

Submission

by Dennis Kinlaw

Dennis Kinlaw's sermon on submission emphasizes the biblical understanding of mutual respect and love within Christian marriages, challenging cultural misconceptions.

Duration: 1:11:20

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:22

Topics: "Submission"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of beauty and how it is a manifestation of God's creation. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the larger context of Bible verses to avoid misinterpretation. The preacher also explores the idea of submission in marriage, explaining how wives and husbands should prioritize the well-being of each other. Additionally, he shares his amazement at the accessibility of classical documents through technology, highlighting the ability to have personal correspondence between influential figures like Augustine and Jerome.

Transcript

I noticed that the passage you give me to work with is one that is a problem passage for a lot of people. And so, I thought twice about it when she asked me to come, but I thought I'll, as a male, talking about submission to a group of ladies, I sort of took my courage in my hand and dared to come. You know the passage.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the Word of God. Now, you're aware that this is Paul speaking to Titus, who is a pastor in Crete.

And in this pagan culture in Crete, they're trying to get a Christian witness. I'm amazed at how much of the New Testament is spent on a corporate witness as well as an individual witness. I almost think there's more about the corporate witness than there is of the individual witness.

And at the heart of that corporate witness is the family. I think Paul almost felt that if he could get a Christian family in a community, that community could be transformed. Because there's something about seeing the gospel manifest in a family that is never true when you simply have a single individual.

When you can see a husband and a wife loving each other, that's different from the way the world lives, if it's Christian love. And when you see parents and children living together in honor and respect and in affection, the world says, this is different. And it produces a different product.

That's what produces the next generation. And so you can understand something of why Paul is so concerned with Titus. So he's instructing the men, instructing the older ladies, he's instructing the younger ones.

Now, the key thing here for Americans today is this word, subject or submission. Is a woman supposed to submit herself to her husband, a wife to submit herself? In this translation here, it says subject, which is a little stronger than submit. But the implication that comes to the typical American when he reads this or when she reads this, is that the wife is to be something of a doormat, you know, an echo.

The husband speaks, the wife immediately obeys and is subordinate to him. Now, there is nothing in Scripture really to support the way the world reads that when they come to this. Because the biblical picture of the Christian family is a radically different one than can be found anywhere else in the literature or anywhere else in the cultures of the world.

And that's what I'd like to get at this morning. Now, I'm glad that when I got married, I married a strong-minded woman, because she was strong-minded. I got a clue to that after I'd been dating her steadily for about six months.

And we came to the first of June and I was headed to North Carolina and she was headed to New York. We were sitting on one of those green benches, used to be on the campus at Asbury, and the first of June and these were our last minutes together. We were to be apart for three months.

And so I said, I will write. She looked straight back at me and said, oh no. I said, what do you mean? I said, no.

She said, no, we won't write this summer. I hadn't paid attention to anybody for six months but her. And now I'm talking about three months ahead of me.

And she said, if it won't last three months, there's nothing to it. And I thought, oh, for heaven's sake, I've got a different creature on my hand here than I expected. Now, I want to tell you one more story.

In 1976, through an amazing set of providences that only can happen at Asbury, we had the Speaker of the House of Commons come for commencement. 1976, the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Now, Phyllis Corbett's husband was a key factor in this.

But I didn't think too much about it. And then I found out. I thought, yes, this is the 200th anniversary.

And he was coming to the United States at the same time on the trip when he came. This was not a part of the original package. This is the way it developed.

He and the Speaker of the House of Lords were coming to the United States to bring the Magna Carta to put it on display in Washington as a British tribute to be a part of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the American nation. And so I thought, well, he'll fly in and fly out, and we won't see much of him. Well, they had planned to take the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the House of Lords, show them Washington, do the yacht trip up and down the Potomac and

all the rest of this stuff.

And so I get word that he's coming, and he's going to spend three full days with us. And I thought, this is a surprise. Well, he was a lay Methodist preacher in England.

On Saturday, he'd go up to Wales and preach on Sunday and come back Sunday afternoon to open the House of Commons on Monday morning. So we had three days together, so we sort of got to know each other. Wonderful person, George Thomas.

Well, that next year, Asbury took a group of Asburians to England for a tour of the Wesley sites. And so they asked Elkie and me to go along, so we were thrilled that we could go. And so we found ourselves in Britain.

