

## **Walt Henrichsen's Homily at Christie & Albert's Wedding**

*August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

[Brief intro about his privilege to be at the wedding]

What I'm going to share with you this afternoon is nothing new, simply a review. And so I want to charge you in that light. I want to call your attention to this charge to the husband and wife in Eph 5, which begins with the words, "Submit yourselves to one another with fear of God".

I call to your attention that every significant relationship in life requires mutual submission. For example if I were a guest in your parents' home, and I said to your mother, "May I have a glass of water?" She would not say to me, "No you cannot drink my water." That is simply not the way friendships are built. Now it is in the nature of the case that life is filled with disagreements. Children disagree with their parents and parents with children. Husbands and wives disagree with each other. Employers and employees. Congregations and Pastors disagree with each other. And probably most importantly of all, all of us disagree with God. Every expression of ingratitude is an expression of disagreement of how God is treating us. So we expect these disagreements to take place. But in the midst of this, there is submission.

And Christie this is the reason the apostle Paul begins with the wife. He says you wives need to be in submission to your husbands. I remember one day I asked a lady, "Are you in submission to your husband?" She said, "Most of the time." And I chuckled and as we talked about it, what she meant was that they were in agreement most of the time. The only times she wasn't in submission was when they were disagreeing! But you know that is precisely the point. That's the only times we have. Those are the moments when Albert expresses his headship.

I remember reading not too long ago in Senator(?) Magazine, that a survey they took said that in the neighborhood, 2/3 of all homes in the U.S. are headed by the wife, not the husband. If that is accurate, this will mean that if you are in submission to your husband it is because you want to. Most men love competition and hate confrontation. When women learn this, they become head of their home. This doesn't mean that they're head of their husband, but they're head of their home. And often times in many cultures when that takes place, the husband simply goes off and finds a mistress. God forbid.

Now, it's interesting to note that the last words of the apostle Paul in this discourse we just read, is, "Wives, see that you respect your husbands." Interesting that that word 'respect' is the word 'phobia.' The word 'fear.' Wives, fear your husband. The reason why this word is translated into 'respect,' is that the translators knew that the wife is not to fear what her husband would do to her – beat her up or something like that. But the fear is to God. You respect your husband because you fear God Almighty. You have to give an account to Him.

Albert it appears that the wife has the greater challenge. For Paul says, "Love your wife." Mercy, what could be easier than to love something as beautiful as this? But I would suggest to you that it is one of the greatest challenges you will face in your life. Notice with me that the apostle Paul gives 3 verses to the charge to the wife, 9 verses to the charge to the husband. And it may very well be that the reason for this is that it's 3 times harder for us to love our wives than for them to be in submission to us.

The reason for this is obvious. The average man is not finding his sense of significance and fulfillment from his family. He finds it from his vocation. For example, when you meet a stranger and the names are taken care of, one of the first questions that individual asks you is, "What do you do?" That is, "How much respect do I owe you on the basis of the answer you give to me?" They don't ask you, "Tell me about your family," because all men understand that their sense of worth and significance is found in your vocation.

Scripture is very clear about this. God does not take kindly when we do this. We are significant for one reason and one reason only. Not because of who we are or what we do, or the titles that we bear. But we are significant because of *whose* we are. We are the child of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We derive our significance solely from that. On the basis of that, we obey his admonition to love our wives.

Most men in their quest for their vocation, neglect their wives and families. Now ostensibly they do because they are trying to provide for their families. But most of the time, that is not the case, because the Bible says, "I will provide for you," says God. "I want you to obey. Husbands love your wives."

Let me remind you further that there is a huge difference between love and passion. The word for passion in the Greek is the word we use for 'erotic.' That word is not found in most Scripture. It's antithetical to everything the Bible teaches. Eroticism, passion uses people. Love allows themselves to be used. Never ever use your wife to meet your needs. Always in love strive to meet her needs.

And finally, let me call to your attention Col 1:24. Where the Apostle Paul says, "I rejoice in my sufferings for the body, which is the church, the body of Christ." What the Apostle Paul is saying that because the church is the body, he sees himself as it were as a hand. And when harm comes in the direction of the church in the way of persecution and affliction, he tries to stand between it and the bride of Christ and absorb the pain. I charge you with that task. Your job as the head of the home, is to stand between harm and your family as best you possibly can. And so when there's trouble, you take them into your arms and you absorb their trouble and you say, "Sweetheart, the problem is not yours, it is mine."

Finally, I want to charge the two of you together. I ask myself the question, how does the beloved know that he or she is loved? Let me suggest to you that the simplest most accurate definition of love is seeking what is best for the other person. Now every physician knows that in seeking the best for the patient, he often times has to hurt the patient. Therefore the patient cannot determine love on the basis of experience. I charge

in Jesus Christ, don't ever do that with each other. That is extortion and Christ does not take highly to that.

Therefore I charge you, do not use each other. Look to God and God alone for the meeting of your needs. And give yourselves wholly for the meeting of the needs of one another. Above all, never speak in a humiliating or belittling way to each other. Never ridicule, never humiliate, never tell jokes at the other person's expense. Nobody likes it when it's done to them. And it's absolutely inexcusable when we do it to one another.

Finally, I charge you to be good friends. Get to know each other. Fall madly in love with one another. Delight in each other's idiosyncrasies. Spend hours together talking about the significant issues in life – what do you want, where are we going, what you care for for your children. And may the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus that you may with one mouth and one heart glorify God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.