

## **Your Throne, O Lord, is Forever**

**Sermon Text:** Psalm 45

**Study Texts:** Ephesians 5:25-32

**Sermon Recap:** The main idea of this week's sermon is: The King of kings will be exalted forever. Take time before your growth group to review the key points you noted from today's sermon.

**Sermon Connection:** Psalm 45 is a royal wedding song written for the occasion of the wedding of the prince, the son of the king. In the Psalm, we see a great celebration for the son of the king is to be married. We see the splendor of his attire; he is arrayed in his full kingly dress; he awaits his bride. The bride is adorned for her husband; she is radiant; she is ready to become his wife; she is ready to find her new identity in him and in his people.

In the immediate context, Psalm 45 speaks of one of David's sons, Solomon perhaps. But, in the larger biblical context, the Psalm speaks of Christ as the Redeemer (Husband) of His people, the Church. Therefore, to consider this theme further, we turn to Ephesians 5 where Paul ties together Christ's role in salvation and the husband's role in marriage. Just as Jesus is the Bridegroom who honors and glorifies His Bride, so also the husband is to honor and glorify his wife as he leads her to know and love Jesus.

### **Lesson Plan**

**Lesson Goal:** To see that husbands, following in the example of King Jesus, teach their wives to hope in God for salvation

#### **Lesson Points:**

**Point 1: Husbands, Love Your Wives as Christ Loved the Church.** (vv. 25-27)

**Point 2: Husbands, Love Your Wives as You Love Yourself.** (vv. 28-30)

**Point 3: Husbands, Love Your Wives with the Gospel.** (vv. 31-32)

**The Context:** Paul's letter to the Ephesians has two portions. The first is doctrinal (chps. 1-3) laying the foundation of salvation as being from God alone. In the second portion (chps. 4-6),

Paul applies these truths to the Christian life. And specifically in 5:25-32, Paul applies and shows how the role of the Christian husband is to teach the world that Jesus saves.

**Opening Question:** Husbands, when you think of your role in your marriage, does teaching your wife about the gospel through how you love and lead her dominate your thoughts? Why or why not?

**Transition Statement:** As we will see, this is to be the most important question for the Christian husband...

**Point 1 - Husbands, Love Your Wives as Christ Loved the Church.** (vv. 25-27)

In v. 25, how does Paul instruct husbands to love their wives?

Paul instructs husbands to love their wives “...as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...” The office of the Christian husband is primarily one of imaging and modeling Jesus to his wife. He promises to love her, yes, to cherish her, yes, but his ultimate promise to his wife is to love her in a particular way. On his wedding day, the Christian husband is saying to his wife, “You can know what to expect because I am promising to love like Jesus loves His Church.” The husband promises his wife that he will extend a love that builds up, corrects, satisfies, covers wrongs, restores, establishes place and identity, comforts, and above all, brings her to God.

How does the hope of Psalm 45 provide insight into Paul’s instruction in v. 25?

This type of love—the love of a husband that brings a wife to God—is the kind of love we see celebrated in Psalm 45. While the immediate application of the Psalm is to the son of King David, the larger biblical placement points to Jesus as the Husband of His people. The Church, the Bride of Christ, finds her radiance and glory, her place and identity, her hope from spiritual hurt and depression totally in her union with King Jesus. Because His throne is forever, her hope. Her place and her identity are sure.

In v. 26, Paul uses salvation language to describe how a husband is to lead and love his wife. What does it mean for a husband to “*sanctify*” his wife, and to cleanse her “...by the washing of water with the Word”?

It is most likely that Paul has baptism in mind when he uses the phrase, “...by the washing of water with the Word.” Baptism represents the spiritual reality it symbolizes: the death of the Christian to sin and resurrection to new life through Jesus Christ. We are set apart through baptism as God’s people. Through the gospel, Jesus acted in the best interest of His Church. In the same way, husbands, in acting like Jesus, are to act in the best interest of their wives by setting her apart as special, as one who is identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The way a husband “husbands” his wife should bring her to Jesus In the same way we see the groom of Psalm 45 bringing his bride into a new life.

According to v. 27, what is the goal of every Christian husband? Why/how does this goal assure a measure of happiness and satisfaction for every Christian husband?

The goal of every Christian husband is to present his wife unto God in the full splendor of the gospel. While he, himself, does not achieve this for her, the husband has the distinct work of helping his wife to work out/exercise/apply the gospel in her life (Phil 2:12). In this way, he identifies himself with the work of Jesus, the best Husband; and in doing so, he frees himself to be fully satisfied in Christ. While no spouse will ever fully please the other, when spouses—particularly husbands in this context—look to Jesus, fullness of joy is promised and found (Ps. 16:11).

