



Sermon – December 15, 2019
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Verses Covered This Week

Ephesians 5:28 – 29

Matthew 22:37 – 40

Matthew 3:17

1 John 2:2

So we're going to be today in Ephesians 5. We're going to look at what I think is an issue that has been violently misinterpreted by so many. Then we're going to come back next Sunday and look at the actual point of the text. But for right now, I want to address an issue that, and it won't take long, that we just have blown up in an incredibly brain dead way. I had a, the family's long gone. This was probably 31 years ago. But the family's long gone from the town. And I had, I had a guy that wanted to meet with me for lunch. He was leaving his wife and his kids and so he wanted to talk to me about it. And so we went to lunch and sat down and we discussed some things. He said, "Well, I need you to know I'm going to leave my wife and my girls and the reason is because I need to learn how to love myself. I don't do that well and I need to learn how to do that. And maybe if I can learn how to love myself, I can come back and love them better." Which is the mantra today in a great many circles that you have to love yourself before you can love other people. So you've got to develop good self-esteem and good self-worth and you've got to really fall in love with yourself. Because without loving yourself, you can't love other people. That's the mantra that was his mantra. So I looked at him and I said, "Let me ask you something." I said, "I have three questions." He said, "OK." I said, "Number one, does your wife want you to leave?" "No." I said, "Number two, you girls want you to leave?" "No." I said, "Remember with whom you're sitting. Does Jesus want you to leave?" He said, "No." I said, "So here's your real problem. It's not that you don't love yourself. It's that you love yourself so much that you don't have enough to love Jesus and your wife and your girls. So why don't you let that not control you anymore and turn your love to Jesus, to your girls, to your wife, and go home." He didn't go home because he bought into the mantra. So we're going to walk through the text. We're going to walk through a couple of passages. Won't take long, but I want to get this finally settled in your soul. Listen. Ephesians 5. We've looked at the fact he told the women they have to submit. Told the men to love their wives based on the value they are to Jesus Christ. And then in addition to the value they are to them. He's talked to the men, that they're to bring holiness into the home. So he addressed those things. Now he's going to talk about what that means in the pursuit of the wife. But in

between those, we're going to go where I'm going today. Listen to what he writes beginning in verse 28. Thus, after he says all that, about men bringing holiness into the home.

²⁸Thus men are obligated to love their own wives as their own bodies, the one who loves his wife, loves himself;

Now if you stop it there and that's all you read, then it does sound like what it's saying is you've got to love yourself to be able to love your wife. That if you don't love yourself, you can't love your wife. So if you don't love your wife, it's because you don't love yourself. And you've got to figure out how to love yourself so you can love your wife. Now, and if you stop it there, maybe you can interpret that way. But I want you to look at the very next phrase.

²⁹For no one,

I love that Greek word. It's a combination of three words: not even one.

²⁹Not even one ever has hated his own flesh, but instead he feeds it and he takes care of it.

Now I want you to listen to what he said. He said, "You love your wife like you love yourself." And then he said, "There is not even one person who has ever existed that hates his own flesh." Nobody in this room hates his own flesh. Why do you put clothes on when it's cold? Because you like you. Why do you eat when you're hungry? Because you like you. Why does it bother you when people don't value you? Because you like you. Why do we go through depression and gloom when people don't value us and we feel totally unvalued, why do we do that? It's not because we don't love ourselves. It's because we do love ourselves. Why when people value you do you become arrogant? Because you love yourself. You do not, listen, you do not chase self-love. It is an automatic thing you already have. You don't chase it. You don't try to create it. Because it's your problem in one sense, it's something you have to turn, now listen, from control to a compass. Now so don't chase it. You already have it. It's yours. If you're, you say, "What about people that give up? They quit on life? They don't love themselves." Absolutely they love themselves. The reason they've quit is they've come to the point where they don't think anybody else loves them and they have absolutely no value and so they are done. And it is their love for themselves that puts them in suicidal positions. It's going to be hard, but I want you to understand. The most self-loving act when it controls your life is suicide. You're thinking about nobody but you. And you come to a point where there's just too much in this world and you love yourself too much and you just can't take it anymore. If you didn't love yourself, you wouldn't care. The reason we're bothered or we become arrogant is because we care about ourselves. You automatically, you listen to the Scripture. I mean give up this phony junk that you hear out there. The Scripture says nobody at any time has ever hated his flesh. We love ourselves.

So the key is I have to move it from a control mechanism to a compass. Now how do I do that? Now look at Matthew 22. Slide over there with me. Matthew 22 beginning in verse 37. Jesus is going to quote the Old Testament. This is not some new thing Jesus came up. He quotes the Old Testament. Now listen to what He says. Matthew 22:37.