George Thomas, the Speaker of the House of Commons, found out that we were coming, and so he sent an invitation to Elkie and me to come have dinner with him. So we found ourselves having dinner sitting under Big Ben. I was sitting with my back about 20 feet from the Thames, and Elkie was sitting across the table from me, and he was sitting at the end of the table.

He was an old bachelor. And so the three of us sat there, and a delightful British meal. At the end of the meal, his servant came in and brought a silver tray that had a cigar on it.

Now, I knew that I was socially way above my class sitting there, you know, and quite amazed that I had that privilege. But I'm sitting there, and suddenly in my lateral vision, I see him reach out for his cigar, and as he does, I see a second hand reach out. It's a female hand, and it grabbed his wrist and held it tight just like that.

I could have gone through a hole the size of a pen in the seat, and I thought, what now? Then I heard her voice. She spoke, and she said, Mr. Thomas, you're too important to the kingdom of God to endanger your life like that. And I died.

I turned and looked at him, and suddenly he dropped the cigar, threw both hands in the air, and said, Oh, Elkie, you're just like my mother. And I sat, and he said, she was sitting right there at the end of the table. The prime minister was here in his age, and the leader of the loyal opposition was here in his age.

And he said, I never told my mother I smoked. She was his hostess. Well, he said, they brought out the cigar, and we were in such an intense political discussion that I forgot everything, and before I knew what I was doing, I was picking up my cigar when all the political discussion was stopped dead still with one imperious female voice.

George, what do you think you're doing? And he said, I looked at my mother, and he said, Oh, mother, everybody does this. George, that is not the way we determine our patterns of conduct. Elkie, you're just like my mother.

I lived with her for 59 and a half years. I knew what it meant to live with a strong-minded woman. But I've always been so grateful, because behind closed doors, she talked to me just like she talked to George Thomas.

Interesting thing, he developed cancer in his throat, which I thought was interesting. But about two years later, we got a Christmas card. We began getting Christmas cards from him regularly.

They were magnificent art pieces, really art pieces. So Elkie would take each one and frame it, and so each one of our kids has one of these Christmas cards from the Speaker of the House of Commons. And now he's Lord Tony Pandy.

I thought that name didn't quite fit George Thomas, but the British do things differently. But anyway, about two years later, we got our Christmas card. George Thomas had a note on it.

Elkie, you'll be glad to know that it's been a year and a half since I've smoked. The next year, we got another Christmas card. Elkie, you'll be glad to know it's been two and a half years since I've smoked.

To every Christmas, he reported in to my wife. Now, so what about this matter of subjection or submission of a wife to a husband? Now, here's the place where we need to get not a text, not a verse, but the teaching of Scripture on the relationship of husband and wife, and marriage, and the family, and the whole. I had a prophet, Princeton, that one day, never got over it, and it was one of those major steps in my education and my development.

He was a German scholar, New Testament scholar, also people of probably the greatest mind I ever had the privilege of sitting under. And so he started a lecture one day by saying, you know, you people that underline your Bible, he said, I know which verses you underline. I can tell you which verse.

And I closed my Bible. He said, the verses you don't underline are the word of God as much as the verses you do underline. Now, he said, I understand why you do this, because the verse becomes significant to you, and it's a blessing to you, and you grasp it, and so you mark it.

But he said, you want to get beyond the verse stage. No verse comes alone. It always comes in a, and you need to know the paragraph if you're going to understand the verse properly.

And then every paragraph comes in a chapter. And what you want as you work with Scripture is get to the place where you can see the larger context that the verse comes in, because oftentimes you can pull a verse out, and it will, you see it alone, and when you see it alone, you misinterpret it and miss the richness that God has for you. Now, he said, you want to get to the place where you can hold in your mind the basic thrust of a whole book.

And then you want to pick up motifs and see the way they're developed through Scripture from Genesis 1 all the way through to Revelation 22. You know, I've never been the same since. And that became sort of an ambition.

Now, I'm not there yet, but I'm working on it. Because how different it is, how different it is when you see a biblical theme and the way it is developed. And you cannot talk about the relationship of the husband and wife without talking about the biblical view of marriage, which is radically different from the Buddhist view, from the Hindu view, from the Muslim view, from the secularist view.

You can just keep on going. It is radically different, and you can't do that without talking about the biblical understanding of the family. And we need to look at that.

