

Oh, How He Loves Us!

Ephesians 5:25-32 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Romans 5:5-10 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

I want to speak today about the problem so many have, who want to serve God and do His will, of sinning and experiencing condemnation so badly that they can hardly come to church or even pray about it.

And this subject requires a good look at the DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ.

- Today is Resurrection Sunday.
- The day Jesus resurrected from the grave.
- What a great day to talk about the DEATH AND RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ.

Both of these chapters in our texts speak about Christ giving Himself for the Church in death due to HIS LOVE for the Church to have Himself that Church.

- That is, dying on the cross in order to have a church.
- Ephesians says that Christ died in order to have a means of getting Himself a church.
- His death provided a way for a Church to exist.
- He loved the Church before it existed.
- He loved the idea of having a Church, so He went forth to accomplish the means to get Himself that Church.

Church does not mean a denomination or holy building in the Bible.

- It refers to a people who are God's people today.

Ephesians 5 said that His death was necessary so that He could sanctify and cleanse Himself a people to be His Church with the washing of water by the word.

- What does it mean that He would cleanse Himself a church with the washing of water by the word?
- This refers to BAPTISM INTO HIS DEATH.
- Water Baptism is God's way of putting us into Jesus' death.
- Romans 6:3 says that we are baptized into His death.
- How do we get into His death?
- We are baptized into it.
- Water baptism is all about that.
- But it is not water baptism alone.
- It is washing of water BY THE WORD.
- This means that we must believe the WORD OF GOD, that we died with Him, and THAT FAITH, accompanied with water baptism, saves us.

And from the moment we are cleansed by being washed with water, by faith in His Word, WE ARE WITHOUT SPOT AND WRINKLE.

- This is what the Glorious Church is all about.

This is not talking about being washed AFTER you are saved in the Church, but it talks about what state you are in as soon as you are baptized into His death.

- Why does the washing of water in verse 26 follow the giving of Himself in verse 25?
- It is because WATER BAPTISM puts us INTO THAT DEATH THAT He experienced.
- And He died so that we could be baptized into that death.

And now that He has Himself that Church, and you are in it, do you think He loves you LESS?

If you wanted something, but did not have it, would not having that something and enjoying it be better than simply wanting it before you had it?

The Church, Jesus' Bride, wants to feed you today with the bread and wine again this morning.

- Truths about the cross are what we refer to when we say we are feeding on bread and wine.
- It's the oil for the candlestick.
- It's the wisdom and understanding that will help you build your house on the rock so that it will never fall.

Many souls have backslidden, and the Lord doesn't want you to backslide.

- So He is wanting His Church to FEED YOU this morning.
- The Church is very important in Jesus' heart.
- It's HIS WIFE.
- The MOTHER of His children.

Satan attacked the woman in genesis because he knew that the mother is the one who will give birth to her husband's children... and MORE...

- A mother is not only necessary to BIRTH children.
- But how many mother's know that the purpose of a mother is FAR FROM OVER at the birth of her child?
- In fact, the BIRTH IS JUST THE BEGINNING.
- After a person is BORN AGAIN, THEN the Church's role as MOTHER really comes into play.

The children need to be nurtured.

- The mother cares for the Church.
- We pray to our Heavenly Father, but we cannot forget the other aspect of our HEAVENLY MOTHER, the church.

Galatians 4:26 **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

Hebrews 12:22-23 **But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To**

the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

2Chronicles 6:5-6 Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel: But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

Just as God chose out a city JEBUSI, and renamed it Jerusalem, and put HIS NAME there, a man takes a woman and marries her, and gives her HIS NAME to be His wife.

- And We have a heavenly Father, and a Heavenly mother.
- Heavenly Jerusalem, the CHURCH of the firstborn.

And the woman is supposed to GIVE FOOD to the children.

- The woman generally prepares the meals.
- So Satan went after the woman in Genesis 3 to get her involved in FOOD that would replace the FOOD God wanted humanity to eat.

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree [was] good for food, and that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make [one] wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The woman is supposed to give fruit of LIFE to the family.

- The CROSS IS THE TREE OF LIFE.
- And the TRUTHS OF THE CROSS are the FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

I think Satan succeeded in making many churches today give the wrong food to the family, but thank the Lord that there is FRUIT OF LIFE that we can give to you this morning.

- The truths of the Cross feed God's people.
- Satan wants a counterfeit meal prepared by the mother.
- But the real mother is not going to provide a counterfeit meal.
- She knows her food.
- She is going to give FRUIT OF LIFE AND NOTHING ELSE.
- She is going to feed the people the truths of the cross.

Let me say that Christianity with dead dry ritual is not Christianity at all.

