

## CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS

### Session 7 - A Mysterious Type of Christ and the Church

#### Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:22-33

**Ep 5:22** Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands as to the Lord;

**Ep 5:23** For a husband is head of the wife as also Christ is Head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the Body.

**Ep 5:24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so also *let* the wives *be subject* to their husbands in everything.

**Ep 5:25** Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

**Ep 5:26** That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word,

**Ep 5:27** That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

**Ep 5:28** In the same way the husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his own wife loves himself.

**Ep 5:29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,

**Ep 5:30** Because we are members of His Body.

**Ep 5:31** For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.

**Ep 5:32** This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

**Ep 5:33** Nevertheless you also, each one of you, in the same way love your own wife as yourself; and the wife should fear her husband.

#### Today's Reading

Many Christians know that husband and wife are a type of Christ and the church. However, most know this type only in a superficial way. Their knowledge of this mysterious type does not touch their being or affect their living. We need to get into the depths of this type in order that our being and our life may be changed by it.

The first couple in the Bible, Adam and Eve, present a significant and complete picture of Christ and the church. According to the book of Genesis, God did not create man and woman at the same time and in the same way. Firstly, God formed man's body from the dust of the ground. Then He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man [446] became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). After God created man, He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). The animals and the fowl were brought to Adam, and Adam named them. But for Adam "there was not found a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:20). Within Adam there was the desire to have a counterpart, to have someone to match him. Among the cattle, the beasts, and the fowl, there was no counterpart to Adam. In order to produce such a counterpart, "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam" (Gen. 2:21). While Adam slept, the Lord took one of Adam's ribs and used it for the building of a woman (Gen. 2:22, Heb.). In life, nature, and form the woman was the same as the man. Therefore, when God brought the woman to Adam, Adam exclaimed, "This time it is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23, Heb.). Adam knew that at last he had found his counterpart.

Because there was no counterpart for Christ in the created universe, God caused Christ to die on the cross. As He slept there, His side was opened, and blood and water came forth (John 19:34). Because in Genesis 2 the problem of sin had not come in, that chapter mentions only the rib that was taken out of Adam; it says nothing about blood. But John 19 speaks of blood, which solves the problem of sin. The water signifies the flowing life of Christ, the eternal life, which produces the church. This life is also typified by the rib. According to John 19, not one of the Lord's bones was broken when He was on the cross. This was a fulfillment of the Scripture which said, "Not a bone of him shall be broken" (Psa. 34:20). The unbroken bone of Christ signifies Christ's unbreakable eternal life. Hence, Adam's rib typifies the unbreakable eternal life of Christ. It is with this eternal life that the church is built up as the Bride, the counterpart prepared for Christ. In this building up of the Bride, Christ gains the church as a match for Himself.

In the church there is no place for our natural life and fallen human nature. The human life and nature are not adequate to match Christ. In order to be His counterpart, we need to be one with Christ in life and in nature. This means that Christ and the church as one unit have the same life and nature. Furthermore, Christ and the church have the same image and stature. We should not merely know this as a doctrine, but see it as a heavenly vision. We need to see why we must receive Christ as our life and partake of His divine nature and, furthermore, be transformed into His image from glory to glory. We also need to see that we must attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ because we are to be Christ's counterpart. If we see this vision, we shall be able to understand the type of Christ and the church in chapter five of Ephesians.

According to the New Testament, Christ's care of the church has two aspects. The inner aspect is the nourishing, and the outer aspect is the cherishing. To be nourished is to have something imparted into us inwardly, whereas to be cherished is to be warmed and comforted outwardly. Cherishing is related to environment. In our environment or circumstances the Lord Jesus is often real to us as a warm, tender breeze blowing upon us. As this warm breeze comes upon us, we have the sense of being soothed tenderly. Although this takes place in the environment, it is something more than the environment itself. It is even something that surpasses the Lord's presence. When the Lord's presence becomes a gentle breeze, we experience His cherishing. This cherishing includes soothing, comfort, and rest.

In the environment of the church life, we often experience the Lord's cherishing, although we may not even be conscious of it. However, if for any length of time we are in an environment where there is no church, we sense that the climate has changed and that the environment is different. Then we begin to sense that we have lost something, that the tender, warm breeze is no longer blowing upon us. We may have everything necessary for our material existence, but we know that something we formerly enjoyed is missing. When we return to the church life, we immediately and spontaneously enter into the environment and atmosphere of the Lord's cherishing. Once again we are warmed, soothed, and comforted. This is cherishing.