

Date: 16.9.18
 Text: Ephesians 5:22-6:9
 Title: Good. Different.
 Place: Swansea/Charlestown AM
 File: Ephesians 5
 Preacher: Stephen Taylor

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Last year ALDI launched its new advertising slogan Good. Different. Tom Daunt, Chief Executive Officer of Aldi Australia, said after 16 years of operation in Australia, it was time to tell consumers why Aldi will continue to do things differently from traditional supermarkets. "Aldi Australia is unapologetically different – and that's a good thing for shoppers," he said. "We are proud of our differences and we stand by them wholeheartedly."

In the same way Paul as he gets to the end of his letter to the Ephesian church wants to say to his readers that we are to be Good, Different also. There is something that makes us different from our neighbours that will enable us to stand out from the crowd. Jesus has chosen us, predestined us & sealed us. Jesus has broken the wall that separated the Jew and the Gentile. Which means that according to Paul in Ephesians 4:17, "*So I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do.*"

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We Christians are to be unapologetically different & that is a good thing for our world. We should be proud of our differences. We also should stand by them wholeheartedly. In Church we will act a certain way – we will be humble, unified and Christ centred. And at home we will be different as well. Good Different. We will submit, we will obey, we will grow in holiness and we will show sacrificial love & caring headship. We will be good different in our marriages, good different in our families & good different in our workplaces.

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And it all starts with that dirty word "Submission". When I was growing up Skyhooks had a song "Ego is not a dirty word". But submission is now a dirty word at least in our society today for it speaks of being under someone's thumb, having no say, almost as being someone's slave. But this passage will tell us that the good different Christian will submit, will obey, will sacrificially love. And it starts firstly in our marriages.

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1. Different marriages (verses 22-32)

²² *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

Now that's different, isn't it? If you going to say one word to a prospective wife who is about to marry her husband, what word would it? Love? Cherish, Care, Enjoy, Commit? All good words, all have their place. But Paul chooses the word Submit. But please let us read it in its context. For Paul has already said to all Christians in verse 20, "*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*". So all of us are called to submit to one another at one time or another.

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I was thinking about this in my own context. I might be the senior minister of this church but I am also part of a body of elders and at times we make decisions that I disagree with it and I need to submit to their authority. The structure of the Presbyterian Church means that this

Church, which I am a part of, needs to submit to the decisions of the wider denomination. We all need to submit to the laws of this land, to what our police and judges and politicians tells us to do. And even in my marriage there are plenty of times where I have made the decision to submit to Kaylene's wisdom on a matter she has more knowledge on than me.

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Submission is something we all must do. Actually submission is something we choose to do. It is not a forced obedience. Do this or you will be punished, that sort of thing. Submission is voluntarily placing yourself under the direction *or under the protection* of someone else. So in this verse Pauls says *Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.*

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As Christians we have already submitted ourselves to the Lord Jesus. He is our Lord, he is our Saviour. His word is what we seek to obey. That sort of submission isn't servitude, its freedom. It doesn't stop us from doing what we want to do, it makes us free to do what we were made to do. Besides Jesus himself has submitted his whole being to God the Father.

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Please think with me about that for a moment. Jesus is God. He is part of the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit but when God the Father determines that Jesus should leave heaven and go to earth, leave his status and take on flesh, Jesus submits himself to His fathers will. So God isn't asking us to do anything that Jesus hasn't already been willing to do for us. Submission then is not a dirty word. It is a good word because by it our world has been changed. A different word because that now is the model that we are all to follow.

And this leads me to another point. Jesus is equal with the father and yet there is a different role for the son as against the father. Within the godhead there is an ordered equality. An equality of status but different functions. And so when wives are asked to submit to their husbands, when pastors are called to submit to their elders, there is also an ordered equality. We are all called to submit as part of how our oneness works.

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What Paul is saying is that wives and husbands are equal but different. They have the same status in God's eyes, but different roles. The husband has the responsibility of headship, of being the one who makes the final decision within this partnership (and by the way he will often make that decision because he recognises his wife's wisdom) & the wife is to submit.

So what does that mean in practise? Well it doesn't mean the wife doesn't have a say. It doesn't mean that she is a doormat ready to be walked all over. Much of the time agreement will be reached by mutual discussion. But for those times when an agreement has not been reached despite reasoned debate, one side will need to back down. At that time the wife is to submit to her husband's final decision. But the godly husband will often make that final decision based on his wife's needs rather than his own.

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Because the flip side of the wife's submission is that the husband is called to love, with a sacrificial love, a sanctifying love and even a self love. ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* ²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,* ²⁷ *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* ²⁸ *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*

For I think in some ways the husband has an even harder job than the wife. He is to love his wife just as Christ loved the Church. Wow that is a high bar to jump over isn't it? Christ was perfect. Christ gave his life for the Church. Christ is always with them and for them. And that is the standard, that is the model, given to each and every husband.

