**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**In The Name of Jesus**

 ***Colossians 3:17-25***

 **December 4th, In the Year of Our Lord 2022**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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 As we continue to read Paul’s letter to the Colossians, and to us, we see he stays focused on the foundational power, authority and purpose in the Believer’s life. Verse 17 summarizes all of life’s actions and statements into being under the name of the Lord Jesus. “Lord” is the title used to signify that Believers do not just agree that Jesus is God but have trusted and committed (faith) their lives to Him. The title signifies that a Believer’s total life existence is indebted to and relies upon Him.

 Remember that Peter, John and all the apostles were ordered by the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem not to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). Obviously, they did not obey those commands and continued to speak in the name of Jesus teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2). But Peter and John, like Paul, preached in the name of Jesus and many people were healed in the name of Jesus and the Gospel message spread.

**Colossians 3**

17 Whatever you do in word or deed,

do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

 In addition to ministering in the name of Jesus, Paul points to the attribution of giving thanks through Jesus to God. This turns the emphasis on the source of the Believer’s witness, which is not from them but God.

 From verse 17, we can ask the question, “What does living in the name of the Lord Jesus entail?” Starting in verse 18, Paul gives an instruction list for people to follow. In this list, Paul identifies members of the basic family unit in their time…wives, husbands, children, fathers and slaves.

It is my view from reading Scripture that God’s original plan for family assignments is often misunderstood and abused in application. Each of these family positions God set aside for a specific function and purpose that He ordained from the beginning, except for slavery. We will comment on each in the order they are given.

**Wives**

18 Wives, be subject to your husbands,

as is fitting in the Lord.

 The key words are “fitting in the Lord”. We turn to Ephesians 5 to receive a foundational understanding of God’s intent and read. . .

“always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Ephesians 5:20-21).

 In Ephesians 5:20,21 Paul is addressing all people and uses the same words as he does in his letter to the Colossians concerning giving thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus. Our attention is directed to “be subject to one another in the fear (reverence/respect) of Christ”. It is obvious that both husbands and wives are on equal ground in their relationship with Christ and each other. With this foundation understood in Ephesians 5:20,21 as in Colossians 3:18, Paul identifies God’s role for wives and husbands within the family.

 The role for wives is fulfilled only if the husband fulfills the loving role of Savior as Christ did for the Church and gave Himself up for her (The Church). In this husband role, husbands are to serve Christ and love their wives as their own bodies. Husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives just as Christ does the Church. The husband’s life is to be sacrificial towards his wife. Within this relationship established by God, wives are to respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:20-33).

 The problem we often have is that at times husbands fail to live-up to their God-assigned roles and duties. Husbands too often claim headship over their wives without submitting to Christ as their own head. This can lead to wives not wanting to respect their husbands. This begs the question, “Then why did she marry the spiritual-dead-beat in the first place?” Too many marriages are entered without either spouse knowing and understanding their Godly roles as husbands and wives. From my own experience, learning to be husband and father was an “on the job” exercise. We all know there is a 50 percent divorce rate in America. And the average length of marriage is 7 to 8 years.

We have all observed the sad situation when a king dies and his son is automatically crowned king to take his father’s place. However, often times these sons of kings do not have any idea how to be king. They are king by title only. Many husbands and fathers are by title only.

It is my opinion that if a husband does not respect his wife in a way that is fitting to Christ, then he, in many ways, has forfeited his headship of the family. Therefore, this is the primary reason for the breakdown of the family in America and around the world.

We see that Adam failed (Genesis 3) to protect Eve from Satan (serpent). Adam went right along with eating the forbidden fruit. Remember, God came to Adam first (Genesis 2:17) before Eve was created and warned him. When it came time to fulfill his love-protector role, Adam failed in his service to God.

Husbands are to first serve God as the Lord of their life and then they can fulfill their “Christ-fitting” role to their wives.

**Husbands**

19 Husbands, love your wives

 and do not be embittered against them.