- I left a message on the answering machine asking "What is a Christian?"
- I said it snot denominational membership, or living by rules and thinking all other denominations are wrong.
- IT IS BEING DEAD, BURIED AND RESURRECTED WITH JESUS CHRIST.
- It is a LIFE.

We are not supposed to be involved in rituals.

Hebrews 9:14 **How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

Rituals are dead works, and we are supposed to be serving a living God.

- "Dead" works do not allow you to serve a "living" God.
- Fruit of LIFE allow you to serve a LIVING GOD.
- The devil would like every church to be involved in dead works, feeding on the knowledge of good and evil – "This is good, that's evil, this is good , that's evil"
- The Pharisees knew what was good and what was evil, but they HAD NO LIFE.
- They were WHITED CRYPTS and GRAVES.
- DEAD INSIDE.
- Having a form of godliness but denying the power – THE LIFE – thereof.

You will either hear "living bread" or "dead works" when you go to a church Sunday morning.

John 6:51 **I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

Living bread, or fruit of life, is JESUS, HIMSELF.

- If the MOTHER is supposed to give fruit of life to the children, and Jesus said He

is the living bread, then we know why Paul said, "I preach Christ and Him crucified."

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

What did He mean?

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.

He was not speaking about literal flesh.

- He meant the WORDS He spoke were life.
- The WORDS ABOUT HIS BROKEN BODY AND SHED BLOOD.

Matthew 26:26-28 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Eating His body and drinking His blood meant feeding on the TRUTHS of the broken Body and shed blood.

They ate from ONE LOAF OF BREAD.

- They drank from ONE CUP OF WINE.
- When you feed on the bread and wine you are making it PART OF YOU.
- You are putting bread INSIDE you and DIGESTING IT, to in turn, MAKE IT PART OF YOU.
- We need to take the TRUTHS Of the cross and make them PART OF US.
- Truly part of us.

You see, putting the broken bread into our mouths and eating it is supposed to SYMBOLIZE that His death is our death now.

- The broken bread speaks of His killed body.
- The poured-out wine speaks of His shed blood.
- And putting that broken bread and poured wine into ourselves is symbolizing that HIS DEATH IS OUR DEATH.

People have gone to churches for years and never come to learn that JESUS' DEATH WAS THEIR DEATHS.

- They never understood that more than Jesus Christ died on the cross that day.
- And I am not talking about the two thieves who also died on crosses.
- I am talking about the SAME CROSS JESUS DIED ON.

- Many never realized that EVERYONE DIED ON THAT CROSS WITH JESUS when He died.

And the ramifications of that fact are astounding!

We feed on what that means to us, as our Mother, the Church, holds service for her husband and teaches the children of God.

Let's not simply chew on this morning.

- Some people treat the WORD OF LIFE like chewing tobacco.
- They chew it and chew it and taste it BUT NEVER SWALLOW IT.
- Unless you swallow it, you do not make it PART OF YOUR LIFE.
- When we take communion, do we chew the bread and spit it out afterwards?
- Of course not.
- That is supposed to teach us that we are to feast on the truths of the cross and MAKE THEM PART OF OUR LIVES.
- TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY.

Let it renew your minds.

Ephesians says that NO MAN YET HATED HIS OWN FLESH.

Ephesians 5:28-32 **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

The Church is Jesus' flesh.

Paul quoted Adam here, from Genesis 2:22-24.

Genesis 2:22-24 **And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

Woman was LITERALLY of man's bone and flesh because God took bone from Adam and made the woman.

- And Adam found something missing from him and was no longer complete.
- So God said a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife FOR THAT REASON.
- What reason?
- Because man is incomplete without the woman.

Jesus went to the cross in order to leave His Father and mother and join to his wife.

Notice that while He was on the cross, we read:

Matthew 27:46 **And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

God left Him on the cross.

- Jesus became SIN, so the HOLY SPIRIT LEFT HIM.

John 19:25-27 **Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own [home].**

Jesus told John to look after Mary, His mother, when he told John to behold His mother.

- Jesus left His mother when He was on the cross.

Why did He go to the cross if it would cause Him to leave His Father and His mother?

- It was because a man had to leave His father and mother in order to be joined to His wife.
- He has to leave their care and their home in order to UNITE to someone who will no longer leave him INCOMPLETE.

And notice what we reads after Mary left.

John 19:27-28 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own [home]. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

KNOWING THAT ALL THINGS WERE ACCOMPLISHED.

- He left His Father and mother.

And Jesus said long before this day,

John 12:32-33 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

A man must leave His father and mother and BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE.

On the cross, Jesus left His Father and mother and DREW ALL HUMANITY TO HIMSELF... uniting Himself TO HIS CHURCH.

- That fulfilled the prophecy that He would be joined to His wife.

