

Ephesians 15-01-04b

Let's pick up our study now in Ephesians chapter 5. We want to see the beautiful symmetry, the structure that Paul has employed under the inspiring ministry of God's Holy Spirit to communicate this truth having to do with our view of authority, when, where, and how do we respect constituted authority. Authority is all granted by God, kings are to be prayed for, rulers are to be respected because they derive their authority from God ultimately. But, if they step outside the proper function and exercise of that authority, those under authority have a responsibility to recognize that and are no longer to labor under that abuse.

Well, Paul is expressing that here and he begins, as he says in Fellowship, where we are doing things that up build. One of the things about many persuasions, whether it is a philosophical persuasion or a religious persuasion, is there is very little of the one another-ness that characterizes the body of Christ. Even in Israel, the law of Moses was generally designed to proscribe behavior that would harm your neighbor.

It didn't prescribe a lot of beneficial things, it said look out for the widows and orphans, if you see your neighbor in need, look out for him, but there is nothing like the emphasis on mutual edification and up building, loving one another, forgiving one another, being kind to one another, being tender hearted, the five or six dozen one another commands that we find in scripture. Here when it says submitting to one another, like everything else, this has its limits. One of the things that I thought was unhelpful as I was preparing this portion of God's Word was the number of commentators who said, well, in this passage Paul says that wives should submit to their husbands in verse 22, and then in verse 25 he says that the husbands should submit to their wives.

That isn't what it says, but it's convenient, it's politically correct, it sounds great and it plays to an audience who are of that persuasion, but that isn't what the text says. What does it say? Let me offer you some labeling here that you might want to put in the margin of your Bible or put in your notes to help elucidate the structure, and it is going to become really, really clear. These structures, as we've seen many times, were second nature to people in the ancient world.

People didn't work off of printed Bibles or written manuscripts, hardly ever. They heard oral presentations, they heard verbal expressions of ideas, and so there were techniques used to signal. In the same way that we use paragraph breaks, we use topic headings, we use kick-out boxes in textbooks to emphasize what is important, sometimes now even in Bibles now they've got shaded text boxes, they've got colored codes and all kinds of helps to try to help people understand what's in the printed text.

They didn't have any of that in the ancient world where somebody is up talking as I am speaking now, and you had to concentrate and derive from the verbal presentation what is peripheral, what is central, what is supporting, what is primary. Well, this is one of those ways, and as I say,

people picked up on this almost unconsciously in the ancient world. It was a commonplace.

People listened to oratory and perorations from the time they were small children. So what is the structure here? Well, in verse 22 it says, Wives, to your own husbands. Looking back to verse 21, what is it when somebody is submitting to someone else? Submitting to one another in the fear of God.

This is the biggest idea. This is the biggest idea, submission in the fear of God, in the sphere of divine things, right? We're not talking about unbelievers and what they do. This is in the fear of God, but if you just had submitting to one another and then the chapter ended, my goodness.

Well, if you don't like the Bible lesson, you can come up after and say, well, you know, next time I want more jokes and less scripture. Next time I want you to sing a solo in the middle, and I would have to submit. Everybody's submitting to everybody, so godly counsel and suggestion here and there.

When it comes to the local church, scripture has the authority. The pastor who presents the scripture has an authoritative message to the extent that his message reflects, represents, and accurately communicates scripture. He has the authority to quiet everybody down and make that presentation decently and in good order, and that's where his authority ends.

Pastor can't tell you how to live your life unless he's also your father or your husband, maybe, but as a pastor, in the role of pastor, pastoral authority per se exists to do two things, to organize the audience and present the content of the word of God, and that's it. There is no pastoral authority to counsel, to advise, to participate in decision making. Those things may happen under some other function or some other authority, but they don't happen in the presentation of pastoral ministry.

The shepherd feeds the sheep and makes sure that the sheep are not attacked, that the sheep are organized, that they don't get in and muddy the water for other sheep, the sheep are cared for decently and in good order, and they are led to green pastures and beside still water. That's the job of the poimain, kai, the daskalos, pastor and teacher. Make sure the flock isn't distracted, isn't hurt from forces inside and outside, and feed.

So no illusions or disillusion about pastoral authority is extremely circumscribed, extremely limited, has one purpose, and that is edification through teaching. Well, submitting to one another, this needs amplification, so Paul is now going to amplify it and he's going to do it in this beautiful symmetry and the example of husbands and wives, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and the church. So A, line A for your kaiasm, the outside bracket here, all of this, the title of this is submitting to one another in the fear of God.

