

Sermon for Sunday, August 5, 1979, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor  
Central Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

"GOD'S GLUE FOR FRACTURED FAMILIES - III"

Ephesians 5:21 - 6:4

Text: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord..."

Ephesians 5:22

Our Sermon on God's glue for fractured families has three basic subjects that we have been or will be dealing with. Do you remember what those three are? They are Rule, Relationship and Role - Rule Relationship and Role. In the first Sermon, we dealt with the structure that God has given us for marriage, in which he has made man the head of the house. Now you will remember, and if you don't remember, copies of that Sermon are available as you leave today. For those on radio, you may write for them. You will remember that we said that every human relationship must have a structure. Without structure, there is anarchy and chaos. God, in his sovereign wisdom, has provided a structure for that family, and that structure is that the man be the head of the house. Now you can argue with that, if you like, and you can say I don't believe it or I don't like it, but don't argue with me! I didn't say it and I didn't think it up. God made the rule. God could have chosen the wife to be the head of the house. Or he could have said whichever of you is stronger, and you fight it out, and whoever wins, you be the head of the house. He could have had the children be the head of the house. That would have been interesting. Somebody has to be the authority to control the situation. But according to the Bible, God chose the man to be the head of the house. Now that doesn't mean that man is any better or more lordly than the wife or the children. It just means his role, his responsibility, is different from theirs. God has ordained the structure of the home and he's made man the head of the house. Now if some of you men start feeling puffed up a little bit about that, please stick around for several Sundays, until we start talking about roles, and the sort of responsibility you have as head of the house. You see, it turns out to be more of a responsibility than a privilege, and you may end up wishing God had made the woman the head of the house.

Last Sunday, we talked about the second of the three "R's" - we talked about relationship, and in that sermon, I tended to focus primarily on the husband. I did that because I had told him the Sunday before that the Bible said that he was the head of the house, and I wanted him to understand early on, before he got in trouble, what sort of lord and king he really ought to be. So we talked about relationships - that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for the church, and I'll tell you, that's an incredible kind of love. Now if you missed that sermon, please pick up a copy of it as you leave, or write us and we'll send you a copy.

Now, today, I want to say a few words to the wife, and I think the young people are certainly included in this, because you, too, are in an authority structure. However, I suggest you men pay close attention, because this is something you need to know as well. In our text for today, the Bible says that wives are subject to their husbands as to the Lord. Now a lot of our modern women do not like that. Either they want to be equal in authority with their husbands, or else they want to rule the home. Now to be equal in authority is impossible. In a family, there comes a time when somebody has to assume authority, take charge, assume command and make a decision. Sometimes there may be occasions in which a husband is critically ill, when he's become senile, when the wife must assume that responsibility. The Bible says that in every ordinary situation, that should be the husband. For you wives who are saying to yourselves, "well I wish my husband would take a little responsibility around the home", let me say to you, I hope to deal with that problem later on. As a matter of fact, you may be part of the reason he isn't playing the role God wants him to. There is no such thing as democratic equalitarianism in a home. Someone ultimately has to be in charge. So if equality is not possible, why do some women want to be in charge? Well, there are a lot of reasons. One of them is that

statement of Paul's, "If there is any encouragement (paraklesis) in Christ..." means that in your difficulties, the Holy Spirit is not only working in you, as we shall see in a moment, but he's standing beside you working for you! So when there is encouragement in Christ, it means the Holy Spirit is at work in that situation. He may be at work in your husband. He may be at work in the problem you're dealing with, or whatever, but the Bible says the Spirit is not only in you, but he's beside you working for you. Praise God for that! Whatever's happening in your life right now, there is encouragement - paraklesis - in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is not only in you, he is for you. Well, that's a starting point. What a great starting point! To know that in any problem I face, I have the encouragement of Christ. The Holy Spirit standing by me, working for me. Now, St. Paul says in the next phrase, "if there is any incentive of love". You ladies, you know when you first fell in love with your husband, do you remember the incentive you had to look nice, to dress prettily and to smell nice, so that when he picked you up for the date he would be encouraged. And you men, do you remember how you dressed up? You went home and you shaved again, even though you shaved that morning? You're all freshened up and you made your plans for your date, you had the incentive of love. Well, I want to ask you a question. What happened to your incentive? Love alone grows weary. It needs incentive. If the incentive of your love for your mate has gone out of your marriage pray God to return it. Work for it to return. Do things to make it return, to make it happen again. And of course, the same is true for Jesus. A wife can't be in subjection to her husband unless she has incentive in her love for Jesus. An incentive that makes her want to do for Jesus the things He wants her to do. You understand that? The incentive of love, the incentive a lady had to please the man she was going to marry, if she has that same incentive to please Jesus, then she is going to want to do the things Jesus wants her to do - the incentive of love.

