

Sunday June 19th 2016
Fathers' Day
'And you fathers.....'

1). When the first person of the Trinity communicates His nature and character to His creation He describes Himself as 'Father' – He is 'God the Father'. And within this definition God describes Himself as, Spirit, love, compassion, grace, mercy, sacrifice, teaching, discipline and judgment – Eph 6:23 *Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Heb 12:5 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;*

a). We are all 'sons of God' by the fact of our creation in Christ at the moment of our new birth - Ga 3:26 *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

And from the moment of our new birth onwards our Heavenly Father, out of His love for us, trains us as a son for the purpose of our being adopted as a firstborn son so as to rule as a joint heir with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.

b). Not only does He train us and teach us through the written Word, but He has also provided us with the example that we are to follow through the Word made flesh – Lu 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

1Pe 2:20 *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

It is then solely within the context of the coming Kingdom of Christ that God deals with us as sons and relates to us as our 'Father' – a Father who is also a Husband.

c). If we take this foundational relationship between God the Father and those who are eternally saved and bring this over into the marriage relationship between a man and a woman God uses the same term, 'father', to describe the husband when a child is born to that couple. At that point the husband becomes father as well as husband.

d). For the eternally saved father, the raising of his children must be seen with the same end goal in view as that which is His Heavenly Father's goal for him - Pr 22:5 ¶ *Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards his soul will be far from them. 6 ¶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*

1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

The raising of children within a Christian family cannot be disconnected from the purpose that God created Man in the beginning; the purpose that must form the foundation on which all else is built.

2). In the Book of Ephesians we find instruction given to fathers that speaks to this same thing - Eph 6:4 *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

a). So we see that there is one thing fathers are not to do – 'do not provoke your children to wrath'.

b). Instead fathers are to bring them up in the child training and admonition of the Lord with a view to Christ's coming Kingdom.

c). And to do this fathers will not only take responsibility for teaching the truth of the scriptures within the family but also model a life of faithful obedience to those same scriptures thereby giving a tangible connection to the One who is our Father in heaven.

d). And this is of paramount importance as we realize that the Ephesians verse we have just read is within the context of the spiritual warfare with the Judgment Seat of Christ in view.

3). And within the day to day routine of normal living there is no better opportunity for the child to witness his father's life of faithful obedience as he

works on the salvation of his soul than to see it in operation within his parents' marriage – a relationship which is itself to parallel and picture the relationship between Christ and His church – Eph 5:31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* 32 *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

a). What we need to realize then is that we cannot separate the role of husband from that of father as the actions of the father are determined by his role as husband as he seeks first the Kingdom and God's righteousness.

b). I am sure that we will understand that any child's perception of what marriage is and how a husband is to behave in it is determined by what that child sees everyday – and this in turn will teach what are the priorities of the father and how seriously he takes them.

4). And so as we look at scripture we will see that the primary role of the husband/father within this context is that of 'head'.

a). Eph 5:22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*

1Co 11:3 *But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

b). And the reason for this is found in - 1Co 11:8 *For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.*

c). Now please note that the husband is the 'head' of his wife in the same way that Christ is the 'head' of His church and the same way that God the Father is the 'head' of Christ – notice how one compliments the other.

d). If we think about God the Father and Christ for a moment we will realize that headship here is not an issue of superiority – God the Father and God the Son are completely equal - 1Jo 2:23 *Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

e). It is their role within the Godhead for the purpose of bringing to fulfillment God's plan for rulership that is complimentary and also differentiates one from the other and in the same way the husband and the wife are equal - 1Pe 3:7b *as being heirs together of the grace of life,*

And their roles are differentiated and complimentary towards the same end - Ge 2:18 ¶ *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."*

f). The husband is assigned the role of head, so as to lead and this is given by the command of scripture - It is never a question of whether the husband wants the role, or feels he can do it, or feels qualified, or has the confidence. The moment he becomes husband he is 'head' and from that point on it's just a question of how well that role is fulfilled.