That's the title. That's the topic. Here's your kaiasm, line A, wives to your own husbands.

This is sort of example one. It's not the only example, it's not the exclusive example, but it is a very prominent and pertinent example because it's familiar to everyone. Nobody got here without a mother and father somewhere.

Wives and husbands, wives to your own husbands as to the Lord. A limiting feature, circumscribing line, not just any old submission, submit to your husband as to the Lord. How do we submit to the Lord? Prayerfully, wisely, knowing what the will of the Lord is, Romans 12, 1 and 2, present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, reasonable service, not unreasonable service, not crazy, strange, cultish behavior, not goofiness, reasonable service.

Submit to your husband the way all believers are to submit to the Lord. This is intelligently, thoughtfully, rationally, carefully, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Wives to your own husbands, that's line A. Line B, for the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church.

Drawing a comparison here, Christ is a lot of things to the church, He's a lot of things to the human race. Interestingly, Paul does not adduce or address the relationship of Jesus Christ to Israel. He isn't the head of Israel the way He is the head of the church, is He? He doesn't say the husband is the king of the household the way Jesus is the king of Israel.

I mean, think about it, we just take these things so for granted. There's a lot of things Paul could have said. People have familiarity with the Old Testament, he's been trained as a Pharisee, he knows the Old Testament inside and out.

He doesn't say the man's home is his castle the way David ruled in Jerusalem, the way Solomon extended the kingdom. He specifically relates Jesus Christ specifically to the church. This is only one of many roles that the Lord Jesus fulfills.

It's only one aspect of His authority as the God-man. It's a very specific and circumscribed role. What is the relationship of Jesus Christ specifically to the church? What did Jesus do for the church? Well, we're going to find out.

That's line B. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. This is already, by the way, ladies, talking to the husband. Wives, submitting to your husbands.

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. What does Christ do and what does He not do in His authority over the church? Does Jesus Christ come down and smack me around if I don't do what He commanded? Does He physically abuse me? Does He yell at me? Does He, you know, how is Christ the head of the church? Is He dominant? Is He arrogant? Is He deaf to any of the feedback? How is Christ the head of the church? That's the way the husband is the head of the wife. If you want to see the way and the means and the extent and the love-infused expression of authority, look at Jesus Christ in His care for and His function as head over the church.

This is what Scripture always does, and we always screw it up as human beings by seizing one thing and running off with it like a dog with a toy without context, without limitation, without nuance, without recognizing that, look, there are limits. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is head of the church. That's all one line.

You cannot separate the husband's authority over the wife from Christ's authority over the church and how He expresses it. What He does and does not do, as, like, similar to. Line C, He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the savior of the body.

Doesn't say He's the dictator of the body. Doesn't say He's the arbitrary king over the body. Christ is head of the church how? Line C, as its savior, as its deliverer, as its benefactor, as one who gave Himself on its behalf, sacrificially so, right? That's line C. Does it make sense so far? Wives submitting to your husbands as to the Lord, line A, no submission apart from that as to the Lord.

B, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. So, both in the submission, it's as to the Lord. In the exercise of authority, it is like the Lord Jesus.

Line C, the Lord Jesus Himself is the savior of the body. This is a positive, beneficial, constructive, loving relationship. First three lines, Jesus Christ infuses every statement, doesn't He? He is our example.

Line four, line D, A, B, C, now we're at D. C, He is the savior of the body. D, as the church is subject to Christ, also the wives to their husbands in everything. As the church is subject to Christ.

How is the church subject to Christ? How much freedom do we have in following Jesus Christ as members of the body, as believers? How much freedom do you have? What is the scope of your choice? How limited is your choice as to whether or not you want to be faithful? Whether or not you want to assemble, whether or not you want to sing, whether or not you want to serve, whether or not you want to give, whether or not you want to pray, whether or not you want to study, whether or not you want to reflect and meditate on the truth of God's Word. How much latitude do you have in your subjection to Christ? How much freedom has He given us? Does He force us or does He call us? Does He dictate to us or does He encourage us? How does Jesus Christ exercise His authority over the church? Well, line D, as the church is subject to Christ, we have a lot of choice and a lot of flexibility and a lot of freedom in that subjection, don't we? Why? Why? Because we have a merciful and a loving Savior who exercises His authority through love, not through force, right? Line D, as the church is subject to Christ, also the wives to their husbands. And once again, you have the omission of the verb.

