

“Husbands Love Your Wives” - Ephesians 5:25-33 – July 15th, 2018

- The title of today's teaching is “Husbands Love Your Wives.”
- The text before us today is the go-to passage whenever I do a wedding and the reason is that of the emphasis on the husband.
- Three times, the Apostle Paul says to the husband, that they are to love their wives and he explains both the “what” and “how.”

- Actually, when you fully understand the “what” of this kind of love, you're driven to the “how” because the “what” is impossible.
- The reason the “what” is impossible for us as husbands is because of the word that the Apostle Paul uses when he says love.
- He is using the word “Agape,” which is one of four different words for love in the original Greek language of the New Testament.

- One of the Greek words for love is Eros, where we get our English word for erotic, which is a physical and even a sensual love.
- Another word is Storge, which is a love of natural affection that a parent will have for a child and a child will have for the parent.
- Then, there's the Greek word Philia, which is a brotherly love and it's the kind of love that we have for one another as a friend.

- It's this word Agape that is entirely different than the other loves, such that, it describes the unconditional love God has for us.
- However, we would err greatly to assume agape love is out of reach for husbands under the banner of being God's love for us.
- We can actually have agape love for the world and the things of the world, which is the word that's used in John and 1st John.

1 John 2:15–17 - 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

John 3:18–19 - 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

- If we're capable of love for the world and the darkness in the world, then we're capable of loving our wives in this way as well.
- It's for this reason that absent the Holy Spirit a husband will have no hope of loving his wife in the way that Paul describes here.
- This is why context is of paramount importance in the sense that Paul couches this in terms of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

- It's with this understanding that we're better able to tackle the text before us concerning the way a husband is to love his wife.
- Specifically, there are three ways that Paul lists, the first of which is to love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself.
- Secondly, to love her as he loves his own body, and the third is the husband is to love her as much as he already loves himself.

- You'll forgive the simplicity with which I say this but a husband who loves his wife this way makes marriage problems go away.
- The reason being is that when he does, the wife will, as God made her, submit to her husband's leadership, and respect him.
- The wife who won't respect him until he loves her, and the husband who won't love her until she respects him are full of pride.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - No husband is entitled to say that he is the head of the wife unless he loves his wife ... So the reign of the husband is to be a reign and a rule of love; it is a leadership of love.”

Here's the bottom line: if a husband will love his wife as Christ loves the church, and gives himself up for her as the spiritual leader, making her holy and pure by way of God's Word, and will love her the same way he loves, cares, and provides for the needs of his own body, making her the most important person in his life next to the Lord, and loves her and values her as much as he loves himself, then his wife will have absolutely no problem whatsoever submitting to him and being respectful toward him.

- I would humbly submit we can either have a marriage that's hell on earth, or we can have a marriage that's heaven on earth.
- I want to close with a story I first heard way back in the 1980's, about a husband who unconditionally loved his wife in this way.
- It's titled, “Johnny Lingo's Eight-Cow Wife.” It was in Reader's Digest in 1988, but originally written by Patricia McGerr in 1965.

Johnny Lingo's Eight-Cow Wife

My trip to the Kiniwata Island in the Pacific was a memorable one. Although the island was beautiful and I had an enjoyable time, the thing I remember most about my trip was the fact "Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife." I'm reminded of it every time I see a woman belittle her husband or a wife wither under her husband's scorn. I want to say to them, "You should know *why* Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife." Johnny Lingo is known throughout the islands for his skills, intelligence, and savvy. If you hire him as a guide, he will show you the best fishing spots and the best places to get pearls. Johnny is also one of the sharpest traders in the islands. He can get you the best possible deals. The people of Kiniwata all speak highly of Johnny Lingo. Yet, when they speak of him, they always smile just a little mockingly. A couple days after my arrival to Kiniwata, I went to the manager of the guesthouse to see who he thought would be a good fishing guide. "Johnny Lingo," said the manager. "He's the best around. When you go shopping, let him do the bargaining. Johnny knows how to make a deal." "Johnny Lingo!" hooted a nearby boy. The boy rocked with laughter as he said, "Yea, Johnny can make a deal alright!" "What's going on?" I demanded. "Everybody tells me to get in touch with Johnny Lingo and then they start laughing. Please, let me in on the joke." "Oh, the people like to laugh," the manager said, shrugging. "Johnny's the brightest and strongest young man in the islands. He's also the richest for his age." "But ..." I protested. "... if he's all you say he is, why does everyone laugh at him behind his back?" "Well, there is one thing. Five months ago, at fall festival, Johnny came to Kiniwata and found himself a wife. He gave her father eight cows!"

