

Mar 23/25 - Ephesians 5:18b, 21-33 "Spirit-filled Relationships"

This section of Ephesians is in the form of a household code. They were common in the ancient world to direct the patriarch of the household in how they should rule as husband of a wife, father of children, master of servants. Using the form of a household code Paul shows how the gospel, the good news of Jesus, the life of the Spirit transforms each of those relationships.

Read Ephesians 5:18b, 21-33

The only command within this passage is vs. 18 – be filled with the spirit. All the other verbs are participles, meaning they are implications of being filled with the Spirit. The key participle for us is vs. 21 – submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. To submit is to stand under. All of our relationships as followers of Jesus are to be marked by mutual submission.

1. What would relationships of mutual submission look like? What motive does Paul give for this?
2. (22-33) What are the postures each spouse is to have toward the other? [For Paul it is Jesus who defines and embodies headship so bring Ephesians 4:15-16 and Mark 10:42-45 into your discussion at that point]
3. How would this teaching have spoken into the cultural norms around marriage in the first century?
4. What are some of our current cultural norms around marriage? What is seen as the purpose of marriage in our culture?
5. (vs. 27) What does Paul see as the purpose of Christian marriage?
6. How does an environment of mutual love and submission allow for the new humanity to be cultivated? How might we foster this in all of our relationships?
7. Paul does not give us rules for marriage, nor does he give us a framework (egalitarian or complementarian), he gives us a picture, a picture of a marriage, a picture of Jesus our spiritual spouse loving us and laying down his life for us and invites us to be filled with the Spirit and look at Jesus. Discuss