

Word Notes Sunday 08/06/14 Tony Hodge - Marriage

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Texts: Eph 5:21-32

One of the main story threads through the Bible is about marriage – from Creation in Genesis 2 through our relationship with Jesus on to the New Order in Revelations 18, 19, 21 & 22 and the marriage celebration of the bride and the Lamb. One well known passage is that in Ephesians 5 which talks about relationships within the church, especially within the family and links the relationship between husband and wife directly with that between Christ and the church in what Paul calls a “profound mystery”.

The submission often seen as only applying to couples is not restricted to them alone but is in the context of all members of the body submitting to one another (verse 21). Much has been made of the instruction to obey or submit as the church does to Christ and we have to be careful to understand just what that submission entails. The Greek word *υποτασσο* (*hooopotasso*) can be used in two ways – relating to military order and obedience or non-military use as a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. Getting this right is not as straightforward as it might seem, perhaps the hardest is how to be “head” of the family in the most Christ-like way possible, not “lording it” over your wife or how to be in submission but not cowed as a wife. Always look to how Jesus did it for your guide.

When we marry we:

- Leave – when we join with a spouse we have to leave something behind of our single life, when we join with Christ we leave the old life behind.
- Cleave – having left one family we join with our spouse to make anew family, similarly in Christ we join the family of God.
- Become one – husband and wife are one flesh, Christians form one Body of Christ.

Our submission to Christ and to each other is characterised as:

- Voluntary not subjugation – Jesus could have come and subjugated the Earth, at the time many Jews thought that was what the King would do, God had other plans to draw people to Himself through the greatest gift of Love ever – the gift of His Son. Nobody forces us into the Kingdom.
- Starts with our “giving in” to Jesus in accepting we can’t find salvation in any other way and deciding to live our lives His way not ours.
- Cooperation – we are called to work with Jesus, joining with Him in his mission to bring Good News to all mankind, through taking the Gospel, building His Church and being prepared as His Bride at the glorious wedding feast of The Lamb.
- Assuming responsibility – to live our lives for Him and in His way not mine and to take our full part in the family of God.
- Taking up His burden – which is easy and His yoke light! We also take up our brothers and sisters burden – in prayer and in deeds, meeting their needs as we are able.

NB practical help in building a strong Christian marriage is available by signing up for “The Marriage Course” from HTB/Alpha run by Jan and Tony. Ask them for details.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

In Gen 2:18 the Lord says that it is not good for the man to be alone. Does this mean the Lord got it wrong somehow? Was Adam created incomplete and what changed when Eve was created from his flesh?

What does that say to you in regard to mankind being made in the image of God? (Gen 1:27)

God is a God of relationships and hungrily desires relationship with us and for us to be in right relationship with each other which involves “submission”. What does Paul’s teaching on submission say to you about:

- Our relationship with God through Jesus?
- Our relationships with others in the Body?

Read 1 Cor 7:29-38. What is Paul’s motivation for this guidance (v 26) and what is your response?

Pray for any needs that arise during the discussion.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)