Mothers Day - May 9, 1971 Rev. Carl. F. Thrun
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

IN NOMINE JESU

Ephesians 5: 21 ff: BE SUBJECT TO ONE ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST. WIVES, BE SUBJECT TO YOUR HUSBANDS, AS TO THE LORD.....HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER.....CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD, FOR THIS IS RIGHT."

I want to DIRECT this SERMON not so much to MOTHERS or to the EULOGIZING of MOTHERHOOD as to MARRIAGE. I am CONVINCED that where HUSBANDS and WIVES have a GOOD THING going for them in their RELATIONSHIP, their CHILDREN will ALSO fall into LINE. MARRIAGE is the PRIMARY INSTITUTION established by GOD. CHILDREN are a wonderful BLESSING that COMES from this UNION. But BEFORE children can be EXPECTED to OBEY their PARENTS in the LORD, they MUST have HONOR and RESPECT for them. It takes MORE than just ~~REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS~~ REPRODUCTION to be a MOTHER or a FATHER as GOD INTENDED THEM TO BE.

I don't have to TELL you that the DIVORCE MILLS in our COUNTRY are HUMMING. Last year PRODUCED the HIGHEST NUMBER of MARRIAGES ending in DIVORCE in the UNITED STATES -- with a TOTAL of almost ~~ONEMILL~~ 1,500,000 persons INVOLVED. They couldn't TAKE IT when the going got TOUGH. They thought it was "forever" - but they DID NOT BUILD their "FOREVER" on a very SOLID FOUNDATION.

Now the going DOES get ROUGH in MARRIAGE. It is NOT a LARK - even though it may START OUT that way. If it is JUST a lark, it often turns out to be a NIGHTMARE - not always, BUT OFTEN. LOSING your HEART to SOMEONE ELSE does NOT mean that you have to LOSE you HEAD TOO. LOSING your HEAD to FORM a MARRIAGE can be a mighty TRAUMATIC BUSINESS - and as some DIVORCED MEN have FOUND OUT, it can be mighty EXPENSIVE TOO.

LOVE, as St. Paul pointed out, is a matter of BOTH HEAD and HEART. There has to be HEART IN IT, of course. Without HEART, it is NOT LOVE. Contrary to what some people

THINK, however, your BRAINS don't have to FALL OUT on the GROUND when you FALL in LOVE. THINKING is STILL in STYLE - especially for PEOPLE who are DEEPLY in LOVE with EACH OTHER.

That is the way St. Paul describes LOVE in our TEXT: "BE SUBJECT TO ONE ANOTHER OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST. WIVES, BE SUBJECT TO YOUR HUSBANDS, AS TO THE LORD. .....HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER.....LET EACH ONE OF YOU LOVE HIS WIFE AS HIMSELF, AND LET THE WIFE SEE THAT SHE RESPECTS HER HUSBAND."

It is God's INTENTION that people LIVE with ONE ANOTHER in UNITY and COMMUNITY. That is how He CREATED MAN - to live HAPPILY in FAMILIES - - - in UNITY with their CREATOR and in COMMUNITY with ONE ANOTHER.

MARRIAGE, when you REALLY understand it, said St. Paul, is something like the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST and the MEMBERS of HIS BODY - the CHURCH. Christ SIMPLY GAVE HIMSELF for the LIFE of the WORLD. He OFFERED HIMSELF in ATONEMENT for the SINS of the WORLD. He EXTENDS His FORGIVENESS without any STRINGS ATTACHED. People who TURN FROM their WICKED WAYS and ACCEPT His FORGIVENESS find a NEW LIFE. It is like being a MEMBER of HIS BODY - ATTACHED to HIM - a PART of HIM. It is DOING what CHRIST, the HEAD of the BODY, WANTS DONE. It is like being CLOSE to Him - and that is GOOD!

For PEOPLE who UNDERSTAND CHRIST and FOLLOW HIM, marriage is a kind of MINIATURE PICTURE of what it is like to be WITH HIM. "WIVES, BE SUBJECT TO YOUR HUSBANDS, EVEN AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT TO CHRIST."

I KNOW this doesn't SOUND very POPULAR TODAY - with all of this TALK about "WOMEN LIB" and "EQUAL RIGHTS" ~~for women~~. Does St. Paul really MEAN that WOMEN are to SUBMIT to their HUSBANDS? Isn't this just a LITTLE BIT of his MALE SUPERIORITY-COMPLEX showing through?