6). The extraordinary thing is that God has delegated the authority to be head to the husband in the same way as we see authority delegated to God the Son Eph 1:22 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

a). And with that delegated authority also comes responsibility – can you imagine the enormity of what it means for God to place a husband as 'head' over the lives of other human beings and then to call him 'father'?

b). No doubt as we think about this husbands will feel an encouragement to fulfill this role the way God has laid it out because the success of the husband/father in this role, from God's perspective, will be seen through his faithfulness to the commands of scripture, ultimately resulting in the salvation of his soul.

Power Point

7). So, having established that the husband is the head of the wife by God's command – what does it look like to be the 'head' in practical terms?

a). The first scripture we shall look at concerns being a leader within the church, but this scripture also gives us a good insight into the role of head within the family - 1Ti 3:2 *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not*

given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

b). So, being head requires the husband to rule his own house, his family, 'well' displaying the character traits seen in v3; then in v5 we see that ruling his own house and taking care of the church of God are synonymous actions.

c). To rule means to stand before, to stand in front of as the one who has responsibility. And we would understand this in the same sense as taking care of, looking after, protecting – and this is done 'well' if it is done according to the scriptures.

8). Then into the idea of 'taking care of' we can add this - 1Ti 5:8 *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

The word translated, 'provide' has the idea of preparing beforehand.

a). Taking care of then must also include providing, and providing is to be proactive, it is planning and being prepared in advance.

b). And I am sure we did not miss the shocking consequence of deliberately not providing - *he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

c). There is no place here for passivity, for apathy or absence – this is the role of the head given to the husband/father by God; this is the one who is the leader of the family, who provides for the family, not only materially but especially spiritually.

9). The next thing we would consider is how the husband is to do this – what attitude of heart is to direct his actions as head of his wife?

a). 1Pe 3:7 *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

b). According to the scriptures there must be understanding, there must be the giving of honor – as both husband and wife are heirs together of the

grace of life – and failure to do so for the husband will hinder his prayers - Hinder literally means to cut down.

c). To have understanding of his wife would mean to have intimate perception with regards to his wife's emotions, feelings and needs so that he could respond accordingly– in the same way that Christ understands that husband and responds to him.

12). We are going to move on now from the role of the husband to the scriptural responsibility of the husband – within the role as head, what is the husband's primary responsibility?

a). Just as the role of head is given by command of God, so is the responsibility that comes with that role given by command, and we find the command in two specific places in scripture.

b). Eph 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

Col 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

And here we can plainly see it – 'husbands love your wives'.

c). This is the command of God to husbands – it is not a suggestion and it is not optional – and the surprising thing is that God has to command husbands to love their wives – we would tend to think that this is automatic, but it is not.

13). Husbands are to love their wives, just as Christ also loved the church – so we are dealing with love here that goes beyond romantic inclination to a love

that is unconditional and sacrificial – the word ‘love’ here is the same Greek word, ‘agape’, that we find in - Joh 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

a). The husband’s love for his wife is to be unconditional – he is to love her irrespective of her attitude, behavior or reciprocation – this is an action in faithful obedience to the command of God, not in response to the action of the wife and demonstrates the love Christ extends to us.

b). And the husband’s love is to be sacrificial – and we would understand this in two ways. Firstly, it will of course require the death of self to love this way as in our flesh we would tend to only want to love our wife if our wife deserved it, but in the spiritual the next scripture provides our model for this sacrificial love - Ro 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

c). Now the command here to love, in the Greek language, is given in the present tense which means this is to be a continuous action. It is to begin at the point where the man becomes head and it is then to continue without ceasing until ‘death do us part’. At no time then is the husband ever to stop loving his wife unconditionally and sacrificially. And if the husband does stop doing this then God calls it sin.

d). We would realize that God in Christ never stops loving us, irrespective of what we do – what a perfect opportunity God has given the husband/father to model this for his children.