Now, as we do that, let me begin by illustrating how we need to put things into a paragraph or into a section. Turn with me to Ephesians 5. And you know the passage in Ephesians 5 that I'm coming to. Because the word submit is used in the 5th chapter of Ephesians, where he's beginning that remarkable passage about husbands and wives and Christ and the church.

Now, look with me at 5.18. He has been speaking before in the earlier part of the 5th chapter. The 5th chapter begins with this incredible verse, Be imitators of God. Therefore, as dearly loved children, live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Now, that is the only passage in the Bible where we're told to imitate God. We're told to imitate Christ. We're told to imitate Paul.

Paul says he's an imitator. But this is the one passage, and it's the beginning of a section telling us how we are to live, and it ends up with this section about husbands and wives and about Christ and the church. Now, this is a passage that speaks to all of us without any exception, because you may not be a husband or a wife, but every person who is a believer is to be a part of the body of Christ and is part of the bride of Christ.

Now, one of the things I like is that this mixes up all the gender stuff, because, you see, I'm a part of the bride. Now, it's interesting, males are part of the bride, but that's who I am. I'm part of the bride.

And, of course, the reason is that there's no gender in God. There's no maleness and femaleness in God. Whatever is in the maleness that's different from the femaleness, and whatever's in the femaleness that's different from the maleness, whatever that is, it's all in Him, but it's not separated into male and female.

That's down here for you and for me. And so I get the privilege of shifting gender roles when I come to Christ. Isn't that interesting? Now, that means that I ought to think twice about my gender role when I think about else, you see, because we're in a relationship that transcends the world's understanding of this gender relationship.

Now, he's going to tell us how we are to imitate God. What it means to imitate God, it means that we live in love as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us. It's a magnificent passage and an amazing passage.

Now, then he talks about how this has worked out, the kind of quality of life that you will be lived if you live, if you imitate God and you live in love. Now, I remember I wanted to read through the book of Ephesians instead of sitting so I could get a feel for the whole of it. And so I'm reading through and sort of lost in it, and I come to the fifth chapter and the first verse, and I read that, imitate God, and I laughed out loud.

I thought, this is ridiculous. Me, imitate God, the omnipotent one. There are a few people in human history who've tried that and all turned out to be fools.

Omniscient one, one who knows everything. The thing I know about me is I've got a question that I don't have an answer to. If I find an answer to it, I always pick up ten more questions when I get the answer to that.

So my knowledge is not exploding knowledge, it's exploding ignorance. So I thought, and then omnipresent, He's everywhere. Well, I'm amazed at how much more I can be everywhere through a computer than I could thirty years ago and know what's going on, all this kind of thing, but it still doesn't match in any sense.

God's presence is everywhere. So how can I imitate God? Then I kept reading. Imitate God.

Well, only in one way. Live in love, agape love. And then he defines and explains the character of that love.

As Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, and in that became a sweet-smelling fragrance in the nostrils of God. Isn't it interesting when your B.O. can be pleasant fragrance in the nostrils of God? Now, what is it? It's agape love. Now, that's the key to this whole passage that runs through.

And you dare not read the passage about submission without reading it in the light of the way this section begins. And what is that love? The incredible thing to me, and I cannot get over it, and I don't want to get over it. I think if I could understand it, I don't think I'd ever get off my face, because the incredible thing is that he loved me more than he loved himself.

The eternal God loves you more than he loves himself, because he was willing to die for you. Now, that's the context for any submission that we're ever going to talk about. Now, notice the way he develops it.

I want to talk grammar to you. So, I'm going to take you to school for a few minutes. And so, don't get afraid.

If I can understand it, you can understand it. So, here. Do not get drunk on wine.

Now, you remember in Titus, he said the older women should not drink too much. It was common in that culture. And what do you use wine for? To get that lift you think you need and you want and so forth.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, the Christian's alternative is to be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Now, that's the translation that I have in front of me. But the interesting thing is the grammar of the Greek is different from the grammar of the English.

Now, watch with me. Keep your eye on the text. Do not get drunk on wine.

You've got a good imperative verb. Don't drink too much. A command, which leads to debauchery.

Instead, and you've got an imperative verb, a command, be filled with the Spirit. It is a command that I should be filled with the Spirit. Speaking, therefore, is not an option for me if I'm to follow Christ.

I have to speak until he has filled me with the Spirit. My text says, speak to one another with psalms. But the interesting thing is that's an imperative in English, but it's not an imperative in Greek.