You don't need it the second time. And this is another argument in favor of leaving hupotasso out of verse 22. Paul does the same thing here.

Also, the wives to their husbands, to their husbands, not somebody else's husband. This is

specifically in the sphere of marriage, one-on-one, wives to their husbands in everything, in everything, whatever the sphere, economic, child raising policy, future plans, division of labor, rules of the household, what does and doesn't go, what you are and aren't going to do, what you are and aren't going to spend money on, what you are and aren't going to pursue, in everything. There are no exceptions to this.

As the church is subject to Christ, also the wives to their husbands in everything. And you get the idea that is there a sphere of function as a believer where you say, well, the headship of the Lord Jesus and my role as a member of the body, that doesn't really pertain here because I'm, you know, clipping the hedge, and clipping the hedge doesn't fall under Jesus' authority, so I can do this any way I want. In everything here, it goes back to is there something you're not subject to Christ for as a believer? It's pretty much ubiquitous.

It's everywhere. It's on everything. Same thing here.

Also the wives to their husbands. There's in every sphere, you've got to have one eye on, I am the wife of my husband in the same way that as believers we say, I represent the Lord Jesus Christ as His body on this earth. There's nothing we do where that doesn't influence or pertain or condition our perspective.

Line E, A, wives submitting to your own husbands, B, the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, C, He Himself is the Savior of the body. That's the focus. That's the emphasis.

D, as the church is subject to Christ as its Savior, as its head, so the wives to their husbands in everything. Line E, husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, self-sacrificial and beneficial, self-sacrificial and beneficial. Line E. Now look at A, B, C, D, and E. Is there any of those lines so far where you do not see the Lord Jesus Christ defining, conditioning, permeating these concepts? It's all about the Lord Jesus, isn't it? Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church.

Your love should reflect the same emphasis, the same purpose, the same characteristic sacrificial beneficial nature as the Lord Jesus has done for us as His body and as His church. He gave Himself up for her. Christ has a lot of things to the church, has done a lot of things for us, but the emphasis here is on His self-sacrifice.

He wasn't looking out for His own interest. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus who did not grasp His privileges, who did not hang on to His authority, who didn't remain enthroned under His kingly crown. He came to earth and absented Himself from those things, let go of them.

They were not a thing to be grasped, right? Line F. What is the purpose? Love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her so that He might be glorious, so that He might be worshipped by all, so that He might be lifted up on high and hear the choirs of angels

sing and the white-robed throngs manifest His praise forevermore. That's why He did it. He did it so that He could inherit a kingdom.

He did it so that He could be grand and lifted up and swell with the knowledge that everybody is indebted to Him. That's why He did it. Why did He do it? Line F. That He might sanctify her, that He might benefit in a permanent and eternal way her.

Jesus Christ gave Himself up for the church for the church's benefit, that He might sanctify her. This is line F. Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word. Last great day of the feast, Jesus stood up, out of His innermost being will flow rivers of living water, the one who comes to Me.

Living water. Cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word. This is a necessary cleansing.

This is a qualifying cleansing. Being clean qualifies us, gives us privilege, gives us access. Unclean, defiled, loss of privilege, loss of access, loss of opportunity, loss of fellowship with others and with the Lord.

He gave Himself up for her, line F, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word. Remember on the night before He was crucified, was there some cleansing involved there? What happened in the upper room? Jesus typified this very concept when He stripped to the waist, put a towel out and washed the feet of the disciples. Peter says, you're not going to wash my feet.

Jesus says, if I don't wash you, you have no part, you have no inheritance with Me. It is a qualifying cleansing. If I wash your feet, you have a part with Me.

You are qualified to partake, to participate, to enjoy, to move forward into these wonderful privileges and potentials. Now, here is the center of the chiasm, the big middle, that He might present to Himself the church, glorious. The purpose in all of this is the union, the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ with a glorified church.

This strengthens the relationship. So many people, you know, marriage is having trouble, we're struggling, we need counseling. What's the matter? Are we not communicating? Are we not sensitive? Are we not listening? Are we, you know, we're too busy, we're going in different directions, we don't share common interests anymore.

We're this, that, the other, you know, I used to like you but now I don't, you know, your mother said bad things about me, I'm leaving, whatever it might be. Problems in marital relationships, you know, the incredibly high divorce rate and even that's become somewhat meaningless since people just shack up now and, you know, the definition of marriage has become so blurry nobody knows what it is anymore. But we still recognize that there are significant issues between men and women who choose to share their lives together living in what we would call a man and wife

situation.