e). The command is also given in what is called the active voice, which means that loving his wife is something the husband is to do actively.

f). This then moves us beyond the thought of, ‘I love my wife’, and beyond the feelings of love for my wife that I experience into the realm of taking action through which my wife knows and feels that she is loved.

g). And finally the command is written in the imperative mood, which means that the husband is to love his wife by his own choice. The husband can choose to love his wife or he can choose not to. It really is a matter of choice; a matter of obedience or disobedience, modelled before the children.

h). What we will realize here of course is that if the husband says he no longer loves his wife it is because he has chosen not to – and because this is a

matter of choice he can choose to change his mind and start loving her again in obedience to the scriptures.

i). Please remember that this is a command of God, and we are never commanded to do something we cannot do as He will always provide the grace for us to do it.

17). If we go back to the Colossians 3:19 scripture - *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.* - we find something the husband is commanded to do, 'love your wife', and, something he is commanded not to do, 'do not be bitter' toward her.

a). So the command is to love on the one hand and not be bitter on the other.

b). The idea behind the Greek word translated 'bitter' is that of stabbing or piercing for the purpose of causing pain - and this is something husbands are commanded not to do.

c). This means there should never be an unkind tone of voice, but always compassion - Never a harsh or demeaning manner, but always gentleness - Never tearing down, but always encouraging. In fact the very way the Lord deals with us in the present in preparation for the future.

18). God has made every wife so that the thing she needs most is the love of her husband, and He has given the husband the responsibility and the grace to fulfill that need.

a). Although the husband needs to be loved the thing he needs the most is the respect of his wife - and it won't be any surprise to know that this is what wives are commanded to give.

19). Let's call to mind that which was stated in Genesis and repeated in our Ephesians Chapter 5 scripture - *Ge 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

a). With that in mind let's recall another verse from Ephesians 5 - *29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

b). Now follow where this takes us – the husband and wife are one flesh, therefore to nourish and cherish our wife is to nourish and cherish our self.

c). And the example here is the Lord and the church – the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, because the church is His body – Eph 5:30 *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*

d). And how does the Lord nourish and cherish His Church? He does it through the Word. And what is His purpose for doing so? Eph 5:27 *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

And again we see the inextricable connection between the husband's obedience to the scriptures in his role as head and his faith being brought to its goal, all within the sphere of headship within the marriage relationship.

20). And finally, let us remember the context for marriage within God's purpose for Man – Genesis, as we know, introduces the marriage relationship as a prerequisite for rulership by Adam and the Woman. A relationship that finds its fulfillment with Christ and His Bride in Revelation - Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

a). In between these two points, Genesis and Revelation, we find ourselves and marriage in the here and now, a relationship that, because of its scriptural context, is to transcend a simple joining together in matrimony by presenting a continuous, tangible picture of the relationship between Christ and those who will constitute His Bride.

b). And what greater way can there be to demonstrate to our children the love that Christ has for us than the everyday example of the love that Dad has for Mom?

c). What an awesome responsibility and what an incredible opportunity.

d). And of course, husbands, as we embrace wholeheartedly our role to lead as head and our responsibility to love, so we are being faithfully obedient to the Word of God, so we are doing a good work and producing fruit for the Kingdom, so we are making our own wedding garment in preparation for that Day.

e). And as we lovingly lead our wives as their head so we will make it easier for them to faithfully fulfill their role and responsibility as wife – the submitted helper – with exactly the same future outcome for them through their own faithful obedience.

f). The happiness, joy, intimacy and fulfillment that comes through faithfully following God's directives within marriage is almost beyond description – and God commands us to continually have this experience, and will then reward us for our faithfulness in doing so – how incredible is that?

21). And so let me encourage every father here today to be the husband that God has called you to be – be the head that He has appointed you to be – and fulfill the responsibility He has equipped you for – love your wife as He has loved us – Eph 5:33 *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

And let your children grow up seeing the reality of it as you guide them into the truth concerning the Kingdom which is to come.