I think WOMEN are at their ever living BEST when they EXERCISE ALL the GRAND INTELLECTUAL and EMOTIONAL EQUIPMENT God has GIVEN them. In MANY ways, women are BRIGHTER and SHARPER than MEN. They seem to be MORE SENSITIVE than MEN to HUMAN NEEDS - and they can often SEE MORE EASILY through sham and PRETENSE than men do. Women KNOW LOVE!

The most INTELLIGENT women in the WORLD are those who UNDERSTAND what St. Paul is TALKING about. They KNOW how to MAKE a REAL MAN outof a MAN. Sure, they can MAKE their OWN WAY in the WORLD just as well as ANY MAN. But they have LEARNED what it is to be a WOMAN. They are NOT SUBORDINATE and they are NOT INSUBORDINATE. They are WOMEN - in COMMAND of the POWERS God has GIVEN THEM to make LIFE a thing of BEAUTY for THEMSELVES and for EVERYONE ELSE.

In Christ, WOMEN are REAL WOMEN. In Christ, WOMEN don't have to LOOK upon MEN as SUPERIOR BEINGS. Christ LOVES MEN and WOMEN EXACTLY ALIKE. He FORGIVES MEN and WOMEN EXACTLY ALIKE. He GIVES LIFE to MEN and WOMEN so that ALL may have the SAME FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE. But CHRIST does NOT TURN women INTO men, or men INTO WOMEN.

With LOVE and TENDERNESS, the CHRISTIAN WOMAN BUILDS UP her HUSBAND. The MORE of a MAN he is, the MORE he NEEDS HER to do JUST THAT. Marriage is a MUTUALITY - something like the RELATIONSHIP between CHRIST ~~nad~~ and HIS CHURCH. The CHURCH

doesn't FEEL PUT UPON because it YEILDS to CHRIST. The WIFE doesn't feel PUT UPON when she YIELDS to her HUSBAND. ~~And~~ In THAT YIELDING - THAT SUBMISSION - THAT GIVING - - - there is a DISTINCTIVE POWER that BELONGS to WOMAN, and to woman ALONE! "WIVES, SUBMIT YOURSELVES COMPLETELY TO YOUR HUSBANDS, THE SAME WAY THE CHURCH SUBMITS ITSELF TO CHRIST."

"YOU HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES IN THE SAME WAY THAT CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HER.....MEN OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR WIVES JUST AS THEY LOVE THEIR OWN BODIES. THE MAN WHO LOVES HIS WIVE LOVES HIMSELF."

Most men have to LEARN HOW to LOVE. They do not come by it NATURALLY. St. Paul had to LEARN it HIMSELF - and he KNEW what he was TALKING ABOUT. LOVE calls for SELF-SACRIFICE - NOT SELF-ASSERTION. LOVE and GENTLENESS - not TERROR and THREATS - are the way to a WOMAN'S HEART in a HAPPY MARRIAGE.

The DOMINEERING MALE is NOT, as some people seem to think, the IDEAL PARTNER in a MARRIAGE. DOMINATION is the GOAL of the SELFISH MAN. He may even THINK he LOVES his WIFE - but actually what he is LOOKING for is MORE POWER - GREATER RECOGNITION - MORE MONEY - a BETTER JOB - a BIGGER CAR - a MORE PRETENTIOUS HOUSE - and a GOOD LOOKING CLOTHES HORSE for a WIFE. He wants his wife to DRESS WELL and to SERVE STEAK for dinner. WOE to her, however, if she OVER SPENDS the HOUSEHOLD BUDGET. He wants his CHILDREN to be SUCCESSFUL and to MARRY WELL - but it is NOT always CLEAR whether his CONCERN is for THEM or for the GLORY that SPINS OFF in HIS direction. Some men seem to think that because they are the BREADWINNERS in the FAMILY they can DEMAND ANYTHING of their WIVES and CHILDREN. To a man like this, CHILDREN are to be QUIET as soon as he STEPS in the DOOR. The WIFE should turn into a PASSIONATE LOVER if he happens to be in the MOOD.

If she doesn't go HIS WAY, he SULKS.

When a man SLIPS a RING on ~~his RIGHT~~ the FINGER of his bride, he ASSUMES QUITE a RESPONSIBILITY. It is NO LONGER HE - JUST HE against the WORLD! Now he has a WIFE, and SHE comes FIRST - - - AHEAD of CAREER, AHEAD of FRIENDS, AHEAD of RECREATION, and even AHEAD of his OWN FAMILY. "FOR THIS REASON, A MAN WILL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND UNITE WITH HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO WILL BECOME ONE.