God views it as a marriage, whatever people call it themselves, if two people move in together and start cohabiting and treating each other like man and wife, they used to call that common law marriage, now nobody wants to call it a marriage, it's a marriage. If you unite and make some sort of even temporary commitment, in God's eyes it's a marriage. God didn't ordain that some pastor say a bunch of words and sprinkle you with some holy blessing and people throw rice at you and now you're married.

What is marriage? The Jews didn't do it that way, it wasn't done that way by the Greeks. When are you married? It's a good question, we'll talk about it another time, but that he might present to himself the church in all her glory. Not that he might be glorified with the church on his arm.

Look at my trophy wife. He does it, his purpose is that we be raised to his station, that we be brought into the realm and the glow and the grace of his glory, that we share in that with him. Look at the letters to the seven churches and the promises to the overcomers.

With me on my throne, with me in white, a new name, a white stone, not hurt by the second death, gifts, sharing with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the center of the chiasm. Now let's see the symmetry.

The previous line, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that was line F. F prime, the corresponding, as we move back out of the chiasm here, if he sanctifies her and cleanses her with washing of water by the word, what is she? Having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and without blemish, blameless. You see the correspondence there, F and F prime? He sanctifies and cleanses with washing of water by the word, what is she now? No spot, no wrinkle, no such thing. Holy and without blemish, without fault, without blame, without charge, without guilt.

What was the preceding line? Line E, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, E prime. So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. See the, see the parallel, see the correspondence, husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his own wife loves himself because the two have become one flesh. You share destiny, you share blessing, you share opportunity. You share relationship and potential in Christ, in the eternal future.

It is definitional. This is what defines us, this relationship with Jesus Christ and the model on earth is the defining relationship. This is why traditionally when a woman would be introduced, she is Mrs. Thomas Bradley.

She is Mrs. James Garner. She is Mrs. This, Mrs. That, because she's, it's definitional and it's not a bad thing. People say, oh, that's so denigrating and I lose my name and my identity is wrapped up in my husband and this is bad.

Why? This is a privilege. It is a blessing. It is an opportunity.

The two become one. And if the husband is doing his job the way the Lord Jesus Christ did his job, do you feel denigrated and second class because you're now called by Jesus name? Because you now come before the Father, qualified, sanctified, holy, without spot, wrinkle, any such thing, blameless? Do you feel defiled and denigrated and second class and abused because you're called by the name of Jesus Christ? Paul says, this is what marriage does. This unity of the man and the woman.

Was Eve somehow diminished? Because she was brought forth from Adam. Adam was completed and she is completed in that union. The two become one.

There is no negativity involved unless you have a perverse mind or unless people do not do this in Christ, in the fear of the Lord, as unto the Lord, the way Jesus Christ did it. So that's E prime. Husbands ought to.

Husbands are obligated to. Dei must, this is a bond. It's the same word, desmos, chains, bonds ought to in Greek is must in the sense of this is a chain.

This is a binding obligation. Love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.

The Lord Jesus loves us because we are his body. We are evermore a part of him. What was line D as the church is subject to Christ? This is the nature of wives subjection to their husbands.

Look at the subjection of the church to Christ. How oppressive is it? How limiting is it? How much of our freedom does it take away? How oppressed and downtrodden do we feel because the Lord Jesus is the head of the church? How limiting has that been for us? The only limitation is what we do to ourselves, right? Well, look at D prime for no one ever hated his own flesh. He nourishes and cherishes his own flesh, nourishes and cherishes.

What is the nature of husband's authority over the wife? It is there, just like I mentioned earlier about a pastor. What is the pastor's authority for to nourish and build up and cherish believers who need the word of God, need somebody who can take the time and has the tools to elucidate these very truths so that we can live in the light of God's countenance, live in the light of his blessing, walk the narrow road, go through the straight gate, enter into those opportunities and potentials that Jesus died to give us. The pastor is a part of that process.

He's not there to lord it over the flock. He's not there to beat the sheep. He's not there to shear

the sheep and take the wool and sell it and build himself a big house and drive a fancy car, have a TV ministry, sell resources at \$147.50 so that you can get a refrigerator magnet and a little calendar and a plaque to put on it.

I saw this, by the way. It just drives me batty. No one ever yet did despot to his own flesh.