And the love He has for the CHURCH is absolutely staggering.

No man ever yet hated his own flesh.

- And a Jesus loves His church as a man loves his own flesh.
- The Church IS HIS FLESH.

That is why the Church is called the BODY OF CHRIST.

- This church building is not the BODY OF CHRIST.

Ephesians 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

PEOPLE are members of His Body.

Romans 5 said ...

Romans 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

WHEN WE WERE SINNERS....

- When we did wrong and did not care!
- When we purposely did wrong...

- Christ still loved us.
- He died for us in our sinful state.

Nobody will hardly ever be found to die for a righteous man, LET ALONE AN ENEMY.

- While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!
- WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES.

Romans 5:10 ...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son

When you are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh YOU ARE PART OF THE CHURCH.

- You are HIS BODY.
- HIS BRIDE.
- And NO MAN EVER YET HATED HIS OWN FLESH.

Rest assured GOD WILL NEVER HATE YOU.

- When you make a mistake, God does not hate you.

If He loved you so much that He surpassed any human love possible in order to die for you when you were HIS ENEMY, when you did not care if you sinned or not, HOW MUCH MORE IS HIS LOVE FOR YOU NOW THAT YOU ARE HIS BODY?

- ...Now that you are a Christian, and make a mistake and feel AWFUL that you did it?
- If He loved you when you were sinners, sinning constantly, He certainly loves you as His people, even if you make a mistake and sin, and feel awful about it.

You need to understand the kind of love He has because he died for you when you were sinners.

- Understanding that will correct you out of any condemnation you feel when you sin after you are saved.
- We are going to have Communion Supper after this sermon this morning.
- The broken bread represents His broken Body.
- The poured wine represents His shed Blood.
- And eating and drinking these things is supposed to represent to us THE TEACHING OF THE TRUTHS OF THE CROSS and WHY HE DIED.
- It teaches the RAMIFICATIONS Of that death.

- By eating and drinking we are representing what we are supposed to do with the UNDERSTANDINGS about that death.

Let that communion today speak to you as you eat and drink it, of how much CHRIST LOVED YOU AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR YOU WHEN YOU WERE SINNERS.

- Let communion remind you that when you make a mistake, you can turn to the devil and laugh at him when he tries to condemn you.
- GOD STILL LOVES YOU.
- You must repent and truly seek forgiveness.
- But God still loves you.

Get that truth into you so much that OUT THERE IN THE WORLD, when you sin and err, that truth is PART OF YOU, and nothing anybody says or any feeling of condemnation you get when you sin will stop you from knowing that Jesus is waiting right there to hear your cry and forgive you.

Communion helps us to understand how much we are supposed to believe these truths.

- It shows how much we are one with HIM NOW.
- Not only does it remind us of His love in dying for us.
- For, we do not only have broken bread and poured wine, BUT WE EAT THE BROKEN BREAD AND DRINK THE Poured WINE to show that we are ALSO ONE WITH HIM.
- He is part of us now.
- He is JOINED to us now.
- We DIED WITH HIM.
- That is what it means to be ONE WITH HIM.
- He drew all humanity to Himself in His death.
- BECAME ONE BODY WITH US.

When the devil confronts you, he tries to block you.

- And so long as he is front of you, you are hindered.
- You need to get him BEHIND you and go on.

Jesus was tempted of the devil in Matthew 4.

- But Jesus KNEW THE WORD.
- THE WORD WAS SO MUCH PART OF HIM THAT HE RECOGNIZED THE DEVIL'S LIES.

- EVEN WHEN THE DEVIL QUOTED THE WORD, JESUS KNEW WHAT ITS PROPER CONTEXT WAS.
- And then he said, GET THEE BEHIND ME.
- Like saying, “Take a hike!”

What did Jesus do with other offenses?

- Offenses are things that TRIP YOU UP and stop you from going on.

Peter tried to convince Jesus to not die on the cross, out of pity.

Jesus said,

Matthew 16:22-23 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He took all offenses that appeared before Him to hinder Him, and PUT THEM BEHIND HIM.

- And He then said, “thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”
- Peter did not KNOW THE WORD.

Did you know that some well-meaning Christians, who do not know the word, will often be an offense to you?

- They will BE BEFORE YOU LIKE STUMBLINGSTONES.
- Stumblingstones are stones before you that you stumble over.
- Whether it is the devil or a misinformed Christian, PUT THAT OFFENSE BEHIND YOU and go on!

If you know the WORD, you can put that behind you!

When we take communion, picture the food going into you like the TRUTHS OF THE CROSS ARE SUPPOSED TO GET INTO YOU.

The mother cares and nurtures.

- Don't run away from the Church-mother.
- You need to be here every service.