 I see that through understanding God’s role for wives we have clarity in understanding verse 19. Key words here are “love your wives and do not be embittered against them”. We now know that “love your wives” carries not just the physical attraction but the sacrificial love that Christ has for the Church. By husbands fulfilling their Christ assigned role/duties bitterness can be averted in their relationship with their wives. Bitterness often carries feelings of antagonism, hostility and resentfulness. All of these are in sharp contrast to love. Many of us are familiar with the best characterization of love in the Bible.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

 I observe that the challenge we have as a society, a culture, is that classes are seldom or not offered in the school or church on how to be a husband or father. Seemingly, men are just to absorb the role of husband and father through society’s norms. And we know that society heavily leans to a secular worldview. So, it is really the responsibility of the Church to educate young men. I have preached sermons on the subject and have sat with couples seeking to be married in pre-marriage counseling. However, there is so much more to being a husband and father as God intended than can be conveyed and taken-in as a “way of life” than in a few talks. I see that we here at the local church should educate boys and young men in the biblical role of husbandry but not animal husbandry. However, due to our senior age within the church, we need to find and talk to some young men. If you know of one, send him my way.

**Children**

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things,

for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

 From this passage, we see that Paul intended for children to read his letter. Or at least a parent or someone was to read to children God’s Word. Again, being obedient to parents is intended to work if parents are also living a life under God. It is common sense that a child is not to follow a parent’s illegal commands. However, it is not so much that parents are commanding their children to rob banks, but it is the life-witness such as cursing and inappropriate discussions with friends in the presence of children that parents project that is/could be a detrimental witness to a child.

 From experience, we know that children learn and absorb the most information as compared to any other time in their lives. By our actions and statements, we set their example for life. With this said, parents are to guard the input, what children our exposed to, so their minds will not be imprinted adversely. In our modern tech-media world of entertainment and communication, the biggest threat to a child’s well-being is the internet. Parents are advised to take the necessary steps to protect their children.

**Fathers**

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

 Just as husbands are not to have an embittered relationship with their wives, the same goes for their children. Notice that in the order of Paul’s list wives are the first. I see that all these other family positions are predicated from the stability of the wife-husband relationship. If a man is fulfilling his Godly role as husband, then he is also in line to fulfill his Godly role as father. They do go hand in hand. It is not good for a child to see their father mistreat or fail at being a husband. This lends to a child losing heart.

 The success of family and society is predicated on all of these relationships between wives, husband, children and fathers being fulfilled in the Lord.

**Slaves**

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth,

not with external service, as those who merely please men,

but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

God never planned for there to be slaves. However, fallen man entangled in a life of sin and death entered into the control of other persons. Slavery is a part of all of human history. God’s own people (Hebrews) were placed into slavery by the Egyptians and taken into bondage by the Babylonians. God does not indorse slavery. God provides advise to slaves to have a successful spiritual life. In Genesis 29, we read that Jacob agree to be Laban’s servant (slave) for seven years for the right to marry his daughter (Rachel). Most of us are familiar with Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers. In Joseph’s servitude, he maintained a relationship with the Lord. Even though there were challenging episodes in Joseph’s life because of his slave status, he restored his relationship with his brothers who sold him into slavery. Not all slave stories end as Joseph’s did. Due to the fallen world, many slaves die in captivity. This is a product of the fallen world of free-will-choice in which we live. I have preached sermons on why God allows for pain and suffering and evil to exist. The bottom line is that for love to exist there has to be other choices. I preached a sermon on September 27th 2020 titled “God’s Life to Eternity”. I have added to the sermon since I first delivered it. I can forward (email) a copy upon request.

Remember, the Bible identifies indentured servants as slaves that included people from all races, nationalities and ethnic groups. There are instructions regarding how slaves should be treated. Some of these deal with captured soldiers and their women and children. Invariably, in the course of fallen man’s governance of life, people lose their self-sovereignty. The reality is that God works through fallen humanity’s misgivings to accomplish His goals.

Paul ends the teaching regarding slaves with a word for all of us. I notice that all of us are in some kind of servitude. For many, their employment is a house of slavery. We all know the term “corporate slavery”.

 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily,

as for the Lord rather than for men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

**AMEN**