours, I have mine. I will spend every day, all day long, you can come to my house and I will help you put the Bible together. But the truth of the matter is, He did not even write it to you. He wrote it to me. When He was dying on the cross, He was saying my name on His lips, not yours, Phil. Forget you. He was not even thinking about you. Jan, you were the last person He was thinking of on the cross. Do you know why? Because He is thinking of me. Yes, He was. He was not. He was not thinking about you. He was not thinking about you. Oh, yeah. He was thinking about me. Do you know how I know He was not thinking about you? I know. Do you know how I know? Because He was thinking about me. Do you know how I know He is thinking about me? Because He wrote me a book. He did not write you one. No, yeah. She has got your name on it because you put it in.

Do you see the game we are playing here? That is what I call a personal relationship. That is a personal relationship. I know He wrote the Bible to you, but when it comes to me and Him, forget you. I know He died for all of you, but when it comes to my personal relationship, He did not die for you. He died for me. I cannot claim it for you. I can only claim it for me. You have to claim it for yourself. But that is what a personal relationship is. A personal relationship is God has a personal relationship with you. He died for you. He wrote you the Bible. He gave you every day. It is Him. All I want in life, all I want in life is to know that I am the number one thing in God's heart and God's mind. When I have that and I am secure in that, I can face anything for Christ.

Guys, do you know what your wife wants? She wants to know that you are the only thing in her life. When she is secure of that, she can get through anything in life. Do you know why? "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church," because your earthly relationship, husband and wife, is only a picture of the spiritual one. The spiritual one? You do not have the earthly one. You do not have the earthly one right if you are not willing to take the time to do what you have to do to be Christ to your wife.

Let me tell you something, guys, and I am just going to say it. You can get mad all you want. I do not care. I am past the point of caring at this point. We already took the offering. You want to leave? Go ahead. No, I am not going to say it. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, I am not going to. Okay, no, I am not. Let me tell you something. That is why as the weaker vessel in our relationship as the church, the bride of Christ, I love Him and I want to be with Him more than any other.

X. The Intimacy of Christ and the Church in Song of Solomon

I want to end with this and then I am done. Good shape here. The book of Song of Solomon. I do not know what you know about the book of Song of Solomon. Remember last night I showed you how Job 40 and 41 were the greatest chapters in the Old Testament on the devil? Then I told you that Revelation 12 and 13 were the greatest chapters in the New Testament on the devil. Most of the major subjects in the Bible have counterpart books. In other words, if there is one in the New Testament, there will also be one in the Old Testament that balances it out. The mystery of this church, the mystery of you and I becoming one flesh with Christ and how it connects to the marriage relationship is laid out in the book of Ephesians.

If you want the counterpart of that, and remember I told you, I told you that if you want to understand the key component to your relationship with Christ, it is your intimacy. It is your intimacy. Now we think intimacy is sex today. Intimacy has nothing to do with sex. Intimacy is what you have with Christ and what you ought to have as a husband with your wife that has nothing to do with sex.

In the book of Song of Solomon chapter 5, Song of Solomon is the counterpart. Do you know what you have in Song of Solomon? If you want a book that defines the intimacy, it is Song of Solomon. If you want a book that tells you how you ought to view Christ and why, and when we

come through our marriage stuff, we are going to break it down. It is the book of Song of Solomon. In that book, it is the book that tells me as the body of Christ, the weaker vessel, how God looks at me. Because that is a big problem. We talked about that when we started our message today. You do not know, we do not know how God looks at us. The Song of Solomon lays out in the most intimate way when God looks at me. You talk about a personal relationship, it is Song of Solomon.

You want to know how God looks at you. You want to know what God thinks when He does look at you. You want to know what He is thinking right now when He is thinking about you, seated in heavenly places. You will find half of Song of Solomon is devoted to Christ talking about the bride. Then you are going to find the other half is the bride talking about Christ. It shows you and I what you ought to be feeling toward Christ. All this is the basis for the physical and the spiritual.

Song of Solomon 5:9-16

9 What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

11 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

16 His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

You know what you have? You have the church, the bride of Christ, looking at Christ and telling Christ what impact He has made in her life. It says down there, "chiefest among ten thousand." Then it talks about His head, His eyes, His cheeks, His hands, His legs. Every one of these means something in the Bible with what it is like. Legs like pillars of ivory, whatever. Every one of these you can go into the Bible and run it down and it will give you a composite that brings about what she says and that one word down there, "altogether lovely." The things that make Christ altogether lovely is His head, His hands, His legs, His feet, His mouth, the chief of ten thousand. That is what makes me love Christ. That is what a woman is looking for in a husband. Do you see?

Ephesians 5:31 says that the two become one flesh in marriage. But how does that work? It takes two to make marriage, and if you have a husband and wife and they get married and the two

become only one, then there is somebody lacking in that marriage. The person that makes up, because the marriage is two, the person that makes up that second part in that marriage once the two become one, has to be the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to the wife, the model. He is to the husband, the model. Both husband and wife understand not only her role, she understands his role. The man should understand not only her role, but understands his role. There should never be any confusion in the two. The only time there will be a problem and confusion is when one or the other will not do what is right. That is when the church steps in, and God, listen to me, God always makes provision for the one who wants to do what is right in any given situation.

XI. The Personal Relationship with Christ

Now, you may find yourself here married and divorced. You may find yourself here never married. You may find yourself in a hurry. You are never going to get married. You may find yourself, "I do not want to get married." You may find yourself, whatever the case you are in, or you may find yourself married, someday you are going to be divorced. I do not care. God has something. God does not care what UPS package label you have on when you get here. He only cares what you want to do from this point on. He only cares what you want to do if you want to do what is right.

This church, me, this congregation, small as it is, they are a bunch of junkyard dogs, trust me. We stand for the one who wants to do what is right. We help the one. You give me a husband and wife that are willing to work it out. I will give you the most blissful marriage you ever saw in your life. Like I said, love is grand and divorce is 20 grand. Probably 50 grand now. It will work. It will work because the Bible says that is what it needs to be. I will help you. It is what I am here for. But I know this, next year is going to be a defining year and it will not get done. It will not go any farther without men and women looking at, "You know what, if I am going to carry this thing out, God wants the very best for me. Why do I want anything less than what God wants?" That is where you are at.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. I have said it before. I do not care where you are at. I do not care where you have been in life. I do not care any about that. All I care is what you want to do.