It's a command in English, but it's not a command in Greek. And this is where our translations don't represent accurately. It says, be filled with the Spirit, speaking, and it's a participle, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and you've got another participle, and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father, and the English translation got it right there for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then submitting, and it's a participle.

It's not a command. Now, what am I saying? You've got a string of participles that describe what it means if you're filled with the Spirit. How does the fullness of the Spirit reflect itself in one's life? If I'm filled with the Spirit, then I find myself speaking to others in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Christians can't keep from singing. Somebody was telling me the other day about a Muslim convert, a woman, who showed pictures of her wedding, and there was not a smile in the place. She said, we never smiled, and we never had music until we found Christ, and the greatest music Lucy of the world's ever had.

The only place you can find the greatest of music is among Christians. We sing, and when the Spirit comes, if you go back and look at those films of the Seventy Revival at Asbury, you'll find they were singing. They couldn't keep from singing.

They had to sing. When you're filled with the Spirit, there's a song in your soul, and you sing. When you're filled with the Spirit, you make music in your heart to the Lord.

When you're filled with the Spirit, you give thanks to God the Father for everything. And when you're filled with the Spirit, what do you do? You submit to one another. And the first call for submission here is universal.

It's not to women. It's to everybody. The person who's filled with the Spirit, male or female, has quit living for himself or herself, and is now living for somebody else.

Now, that's the context in which this Word occurs. And so, if we're to deal faithfully with the text, we'll do that. Then you get that line.

My text says, wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. The interesting thing is, there's no verb in that sentence, in the Greek. What he's doing is, he's saying, now, if you're filled with the Spirit, you quit living for yourself, and you live for other people, and other people's well-being is more important than your own.

Now, how does that apply to wives? And he says, I'll tell you how it applies to wives. Then he says, and I'll tell you how it applies to men. So, the women, they submit.

The men, how does their submission reflect itself? It is reflected in a far tougher standard than submission. You know, you can obey a person in hating them. You can obey a person in resenting them.

But the command of the men is, you love your wife the way Christ loved the church, which means you live for her and sacrifice yourself and your interest for her. Isn't that an interesting play of a reciprocal relationship in which each is working to get to see that the other is fulfilled? And the amazing thing is, when you come to that point, you find that's the most fulfilling thing you ever do. When I fell in love with Elsie, I just liked her.

She made me happy, and I enjoyed being happy. There came a day when I found it was more fun in making her happy than it was in making me happy. And I thought, am I really growing in grace a bit? That's the way with Christ.

He gets more pleasure out of giving to us than having us give to him. That's God. Now, you see, that's the context in which the New Testament talks about this.

Now, does that mean that there is not an order in the relationship between a husband and a wife and in a family? Of course there's an order. There has to be a structure in any social group. Like, you'll notice it's very clear when he comes to children, he says, children, honor your father and your mother.

I was grateful when I realized that the Old Testament does not tell a child to obey his parents. It says respect. And the Hebrew word for respect is the same word as the word, it's the verb of the verb for glory.

And it's a word which is used, when you use it for God, you say glorify God. And when you use it of his relationship to his parents, you say respect or honor. Now, why doesn't he say obey? I've got a son who's fifty-something.

Do you think he's going to obey me? God's been very good to me. But the time's going to come when he's going to tell me what to do. Not me telling him what to do.

The circle's thin, you know. But there never is a place where he's not to respect me and honor me. So when he orders me around in my dotage, he's supposed to do it with respect and with honoring me.

You see, the tenderness of the personal relationship that permeates this thing, it's not this hierarchy like this. It's we're in this thing together, and the male has a role which the female doesn't have, and the female has a role which the male doesn't have. And you honor each other in the different roles that you play.

Like the parents have a role which the child doesn't have, and the child has a role which the parent doesn't have. And I was talking to someone the other day, a mother who was going into a very difficult situation, so she took her granddaughter along with her for protection. Marvelous to me.

The roles that different members of a family play, and sometimes the little ones can get away with stuff, can solve problems the adults can never solve. But they're roles that are to be played. Now one of the places where we make a mistake in our ignorance and our lack of sensitivity is, we have to realize that Titus and Ephesians, these other passages, Timothy and the New Testament, they were not written for the 20th century or the 21st century.

They were written in a day when there was no such thing as birth control. Do you know how much difference that made? That meant that any woman who was married, and the interesting thing is, in the Old Testament there's no word for an old bachelor, there's no Hebrew word in the Old Testament for an old bachelor. There weren't supposed to be any.