No normal person abuses himself. Have you seen these flagellating guys that think they're holy because they whip themselves and wear a hair shirt? Well, Paul doesn't even recognize that as normal. No one ever hated his own flesh.

And by the way, even these people that do this self-denial thing, why are they doing it? They think it will get them promoted. They're doing it for their own advancement in some weird dark corner of their mind. No one ever yet hated his own flesh.

He nourishes and cherishes his flesh, just as Christ also the church. Line C up above, he himself is the savior of the body, right? C prime, we are members of his body. We have been saved by grace through faith.

Jesus Christ came into the world to give himself on our behalf. He himself is the savior of the body. We are members of his body.

So to what extent have we been benefited by the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the extent to which a husband should be beneficial to his wife. That's the purpose of the authority is to benefit, to bless, to uplift, to glorify, to advance, to love sacrificially. What was line B? The husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is head of the church.

That's your qualifier. He's not the head of the church as Hitler was the head of Germany. He's not the head of the church the way Stalin was head of the Ruskies.

He's not the head of the church the way Pol Pot was the head of the Cambodians. He's not the head of the church the way Ho Chi Minh was the head of people. Husband is the head of the wife as Christ to the church.

Can you think of anybody that has done more at personal cost than the Lord Jesus Christ? That's the definition of the husband's role in being granted by God authority. It is the authority to bless. It is the authority to benefit.

It is the authority to be a support and a positive, the biggest positive in that lady's life. We are members of his body. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the church.

That was line B. B prime. This is the reason a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife and the two become one flesh. We are one flesh with the Lord Jesus.

We are his body. We are one. Our salvation, our standing before God is based on the fact that

we are him.

We have become one with Jesus Christ. How many times have we looked at the in him's in the first part of this letter? In him we have. In him we are.

In him we will be, right? The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. His primary responsibility is no longer to benefit his father and mother.

Now, he can still do that, but primary, primary, primary for a married man is his wife. First and foremost, does Jesus no longer have a responsibility to God, his father? Of course he does. But he is the head of the church.

He's the head of the body. That's B prime. And then you have a reiteration here.

This mystery is great. You look at all of those lines. If you wrote them down or if you've got them marked in your Bible.

A, as to the Lord. B, as Christ. C, he himself is the Savior.

D, church is subject to Christ. E, Christ loved the church. F, Christ is doing the sanctifying and cleansing.

Center of the chiasm that he might present to himself the church, glorious. F, that the results of that cleansing, no spot, no wrinkle, holy and blameless. Husbands, you've got that as your model, as your inspiration, as your aspiration.

D prime, Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, doesn't hate the church. That's the way a husband should be. C prime, we are members of Christ's body.

B prime, to become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and with reference to the church. So the summary.

Let each individual among you love his own wife, even as himself. Not just love your neighbor as yourself, love your wife as yourself. First and foremost, the ultimate expression.

And then back to A prime. What is A prime? What was A? Wives submitting to your husbands as to the Lord. A prime.

The wife is to respect the husband. Beautiful, isn't it? And what's right in the middle that the Lord Jesus Christ might present to himself the church in her glory. If you want to understand as a wife, the purpose of your husband's authority, it is given to him by God for this purpose in the same way that Jesus Christ has been made head of the church for its benefit, for our benefit and our glorification, our being lifted up and sanctified.

That defines marriage for a believer. If you're not a believer, heaven help you because it's just all a train wreck. Who knows why you're together? Who knows how long it will last? Who knows why anybody does anything? But for us as believers, it is clear it is a thing of beauty and there is a symmetry and a reflection of our vertical relationship with God through Christ in our horizontal relationships as husbands and wives and by extension to the family that we're going to see described in the.

Chapter six section that we'll begin to address next time. Well, it's worthy of reflection for all of us. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the beautiful expression of truth that illuminates our lives and our relationships that at the same time that it gives us instruction and counsel on our personal relationships, it also reveals to us the bright hope and the bright future that we have because of the Lord Jesus and because of his love for us and his relationship to us as the head of the church. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts and impress them on our conscience so that as we make our decisions, as we express ourselves in our homes and as we exist in the midst of this generation, the light of the Lord Jesus will shine in us and through us just as it did when he was here in person so that all praise and glory will ultimately rise and be directed to you.

We thank you for your grace. We thank you for your provision. We thank you for the love that you've expressed to us through the Lord Jesus Christ and we pray these things in his name.

Amen.