³⁷He said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹The second one is like it,

now listen, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰Upon these two commandments all the Law and the Prophets hang."

So he says, right, I'm to love God with all my heart, my soul, my mind, my strength, everything in me, I'm to love Him. And then he says, now watch, I'm to love my neighbor. How? Like I do myself. Jesus assumed self-love in the same way Paul assumed self-love. But what Jesus says, and it's the same thing Paul says, is you're going to make it a compass. You're going to love your wife like you love yourself. And Jesus' words, you're going to love other people like you love yourself. So instead of controlling you, it's the compass by which you decide how to love in your marriage and how to love outside of your marriage. Now the key, it will always be controlling in your life if Jesus is not your first love. But it becomes a compass if Jesus becomes your first love. You say, "How do I make Him my first love?" 1 John says, we love Him, why? Because He first loved us. When I understand how much He loves me, when I understand Philippians 2, really get it as best I can, that Jesus Christ came fully God and became fully man so that He could be tempted to sin and so that He could die on the cross so His blood could be shed so He could resurrect so that He could take me and give me His Father back. When I understand as best I can that sacrifice, when I go to Colossians 1:9 – 20 and I realize just who He really is, when I get that, now listen, when the Holy Spirit speaks those two passages to me and I put my faith in that and there's opened up for me, according to Romans 8, Abba Father, Daddy Father, now I have this personal, experiential, real, legitimate, authentic experience with the Creator of the universe through the blood of Jesus Christ. That causes me to love Him with everything I have. When I love Him with everything I have, my self-love is not gone, but it becomes a compass, not a control. You say, "Well, what about Jesus?" Absolutely He loved Himself. What did He pray in Gethsemane? "Father, I don't want to do this." Because He knew what was coming to Himself. The physical pain, the emotional loss, the spiritual depravity, the filth, the cesspool that's going to be dumped on Him, that He would have to drink. And according to 2 Corinthians 5, become literally. He loved Himself enough He didn't want to go. But then what did He say? "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." He loved His Father more than He loved Himself. And the Father's love made His love a compass, not a control. Same thing's true with Paul. Paul loves himself all the way to the end. Second time he's in the Roman prison, he writes to Timothy, second letter, and what does he say to him? Timothy, bring me some books and what? Bring my coat. The first time he's in jail in Rome, it's a pretty cush deal. But the second time, he's a traitor and he's in this horrible, dank, dark, filthy, cold cell. And so he says to Timothy, "Bring me the coat." Why? Because he loves himself. But had that love for himself controlled him, he never could have lived out the call of God on his life. When he was a Jewish rabbi, he says, in Galatians 2 that, "I was excelling above all my contemporaries in Judaism." He was rounding out to the top. If you were a young lady in that day and you came home and said, his name then is Saul, and said, "I'm dating Saul." A rabbi who studied under Gamaliel, one of the greatest guys of the day, he's a top rabbi, he's going somewhere. There wouldn't be a family in Israel that wouldn't go, "OK." You'd love it. And so, for Paul, because he doesn't love God at this point, can't. There's been no experiential change in his life. But at this point now, that self-love, he's arrogant because that's what happens. When the love for yourself drives your life, you're either arrogant or depressed or you oscillate between the two. But when he met Christ, what did Jesus tell him? He told him two things. He said, "You're going to preach My gospel before kings. Oh, and by the way, you're going to get beat up badly. And he did. Shipwrecked twice, beaten, stoned, left for dead, mocked, cursed. There were a group of men that took a vow not to even eat or drink until they killed him. He's hated. He's vilified. He's gone from absolute reverence to just a horrible guy. We love him

because he wrote 13 books. But in his day, he's reviled. He's mocked. He's laughed at. He's just beaten up. And yet at the end of his life, he says, "There's laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Why? Why can he end so well? Because his love for Jesus overwhelmed his love for himself. So it was a compass; not a control. And he was able to take whatever came no matter what. Because he lived in the exact same mode of his Savior. I want you to listen, stay with me, listen to the last words of Matthew 3.