And it's very interesting. The Scripture tends to think of the norm. Now there are anomalies.

You get anomalies like Miriam. You get anomalies like Deborah. You get anomalies like Anna in the temple in the beginning of the New Testament.

You get anomalies like this. But they're not the norm now. He's addressing the norm.

And in that norm there are these different roles that we play. So in that day, every married woman was within the possibilities of six months of pregnancy. And during that, he needed somebody to, he needed to play a role which she couldn't play because she was playing a role that he couldn't play and her role was far more important than his role.

And what it was is an obedience to the command in Genesis, be fruitful, multiply, be fruitful, replenish the earth. Because it's God's intention. He likes people.

And he wants more of us. That's the kind of God we've got. He likes people.

And he wants more of us. And he wants his purposes to go on. So, you know, we tend to think in terms of the 20th century.

Let me just drop something to you. You know, I almost hate to say it out loud because it leads wrong. You know, in my lifetime, one of the greatest men in the world, one of the most influential men in the world, because I lived long enough to live through that day, was Mahatma Gandhi.

Did you know that his wife couldn't read or write? There's not a woman in this house that can't read or write. You've got to search to find somebody. Careers? What careers were open? It was like in the early part of the United States.

You were born on a farm. You grew up on a farm. You lived on a farm.

You died on a farm, with a few exceptions. Now, the scripture is speaking to the norm. Now, there are differences, but what about the normal roles of the family? Now, let me talk.

It's interesting that the very words submitted here, the root idea behind it is order, or taxonomy, really. It's the word from which we get the word, the taxic part of taxonomy, order. There is structure in life, and there has to be.

And so, that's what he's getting at. But what is it that motivates the role that I play? It's the agape love of God that has come into my heart and has made the difference. Now, it's interesting that the United States Census Bureau can't define what a family is.

Now, that's a clue to how far we've disintegrated in our culture and in our society. What is a family? You see, now we're going to have different kinds of families. We're going to have two men who live together and get some woman somewhere to bear a child, and then they take the child and they'll, in their love, they'll let the child grow up, maybe a girl with two men or a boy with two men, or two women who live together, or maybe we'll be, you know, Mormons, original Mormons, this kind of thing.

What is a family? Now, the sociologist will tell you that a family is simply a social structure, and it has to be dealt with as a social institution. So in your colleges, universities, you get your sociologists to teach their courses and write their books, and those are changing drastically from what they were when I came along. A family, if you have marriage, you're going to have sex.

So some people say it's biology that's the basis of it. Now, in your social sciences, or in your sciences, social and otherwise, the tendency is to come at marriage and family in a way that is physically based or socially, culturally based. Christians are radically different.

I went through a period when I was reading stuff on this score, and the question was, will the family disappear? And I decided, no, the traditional family is not going to disappear. And you know why the traditional family is not going to disappear, no matter how corrupt or how polluted we become? Because the basis of the family is not in biology, nor is it in sociology. The basis of the family is in theology, because it's rooted in the nature of the deity.

We're the only people in the world who believe that. Are you Muslim? What's a family? Allah certainly has no family. He lives alone.

But you see, when we worship, we worship in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. So the very God that we worship has a family nature in him. And that's the reason that for a Muslim, love is something Allah does with somebody he likes.

In Judaism, even, love is something that the God of Israel does. He loves Israel. But with us, love is not just something he does, it's what he is.

It's his nature, because it's the relationship of the Father and the Son and the Spirit. It's amazing to me how long I missed that. Do you know, I think I was 40 before it dawned on me that Adam wasn't the first father.

I was a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary. I'd had two and a half years at Princeton and subconsciously, when I thought of Father, I thought, because I'd never really been trained in any major in the doctrine of Judaism. This generation has an opportunity to think thoughts that my generation never could have conceived, because we thought the question was, is God a person? The textbooks that I studied in philosophy and religion at Asbury College when I was a student here were all written by a personalist whose big question was, is the one God who exists personal? There was never any discussion of the Trinity.

And so suddenly when I was in my 40s, I began saying, wait a minute, you baptize a person in the name of the Father, not the Lord. You don't even baptize a person in the name of God. You ordain a person to preach the gospel of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

You've got the family. Now, that's the reason Christians make so much of an issue about the family, because the root of it is in the very nature of God. Now, at this point, I wish I knew how to say things well enough that I was sure that I was being heard.