### **Point 2 - Husbands, Love Your Wives as You Love Yourself.** (vv. 28-30)

What does Paul mean in v. 28 saying that husbands should, “...*love their wives as their own bodies.*”

The term translated as “bodies” can also be rendered “selves.” Husbands should love their wives as they love themselves. The meaning here calls attention to the one-flesh union that God performs between a man and his wife. In marriage, a man and woman pledge themselves so fully to one another that they give up their own autonomy. Marriage is a declaration between two people in which they say, “I am no longer complete without you.” They also say to one another, “I am not my own. We are each other’s.” Paul’s point, then, is to show that a husband’s interest in his wife is rightly ordered stewardship and love to God. Just as we care for our own bodies, nourishing it for health, so also a Christian husband is to do the same for his wife. One commentator notes, “When a husband cares lovingly for his wife, he is caring for the one who is one flesh with him.”<sup>1</sup>

How does the example of Jesus loving the Church help to clarify this otherwise self-interested approach to love?

We see this type of self-sacrificing love displayed in King Jesus. He cares for His Bride, the Church, by sacrificing Himself for Her. Jesus did not love the Church and sacrifice Himself merely for His Own benefit, although He was glorified in it. He loved the Church for the glory of God the Father. In the same way, Jesus teaches us that a husband’s glory and joy are found in honoring and sacrificing for his wife. A good husband has a self-interest in rightly loving and honoring his wife, for in it, he glorifies God and finds satisfying joy.

How does Psalm 45 help us to understand the picture of the gospel in marriage, also depicted in Ephesians 5?

As we note from Psalm 45, the Bride represents the people of God who find their hope and identity in Jesus, the Bridegroom. The placement of Psalm 45 teaches us that even though we experience hardship and suffering (Psalms 42-44), we have ultimate hope of salvation because we are joined body and soul to our King, our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary, Ephesians*, 153.

husbands should seek not to be the savior of his wife but to be a constant reminder of the hope that she has in King Jesus, the true and steadfast Bridegroom.

**Point 3 - Husbands, Love Your Wives with the Gospel.** (vv. 31-32)

Paul says in v. 31 that in marriage, a man and woman become one flesh. How does this reflect the bride's new identity from Psalm 45?

Within marriage, the one-flesh union represents the bond of self-giving and submission that goes on between a husband and wife. In Psalm 45, we see a beautiful bride who has come to marry her husband, the king. In submitting herself to marriage, especially in this Jewish context, she is forsaking her familial ties and taking on the full identity of her husband. She now finds her identity in him. In the same way, when we come to Christ through salvation, we break our ties with the world. We leave behind our old loyalties, our old ways of living, and we find our new identity in Jesus in being His bride.

Note to leaders: This does not mean that we are denying the personhood of the bride, or that she is somehow becoming less-than her husband or anything of the sort. Rather, as Psalm 45 shows, salvation means a break with the world and its practices as we adopt the culture and identity of heaven.

Why does the leaving of one family for another help us to better understand what happens in the gospel?

Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are "*delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son*" (Col. 1:13) This means that our citizenship changes, our culture changes, and our way of living changes. The marriage of the bride in Psalm 45 helps us to see this, and Ephesians 5 helps us to further see that it is entirely good and right because in finding a good husband, a wife prospers and flourishes. The bride of Psalm 45 has not only found a good husband, she has found a husband who saves her from hardship and suffering (Psalm 42-44).

Psalm 45 is a teaching Psalm: Look to God, for He saves and He reigns. How can Christian marriage, and specifically the office of the Christian husband, serve to encourage both the wife and single adults to look to God for salvation?

Psalm 45 was originally written for the occasion of a royal wedding, and yet, God's ultimate purpose for the Psalm was far larger. It was ultimately meant to picture for us the marriage of Christ and His people. It was meant to show us how Jesus saves His people from sin and beautifully adorns them with the gospel, giving them new hope and a new people.

Within a healthy marriage, a wife who is led by a Jesus-centered husband will flourish and prosper. She will be loved, encouraged, disciplined and changed, all for the glory of God. Speaking of this kind of marriage, a pastor once said a wife will never regret submitting to such a man. In the same way a wife is encouraged, Christian marriage should encourage

those who are single among us. Singleness is not wrong, and it does not leave a person incomplete. But, just as the bride is encouraged to hope in Jesus through her husband's love, so the single ones among us should be encouraged to hope in Jesus through the love they see displayed in our marriages.

### **The Big Picture - Marriage, a Picture of Salvation for All**

Psalm 45 is a beautiful picture of how Jesus Christ saves His people from sin and brokenness. The gospel is not only salvation from sin, it is also salvation into God's glory. In Ephesians 5, Paul helps us to see that God designed marriage, not as salvation itself, but as a picture of the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ alone. The role of the Christian husband, then, is primarily one of knowing, loving, and showing Christ to his wife. As he leads and loves her, she will be brought to Jesus, and others will be encouraged to look to Jesus for salvation and grace.

### **Application Questions**

- Husbands, how are you loving your wife like Jesus loves the Church?
- Husbands, how might you have misunderstood your role in the life of your marriage?
- Wives and families, how are you honoring and affirming your husband/father's role?
- As a growth group, how can you all affirm and encourage the husband's in your group to love Jesus more for the sake of one another and others?