¹⁷Behold a voice out of heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

When I love Him, it's His pleasure that drives me. Now listen. The question's going to come to me, I know. I'll wait for the e-mail. Question's going to come. It will be, what about self-worth and self-esteem. Where do they fit in there? I don't have good self-esteem and it's because I don't love myself well. The reason you don't have good self-esteem is because you love yourself too much, because you care what people think. So, where do self-worth and self-esteem fit? Very simply, now listen to me carefully because I'm going to clarify some stuff we are so messed up over. How you value yourself is only tied to one of two things. You either get your worth horizontally or you get it vertically. Your worth is tied to what He thinks about you or it's tied to what other people think about you. When Paul was a Jew, it was tied to what everybody thought about him and so he was arrogant and cocky and was "the guy" because everybody loved him. If you live in a day when nobody loves you and you don't have any value, you struggle with that. You're not going to be cocky. You're going to be gloomy and depressed because you are controlled by what people think about you because that's where your esteem is tied. This was the life altering thing for me. When I was in high school, I was not a great athlete. I ran track. I did learn one thing. The Cajuns are real fast. So we go to the district track meet. I'm running the, there's two of us running the 100. So we have two heats, right, I'm running with one heat and he's running with the other heat. So we run. Both of us came in last. So one of my buddies, trying to cheer me up, said, "Yeah, but Osborne, you were closer to your group than he was to his." OK. So I'm not a great athlete. Not an academic star. 350 of us graduated and I don't think I was in the top 10%. I don't know where I was. I didn't care. I just had the little robe thing. So I wasn't an academic. Wasn't, ah, athletic. Had two friends. So, good friends my sophomore year, we moved to Alabama my junior year. Moved back my senior year. Moved back to Alabama after my freshman year in college. So when we moved back my senior year, my two friends had kind of developed their own friendships and it took a while for us to get back together. So I'm finding myself sometimes eating in the cafeteria by myself. I'm not popular. I'm none of those things. And so I don't know that I would have used the word depression in that day, but I would use the word angry, gloomy, sullen, hurt. So when He called me to preach, and I go to see my pastor the next day and talk to him, as I'm leaving the office from my pastor, I'm walking out and I mean it hit me like a rock. That no matter what anybody else in the world thought about me, the Creator of the universe had just called me to do something personal for Him. That altered my self-worth. As it wasn't tied anymore to my friends or to my high school or to my peers, not even to my church, it was tied to my Lord. That is where self-worth should come. You say, "Well, preacher, I'm not a good guy. Sin pretty badly. No way He would forgive me. I'm really bad. There's nothing I have an option for." Listen to what it says in 1 John 2:2

²Jesus is the propitiation for our sins; not only for ours only, but also for the whole world.

There is nobody that out-sins the depth of the blood of Jesus. Nobody! So your value, I don't care what you are, is still high because you're tied to the heart of God and the blood of Jesus. Now if you've accepted that, your value is now tied immensely, you're now in a whole different realm. Bible says you are the apple of His eye. It says that you are, if you were the only person to believe in Him, He would have died for you. We know that from the thief on the cross. The only person that believed in Jesus before He died. The Bible says you have received the Holy Spirit of God by which you cry, Abba! Father! You have a personal, experiential, authentic, real relationship with the living God. You are adopted. Can't be undone. You're an heir and the Bible says a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Then listen to this. Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Where shall I flee? Can't. He's everywhere you are. He's created you in the womb. You formed my inward parts; you knit me in. In your book are written every one of the day that were formed for me when as yet there was none of them. He has a set number of days you live. And then one of my favorite verses in all the word of God. David says, "How precious to me Your thoughts, O God, how vast is the sum of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand." Every day the Creator of the universe thinks all day long about you. Nobody can make you more valuable than that. As a matter of fact, it's Jeremiah's failure. He quit the ministry. At one point he said, "My pain's unceasing. My wound incurable, refusing to be healed." He says, "I'm dying out here. Nobody loves me. Nobody likes me." And he's right. His message to Israel was, "Surrender to the Babylonians." They're going, "No, we're not surrendering. What's wrong with you?" Everybody hates him. And then he says this, "Will you be to me like a deceitful brook, waters that fail?" He says, "I can't get anything anywhere." God says, "Come back." And then listen to what He says to him. "They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them." You love yourself. Quit chasing what you already have. Let your love for Christ turn it from control to a compass so you know how to treat other people. If you want to be loved, then you're going to love other people. If you want to be forgiven, you're going to forgive other people. If you want to be valued, you're going to value other people. You see somebody, some single mom, she has no clothes, no coat for her children, you're going to buy them a coat because you're going to do for them what you would do for yourself. So it's going to be your compass. So you're going to live by this. We're in a society, right, that doesn't like us like they used to. So here's where you're going to live. Listen. You're not going to live off horizontal hate. You're going to live off vertical value. You're going to be just like Jesus.

Let's pray.

Father, remind us if there are people here that do not know You, remind them today of how much You do love them and how valuable they are to Your heart. So valuable that Your Son died for them. And Father, for those of us that have embraced that, let that love we have for ourselves turn into a compass. Let us remember how much You think about us; how much You value us. That it's not a value we know about, it's a value we experience now because of our accepting of Your blood. Make that real to us today. Speak that and bring that clarity today. I ask You that in Jesus Christ name.