But, you know, really, all of my notion about the creation has changed. Why he created us. Look with me at the first chapter of Ephesians.

Well, get your text, the first chapter of Ephesians, the opening verse. Let me tell you something about the Ephesian letter. Eight times in the Ephesian letter, God is called Father.

Our Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father. We are to have access, not to God, access to the Father through the Spirit, the Father from whom the whole family in heaven and earth derives its name. There is one God and Father of all who is over all, through all, who reigns.

It's the Father who reigns. Now, it's a sovereign role, but who is the person who's sovereign? He's Father. Always give thanks to God the Father in all things.

And he concludes, peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father. Ephesians, the family permeates it. Now, listen to the family terms that you have in the Ephesian letter.

Now, there are some scholars who think in some of the best Greek manuscripts of Ephesians the word Ephesus doesn't occur. So there are some who think that it was a general letter that was to be circulated in all the churches. And if you read it carefully, the content of it fits that.

Now, listen, you have adoption, son, inheritance, household, heirs, children, circumcision. Now, I'm old enough that I can get away with this, so let me tantalize you for a moment. What was the mark in the Old Testament that a person belonged to God? It's interesting it wasn't on the woman.

That doesn't mean that she was inferior because she was the climax of the creative order. And God speaks of the name Hephzibah, my delight is in her. In the Song of Songs, the longest poems are about her, not about him.

Now, I always thought my poem about him ought to be longer than his poem about me. But his poem about me is longer than my poem about him. The most ecstatic, the most poetic, the most beautiful, the longest ones are about her.

The woman has a special role. There's nothing like it in any of the rest of the literature of the religions of the world. Okay.

Now, the mark that a person belonged to God was at the point where the man and the woman, the husband and the wife, met. You see, prostitution was the way you worshipped in the pagan temple. And when a Hebrew man went in, the prostitute looked at him and said, You don't belong here.

You have another God. I cannot get an Old Testament scholar who will even talk about that. But the interesting thing is that you don't get through the Pentateuch before the term circumcision is used as a synonym for the new birth, the transformation, that life has been brought into you, divine life.

Now, I wish I was smart enough and delicate enough to know how to develop that, but we're dealing with holy things here. This is the reason that God is so concerned about sexuality. There's theology here that's deeper than any of us have ever plummed, plumbed.

Yes. Okay. All right.

Now, you get those terms? The term body, the body of Christ. Love occurs 22 times in this short book, 22 times. It's a major theme that runs through it, Agape.

And he says it's mysterious, and I love this. The word mystery occurs more times in Ephesians than anywhere else in the Bible. Paul says, I'm ordained to preach this mystery, this mystery of God, the gloriousness of it.

Okay. Now, you see, there's so much here that could be developed, but let me tantalize you first. We are the bride of Christ.

Now, what you have, well, let's look at chapter 1 here. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, you know what a mess of a time the early Christians had deciding what to do with that? You see, they were monotheists. They knew they worshiped only one God, but what are you going to do with Jesus? You remember when Thomas said, I'll never believe until I see the scars in his hands? And suddenly Jesus shows up and says, Thomas, put your finger in there and say it. Now, Thomas was a good Jew, which meant he believed there was one God and one alone in heaven.

And he falls on his knees before this man who's got flesh and blood in his feelings, human flesh, and he says, my Lord and my God. Do you know it took him 300 years to answer the question involved in that? How do you say there's one God and yet we got him here in human flesh? And so the doctrine of the Trinity came out of it. But what was it? Listen, praise be to the God and Father of us who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

For he chose us. Now, I want you to notice three words. Chose, predestined, and will.

No, four words. Will and purpose. Chose, predestined, will, and purpose.

We are now talking about predestination. What is the eternal purpose of God in the creation? Why did he make this mess? Okay, he's going to tell us. For he chose us, the choice of God, in him before the creation of the world that we should be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love he predestined us to be. Now, this word is translated here, adopted as son. The word occurs only five times in the New Testament.

And the word is, we aphasis. And what it means is to have child status given to you. Now, no gender in this originally.

But the idea in the word, we aphasis, is to have a child status given to you. Now, what's the purpose of God? And what is predestination about? It is to give the status of children to you and to me. Now, how's he going to do it? Through his own child.