Do you know a lot of marriages are breaking up because of a spiritual breakdown? Has your love for Jesus grown cold? Is your spiritual ardour cooling? Is your religious temperature dropping? Then you're losing your incentive of love for Jesus, that will help make your marriage work. If your spiritual life suffers, I promise you one thing, your marriage will suffer. I know in my house, when things are not going well, spiritually or otherwise, we always pray together at night. When it's Sydney's turn to pray, she always starts off this way if we're not getting along too well, and our spiritual temperature drops, she always says, "Dear Lord, here we are again, Jumper and Jumper in trouble." Next, St. Paul says, "if there is any participation in the Spirit". Now he's talking about the Spirit in you personally. Are you participating in the Spirit of Jesus? This means that your efforts are not yours alone. Let me be quite frank with you. God's spirit in me is in stark contrast to my spirit. Paul talks about that. Is that true for you? That what you want, your spirit in you and God's spirit in you, what it wants, aren't they two different things? St. Paul talks about that over in Romans and calls it spiritual warfare. Do you have that going on in you? I know I do. Now, if a woman or a man or a young person lets his own spirit control his life, he's going to act one way, but if a person lets God's Spirit control his life, he's going to act an entirely different way. So when your personhood is in conflict with the authority that God places in the home, let me ask you, whose spirit is controlling your actions?

Now in the last verse in this first verse of Chapter two, Paul has a sort of confused passage. Are you still looking at verse one chapter two? The last words, "if there is any affection and sympathy". Now, in the Greek, that's a confused passage, because the word "any" is singular, and the words affection and sympathy are both plural. If you happen to have a King James Bible, it translates them plural. It says that if there any bowels (plural) and mercies (plural), so that any is singular, but the affection and sympathy are plural. Now do you know what happened? You can mark this down in the Bible, you can even mark this down in the Church Bible. It would probably be good for the next person who reads it. Do you know what happened? Language for St. Paul just simply broke down. He was trying to express a new idea. He was trying

to give verbal expression to a bold new idea - a radical new idea. You see, he mixed the singular of mankind with the plural of Divinity. And he's saying that this Jesus, this Christ, who is equal to God, has a human heart, and language just couldn't handle it. He's got a heart, he can sympathize with us, he can have affection for us in our distress. He knows how we feel. I don't know about you, but that's exciting to me! Jesus knows how I feel about something. He has affection and sympathy for me in my need. You see, he knows how I feel. Then he can not only enter into my feelings, he can touch me at the very point I need to be touched, and where I need help. Does that make sense to you? So, if a woman is having trouble being in subjection to the rule God has placed on the home, I can't tell her the answer to her particular problem, but I can point her, or a young person or anybody, to the Bible where it tells the kind of atmosphere that must exist where that kind of a problem can be solved.

I know I'm running overtime, and I apologize. Do you know why Paul wrote these words to the Church at Philippi? I'll tell you why. It's because the Church had an internal squabble and was about split. Now, I'm going to be nice enough that I'm not going to explain that two women had started the fight, and that was what caused the problem in the first place. I'm not going to tell that. But the Church was about split, and Paul gave them the remedy, the formula, for avoiding that split. Now a lot of families are under pressure today. They're just coming apart at the seams. I think Paul's solution for the church will work for the family, too. How about you, husband? How about you, wife? How about you, young person? How about you, getting ready to get married? How do you plan to solve your problems, when what you want comes in conflict with God's plan for the family? Well, God says that however you solve your problems, the only way that will really work is His way.

Do you know a lot of marriages are breaking up because of a spiritual breakdown? Has your love for Jesus grown cold? Is your spiritual life about to die? That will help you with your marriage work. If your spiritual life is dying, you one thing, your marriage will suffer. How is he feeling? How is she feeling? Going well, spiritually or otherwise, we always stay together at night. When Sydney's time to pray, she always comes with her way. It's not because she will, but our spiritual temperature keeps the always says, "Dear lady, when you against danger and danger is trouble." Don't say, "I know he's not going to participate in the spirit." You're talking about the spirit as you're talking about you participating in the spirit of Jesus. This means that your efforts are not alone. God is with you. God's spirit in me is in stark contrast to my spirit. You're talking about that. As the time for you, I am that you want your spirit in you and God's spirit in you, when it wants, when they can do it. Don't feel like about your own in Roman and called it spiritual warfare. Do you have that going on in you? I know I do. Now, if a woman or a man or a young person face the spiritual control but like, it's going to see one way, but if a person face God's spirit (control) it's like, he's going to see an entirely different way. So when your personality is in conflict with the authority that God places in the home, let me ask you, whose spirit is controlling your actions?

How in the last verse in this first verse of Chapter two, Paul has a sort of a passage. And you still looking at verse one chapter two, the last words, "I have affection and sympathy." Now, in the Greek, that's a compound passage, because the word "and" is singular, and the words affection and sympathy are both plural. If you happen to have a King James Bible, it translates them plural. It says that in these my bowels (plural) and mercies (plural), so that my affection and sympathy are plural. Now do you know what happened? You can read that down in the Bible, you can even see this down in the Church Bible. It would be good for the next person who reads it. Do you know what happened? Language for St. Paul just simply broke down. He was trying to express a new idea. He was trying