I knew enough about island customs to be impressed. A dowry of two or three cows would net a fair wife and four or five cows would net a very nice wife. "Wow!" I said. "Eight cows! She must have beauty that takes your breath away." "She's not ugly, ..." he conceded with a little smile, "... but calling her 'plain' would definitely be a compliment. Sam Karoo, her father, was afraid he wouldn't be able to marry her off. Instead of being stuck with her, he got eight cows for her. Isn't that extraordinary? This price has never been paid before." "Yet, you called Johnny's wife 'plain?' " "I said it would be a compliment to call her plain. She was skinny and she walked with her shoulders hunched and her head ducked. She was scared of her own shadow." "Well," I said, "I guess there's just no accounting for love." "True enough." agreed the man. "That's why the villagers grin when they talk about Johnny. They get special satisfaction from the fact the sharpest trader in the islands was bested by dull old Sam Karoo." "But how?" "No one knows and everyone wonders. All of the cousins urged Sam to ask for three cows and hold out for two until he was sure Johnny would pay only one. To their surprise Johnny came to Sam Karoo and said, 'Father of Sarita, I offer eight cows for your daughter.' " "Eight cows." I murmured. "I'd like to meet this Johnny Lingo."

I wanted fish and pearls, so the next afternoon I went to the island of Nurabandi. As I asked directions to Johnny's house, I noticed Johnny's neighbors were also amused at the mention of his name. When I met the slim, serious young man I could see immediately why everyone respected his skills. However, this only reinforced my confusion over him. As we sat in his house, he asked me, "You come here from Kiniwata?" "Yes." "They speak of me on that island?" "Yes. They say you can provide me anything I need. They say you're intelligent, resourceful, and the sharpest trader in the islands." He smiled gently. "My wife is from Kiniwata." "Yes, I know." "They speak of her?" "A little." "What do they say?" "Why, just" The question caught me off balance. "They told me you were married at festival time." "Nothing more?" The curve of his eyebrows told me he knew there had to be more. "They also say the marriage settlement was eight cows." I paused. "They wonder why." "They ask that?" His eyes lighted with pleasure. "Everyone in Kiniwata knows about the eight cows?" I nodded. "And in Nurabandi, everyone knows it too?" His chest expanded with satisfaction. "Always and forever, when they speak of marriage settlements, it will be remembered that Johnny Lingo paid eight cows for Sarita." So that's the answer, I thought: Vanity. Just then Sarita entered the room to place flowers on the table. She stood still for a moment to smile at her husband and then left. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. The lift of her shoulders, the tilt of her chin, and the sparkle in her eyes all spelled self-confidence and pride. Not an arrogant and haughty pride, but a confident inner beauty that radiated in her every movement.

I turned back to Johnny and found him looking at me. "You admire her?" he murmured. "She ... she's gorgeous." I said. "Obviously, this is not the one everyone is talking about. She can't be the Sarita you married on Kiniwata." "There's only one Sarita. Perhaps, she doesn't look the way you expected." "She doesn't. I heard she was homely. They all make fun of you because you let yourself be cheated by Sam Karoo." "You think eight cows was too many?" A smile slid over his lips. "No, but how can she be so different from the way they described her?" Johnny said, "Think about how it must make a girl feel to know her husband paid a very low dowry for her? It must be insulting to her to know he places such little value on her. Think about how she must feel when the other women boast about the high prices their husbands paid for them. It must be embarrassing for her. I would not let this happen to my Sarita." "So, you paid eight cows just to make your wife happy?" "Well, of course I wanted Sarita to be happy, but there's more to it than that. You say she is different from what you expected. This is true. Many things can change a woman. There are things that happen on the inside and things that happen on the outside. However, the thing that matters most is how she views herself. In Kiniwata, Sarita believed she was worth nothing. As a result, that's the value she projected. Now, she knows she is worth more than any other woman in the islands. It shows, doesn't it?" "Then you wanted ..." "I wanted to marry Sarita. She is the only woman I love." "But ..." I was close to understanding. "But," he finished softly, "I wanted an eight-cow wife."