Through the second person of the Trinity. Through his son. Now, all I can see is that he created the whole shooting match to enlarge his family, get more children.

Read this chapter very carefully and you'll find that that permeates the chapter. He created us so that we could be children. Sons and daughters.

That's the reason in Ephesians Paul talks about heirs and inheritances. Who gets the inheritance? The son. Now, we are the inheritors of God's creation.

We are his heirs. Now, but the interesting thing is the role that we play. We're children to the father.

And then he created the world to give his son a bride. So the one member of the Trinity were sons and daughters, were his bride. That means that God wants to wed himself to his creation.

At the heart of the creation is the concept of marriage. Now, let me see if I can spin something out that blew my mind. It blew it enough I may not be able to communicate it adequately.

One of the astounding things to me is what you can do with a computer now. A critic about a month ago showed me how I can go on my computer and pull up copies of the classical documents, the patristics of fathers. What Augustine wrote, what Athanasius wrote.

All I've got to do is punch my computer and it begins to crank out over there through the printer. And I've got it in my hands. I can take notes on it, you know.

I have Augustine's correspondence with Jerome and Jerome's correspondence with Augustine. Six months ago I would have never dreamed that I could ever have the personal correspondence between

those two giants in my hands. But I can now.

She opened, she told me how. See, that circle turns. I love it.

But anyway, so I found that Augustine taught his catechumens, you know, when he took people into the church. He did 110 lectures, catechumens, from the Gospel of John. If I were a pastor, don't you think I'd read those things? One of the greatest saints in the history of the world to have what he taught his church membership class.

Well, I also found he did 10 homilies on I John. And I read the first chapter. I'll never do the same again.

Now let me see if I can spell out, thin out this, what he said in there. He, the beginning of I John is, That which we have seen and heard, that which we have looked upon, that which we have seen, that which we have hand, and our hands have handled of the word of life, talking about Christ, that God came in the incarnation so we could feel and touch and handle him. And he manifested himself.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men, the very light of God. As the Greeks say, light of light, God of God. The light of God shined into our darkness.

And that's what he's dealing with in I John 1. How does he manifest himself? Now, interestingly enough, he goes to Psalm 19. The heavens declare the glory. The creator made the world to speak of him.

Let me tell you a funny, this is a great sentence, but it's a funny one to me. I'll never be the same. It's interesting how something comes.

You'll never think the same again. I ran across a book about, I think maybe the toughest book. Vocabulary, what I've never seen before.

The guy's brilliant. And the name of the book is The Beauty of the Infinite. And he's trying to talk about the fact that the infinite, that's God.

There's beauty there. It's there. Now, I read along and hear these words that I've never seen before.

So I find myself sitting with a five-inch thick English front-of-bridge dictionary. But that's not enough, because he uses English words that aren't in there. And then I get a Latin dictionary, classical Latin and a classical Greek, because the words are going to come from either Greek or Latin sources.

And so I find that I can chase back oftentimes and find out what he's saying. So I'm reading along. Very interestingly, notice the word appresentation.

That's interesting enough. You know, representation, that's no problem. But appresentation, I thought.

Then it occurred appresentable, appresent. I thought, wait a minute, what's he saying? I could not figure. So as I read appresentation, the app is to, preposition to or towards, and present, present, towards, present, towards.

And it dawned on me suddenly, he's talking about beauty, that beauty is never passive. Have you ever thought about that? Beauty is never, now you look at it, but it's not like looking at a toad or an earthworm. Beauty leaps at you.

It's aggressive. So you say, I came over the Brava Hill, there was a long valley, surrounded by beautiful mountains, some of them snow-capped. And you say, the beauty of it just hit me.

Hit is an aggressive verb. Or a beautiful woman walks in a room, you say, she didn't strike me. I haven't struck her, but her beauty struck me.

Why do we use language like that? Because beauty is never passive. A woman walks back into her home, and there on the table, in a vase, is a new cutting of fresh, and she has two simultaneous thoughts. One of them is, well, what's the other one? Who sent them? So the guy writing this book is saying, that's the creation.

The beauty leaps at you, impresses you, and the question is, who gave this beauty to me? The heavens declare. God is presenting, giving to us his beauty, like all these flowers that are going to be springing up. I hope you remember, they're the appresentation of God.

I can use the word now. So when Augustine wants to talk about the fact that God has manifested himself, he says, where has he, how has he manifested himself? Well, he says, the psalmist told you, the heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork.

