

THE HUSBAND AS PRIEST

I Peter 3:7

Toby Sumpter

Trinity Reformed Church - Moscow, ID

First Sunday of Lent

A.D. March 1, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Last week we considered the ministry of a husband as a priestly calling, the duty to be a living sacrifice and to minister to his wife such that she becomes a living sacrifice too. Today we meditate on the role of husbands again, focusing on Peter's teaching, and we should note that the context for Peter's teaching is like Paul's (I Pet. 2:4-10).

ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE

The apostle exhorts husbands to dwell with their wives "according to knowledge." "Dwelling with" is used several times in the Old Testament and means to be married and includes sexual love (Gen. 20:3, Dt. 22:13, 24:1, Is. 62:5). Dwelling "according to knowledge" is also reminiscent of the way sexual love is described elsewhere (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25, I Sam. 1:19). Knowledge is not just in your head. Knowledge is closely related to wisdom in Scripture (Pr. 2:6, 8:12), and wisdom is a skill particularly associated with building the house of God (e.g. Ex. 28:3, 36:1). It's not an accident that the love of God is evidenced in his "dwelling with" his people in the tabernacle and temple. Knowledge is also associated with being a priest of God (Hos. 4:6-9, Mal. 2:7-8). In the New Testament, knowledge is frequently associated with salvation and knowing Christ (Lk. 1:77, 2 Cor. 4:6, Eph. 3:19, Phil. 3:8, 2 Pet. 3:18). This is the knowledge that a husband is to have toward his wife, a priestly love that builds and guards the house of God.

AS A WEAKER VESSEL

The exhortation here is to bestow honor on the "weaker vessel." The word for "weak" is frequently used to describe those in need of God's grace and help: David prays for God's mercy because he is weak (Ps. 6:2). Jesus sent his disciples out to heal the weak (Lk. 10:9). When we were weak, Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). "Vessels" in the Old Testament are the furniture and utensils found in the house of God (e.g. Ex. 25:9, 39, I Kgs. 7:45). Paul picks up on this when he tells Timothy that there are different sorts of vessels in the house of God (2 Tim. 2:20-21). Peter insists that a husband is to bestow honor upon this vessel, and this is because God has chosen the weak things of this world to put to shame the things which are mighty (I Cor. 1:27).

HEIRS TOGETHER FOR PRAYER

The reasons given for this exhortation are twofold. First, Peter reminds husbands that they are co-heirs with their wives. Paul uses this description insisting that as many as have been given the Spirit are “sons of God” and therefore heirs and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:14-17). While some modern translations want to flatten out the language of “sons,” this is a serious mistake. Finally, Peter warns that mistreatment of a wife can cause prayers to be hindered. This is the same teaching of Jesus who said that unless we forgive others we will not be forgiven (Mt. 6:15), unless we minister to those in need he will turn us away (Mt. 25:43), if a brother has something against us we ought to leave our gift at the altar and be reconciled first (Mt. 5:23-24). Our love of God is directly related to our love of neighbors (1 Jn. 4:20).

CONCLUSIONS & APPLICATIONS

Marriage (and family) is designed by God to be a place of ministry. Husbands are called to minister grace to their wives. Are you ministering the “grace of life?”

Jesus says that when we love and care for the “weak,” we love and care for him (Mt. 25:43). And this applies to your wife and children as much as anyone else. How many husbands will hear those terrible words, ‘depart from me,’ on account of their treatment of their wife and children. Husbands, love your wives, as though you were loving Jesus. Because you are.

God rejoices over his bride (Is. 62:5), and therefore husbands must rejoice over theirs. Dwelling with them according to knowledge means recognizing the kind of gift and grace they are to you. That is a sanctifying grace. Jesus went to the cross for the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2), and that joy includes his bride.

In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen!



Published by: Canon Press • P.O. Box 8729 • 205 E. 5th St. • Moscow, ID 83843
www.canonpress.com • orders@canonpress.com • 800-488-2034 • Fax 208-882-1568