It is NOT EASY to be a GOOD HUSBAND. It takes a REAL MAN to make a REAL MARRIAGE. Most wives like their husbands to be HEALTHY and CLEAN. They like their HUSBAND to be able to MAKE DECISIONS when a decision has to be made. They APPRECIATE a SENSE of HUMOR in their husbands - one who can TAKE a JOKE ~~and can ENJOY one~~, even if it is ON HIM. They are GRATEFUL for a man with a CERTAIN AMOUNT of AMBITION - but they do not appreciate it when AMBITION becomes the OVER-RIDING DRIVE in his life - - - AHEAD of her or AHEAD of his FAMILY.

There is SOMETHING even MORE IMPORTANT, however. St. Paul puts his FINGER RIGHT ON ~~when~~ what a WIFE looks for MOST OF ALL in her HUSBAND: "HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES.....MEN OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR WIVES AS THEY LOVE THEIR OWN BODIES. THE MAN WHO LOVES HIS WIFE LOVES HIMSELF." A wife is MEANT to be LOVED. A REAL MAN can SEE that. A REAL MAN learns TO LOVE.

What the Apostle is TALKING about is LOVE - not JUST SEX. He is TALKING about SEX TOO, of course. "A MAN WILL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND JOIN HIMSELF WITH HIS WIFE, AND THEY WILL BE ONE FLESH." Now that is SEX! But LOVE is NOT just SEX. It is THAT and a LOT MORE. It is a GREAT thing in the HEART that makes a MAN a HUSBAND. It is something like the thing in HIS HEART that made

CHRIST the man HE WAS. Christ GAVE Himself - ALL UNSELFISHLY - to a WORLD of PEOPLE ~~to who~~ whom HE LOVED. He GAVE Himself - He was ALWAYS KIND, UNDERSTANDING FORGIVING, and HELPFUL!

Husbands, the NEXT TIME your WIFE ASKS, " Do you LOVE me?" SHOW HER! You may have to ASK YOURSELF whether it is a PLAYFUL QUESTION calling for a LIGHT-HEARTED RESPONSE - or whether it is a CALL of DISPAIR from an OVER-WORKED MOTHER who WONDERS whether it is really ALL WORTHWHILE after a day of STRUGGLING with the HOUSE-HOLD, getting the CHILDREN to SCHOOL, and WRESTLING with COUNTLESS other PROBLEMS which SHE has encountered DURING THE DAY. The IMPORTANT thing, however is that you SHOW that WOMAN of yours that YOU LOVE HER.

LOVE IS LASTING. LOVE NEVER FAILS. LOVE COMES THROUGH EVEN when the GOING is ROUGH and the DAYS are TOUGH.

LOVE can take a LOT. In MARRIAGE it has to LEARN to take those confrontations which are a part of EVERY DAY LIFE in a FAMILY. I have heard people SAY after 25 years of marriage - that they have NEVER had an ARGUMENT. Mrs. Billy Graham is said to have remarked, "If two people AGREE in EVERYTHING, one is UNNECESSARY."

CONFRONTATION - when the AIM is EVENTUAL RECONCILIATION of DIFFERENCES - LEADS to STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE. Contrary to "LOVE STORY", LOVE does mean SAYING I'M SORRY! "If I didn't LOVE you, I couldn't TELL you THIS" - that is what a wife says to her HUSBAND when she KNOWS that he LOVES HER. If a MARRIAGE ISN'T STRONG enough to take some GENTLE JOUSTING, perhaps there is a BASIC FLAW somewhere.

You can't go through MARRIED LIFE WALKING on a TIGHT ROPE. You can't be AFRAID to

say something because you MIGHT UPSET your PARTNER. Of course, the OPPOSITE is TRUE too . You CAN'T have a MARRIAGE when your intent is to HURT your SPOUSE. There has to be FORGIVENESS ALL AROUND. With FORGIVENESS, LIFE becomes FULL and FREE. That is the way LOVE WORKS. "HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES - LOVE YOUR WIVES AS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH, GIVING HIS LIFE FOR IT."

CHRIST has a GREAT THING GOING in this WORLD of ours. His LOVE transforms PEOPLE. LOVE works the SAME WAY in MARRIAGE. It takes some DOING - some FEELING - some GIVING - - - but it WORKS! When she says, "Do you love me?" SHOW HER ! ! ! Christ does it ALL the TIME FOR YOU. You CAN do it TOO. And your CHILDREN will RISE UP to CALL BOTH of YOU BLESSED. Amen.