Day after day utters the speech. He just speaks out at you. Night after night shows forth knowledge.

Then it says, like a bridegroom bursting from his bridal chamber, the sun runs a ray, like a strong man goes forth. You know what Augustine does with that? He goes immediately to Jesus. Now, I had to work a little while before I could see his logic, but it's there if you'll stay with it.

He goes, who is Jesus? He's the manifestation of God, like a bridegroom. That's Psalm 19, verse 5. Bursting forth from his bridal, like a strong man to run a ray. And he says, what is his bridal chamber? The bridal chamber, not of the S-U-N, but of the S-O-N.

The bridal chamber of the sun, S-O-N, is the womb of the virgin Mary. Because in the womb of the virgin Mary, the sun married us. Took a body, and we are a part.

Now, if I knew how to do that, we'd be on our faces. Now, there's the bridal ceremony, the wedding ceremony at the end of history, where we get in, but he's already become a man. He's already become one of us, and a body, just like that.

In the middle of the Godhead now, he wants us. Do you notice what it says? For he chose us in him before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he projects in us to become children.

That's the first chapter. In the fifth chapter, he says, we're the bride. He's talking about the father here.

In the fifth chapter, and we're his bride. I've never been able to attend a wedding since. You cannot deal with the subject of human sexuality, if we ever see.

Now, you notice what he says. He chose us in him before that we should be holy and blameless in love. Holiness took on a completely different role for me at that point.

If I'm to live in the middle of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and he's the Holy One, the doctrine of entire sanctification gets sort of pertinent, doesn't it? Wesley's concept of perfection in love is what the

whole process is all about. To get me to the place where I can respond to his love with a completion of love. That doesn't mean perfect performance.

That doesn't mean perfect performance. It means I have nobody in my existence, and to live eternally that way. Now, you cannot deal with any of these texts.

I wish I was smart enough to tell you. To live that way so the world around you will know what the ultimate end of all is. And in your family, in your marriage relations, and it can happen to single persons.

I met the other day a Protestant nun, a girl that had been, I sat in a presence I don't think I ever sat in, where I had a song. Jesus is one of the most fulfilled persons. You know, there are some people who are called to that.

So it's not just those, but it was them. I'll thank God all my life, all the rest of my days, just a couple of hours. That's what heaven's gonna do.

I noticed that in John 13, 14, 15, 16, you know, it's all one evening. Thursday evening. He's saying, I'm going away.

The word heaven doesn't, it doesn't say where he's going. It doesn't give you a clue what it means. And our ultimate fulfillment is not in faith.

One thing in closing, on the submission bit, I started several months back trying to get in my mind that last night of Jesus, John 13, 14, 15, 16. We break it down into chapters, and in the original, it's all one. There weren't even any verses.

We'd read it differently if we read it that way instead of reading it broken up the way. But it begins, and it was the Passover. And Jesus knew that the time had come.

So what he's saying is, everything in human history is, we now come to the crux point of all Christ's Passover. Now time to meet. And knowing, and it says, and the devil, and he had loved his disciples, and he loved them, and they don't know how to translate the prepositional phrase, because it would be translated two ways.

He loved them unto the end, and it could be not time end, but he loved them totally. He loved them to the place where he was ready to give himself totally for them, loved them to the end. Then it says, and the devil had put it into the mind of Judas, the thought of betraying him.

So you've got two worlds, the one Jesus is in, the one he's going to. And you've got another two worlds. You've got the world of good and the world of evil.

That is not a sentimental meal. That upper room is the war room, the battle room, because the redemption of the creation hangs on that evening. Now listen to what he says, and Jesus knowing that all things had been put into his hands, the devil may be active, but the ultimate power is all in Christ Jesus, knowing that all things had been put into his hands, so that he takes up a towel and begins to wash their feet.

You know, if you've got enough power, you can stoop with no problem. When you think you're not quite up to it, you can't afford it, because you've got all power. And Peter said, I don't understand it.

Most of us don't. When obedience, do you think? But the one who is the sovereign Lord of all, that's the story around the words of this, doing to each other's back. And when we do, we're the most fulfilled people in the world.

You remember that scene when Mother Teresa came to watch and sitting behind her, when the cameras were on, were the high and the mighty of the earth, she was the most contented person. Everybody else there was marked by the cross. When you've got the real thing, you can't be demeaned.

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