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It is a sacrificial love because in the same way Christ gave himself up for the Church, so husbands are called to give up themselves for their wives. Give up their time, their energies, their money, their emotions, their future, their present, their everything to show their wives a sanctifying love. Slide 12

Because Jesus does this to help make us holy. The husband's primary responsibility is not to have a good job, to provide a good home, or even to give his family safety and security, it is to help his wife grow more like Jesus. It is to help make her holy. And he will do that by providing a model of holiness in their home, by continually pointing to the supreme example of holiness our Lord Jesus and by doing everything he possibly can to help his wife grow in her faith, hope and love.

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And it is self love because as blokes we know how to look after ourselves. We know how to get the food we want, the drink we want, the fun we want. Well in the same way we should know and love our wives so well that we know what they want. And work hard to provide for them not just the things our wives want but the things our wives truly need. That is how a Christian marriage is to work, the husband will love and the wife will submit so that together what we do in our homes, is a model of what Jesus has done in the world. So that the relationship of Christ and His Church is repeated in every Christian household for a watching world to see.

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And if each married couple was to do that it would be Good. Different. Good because nuclear families and wider families and neighbours and friends would see the gospel story of Jesus and his Church lived out in the flesh every day right before their eyes. And it would be different because that is not how other marriages work at all. They will love each other, while the feeling of love remains. They will scratch another back as long as my back is being scratched. They may or may not provide a good home, a great environment for others to flourish but it will not be a picture pointing people to Christ.

So can I make a suggestion here. If you are a husband don't demand that your wife submit to you, that is not in your job description. Get on with the hard task of loving your wife as Christ has loved you. And if you are a wife don't demand that your husband love you more, get on with the tough task of submitting to your husband, as to the Lord.

As to the Lord, your first priority is still Jesus. Which means if your husband is a difficult man & he is misusing their God-given position in your marriage and telling you to do something that God forbids you to do, or doing something to you that God forbids them to do then you no longer need to submit to them because that would be disobeying God. To make that more explicit, if they are abusing you physically or sexually or threatening you or demanding that you do things that are wrong, please escape and find a safe place for you & your family and then talk to us. You don't have to submit to that sort of terrible abuse.

Ring Jo, ring Todd, ring myself, you don't have to face this alone. And if you as a husband are in a difficult marriage that can be hard also. You too are going to need God's grace, His help,

His patience as well. Marriage isn't easy. For all of us are difficult people at times and what we must all do is keep loving our partner and keep praying that God would do his work in ourselves firstly and then in our wife and husband as well. For we all should desire to be the person that will help our marriage partner be the person that God wants them to be and if they had the choice even after 10, 20, 60 years of marriage they would still choose us.

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I love the story about Winston Churchill who at a formal banquet in London was once asked, "If you could not be who you are, who would you like to be?" He stood up and paused to take his wife's hand – "If I could not be who I am I would love to be Lady Churchill's second husband". Paul is calling us to have good different marriages and secondly good

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2. Different Families

So Paul turns to how children and parents should now behave as followers of Jesus. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honour your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*

Children are not just to submit to their parents but to obey them. Why? Because it is right, because it is good. There is a natural law which virtually every culture and society recognises "*as right*" and that is that children should respect and obey their parents. But then there is also the divine law given in the Ten Commandments. "Honour your father and mother". God has commanded all children to obey their parents. And if that is not enough, Paul adds another practical reason, it will give you a longer and better life. A conscious decision by a youngster to obey their parents will almost certainly put them on the path to a better life.

Now once again I would like to add the proviso, that this a choice that the Christian child should make because they want to serve their ultimate father God. And so if the parents are physically abusing them they don't have to obey them in that. I know that family dynamics make it extremely hard for a child to escape. I get the fact that it seems they have no choice but to take what is coming to them. But if the parents are doing the wrong thing, then it is not wrong to obtain advice about whether they are doing the wrong thing or not. It is not wrong to seek help and once again we as a Church would be a good place to get that help.

But the normal thing would be to obey your parents, even when you don't like what they are saying. I remember soon after I became a Christian, my parents banned me from Church and youth group. I was devastated. My friends was there. I wanted to worship my God. I knew these things helped me grow in the faith. But I was 16 and still living at home. So I obeyed, grudgingly I admit, but I did what they wanted me to do. And a couple of weeks later they changed their mind, my obedience had won them over.

So children need to obey their parents. But for how long? Well when are you no longer a child? It doesn't say. But I would guess until you leave home and take full responsibility for yourself. And even then, the Bible encourages us to honour our parents. We may not do everything they say, but we need to respect their wishes and find a way in which you show your own responsibilities and yet still respect your mum and dad.

Sometimes parents do come between married couples, they take sides, they seek to control

and often they become the reasons marriages or relationships fail. But the Bible also says when we marry we leave our parents and cleave to our spouse. But we should always have a debt of gratitude and we should always find a way to honour our parents. And in this church I have seen a number of fine examples of people who continue to do that especially as their parent's age and become more dependent upon others.

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Children obey their parents in the Lord but Paul wants to particularly say something to the fathers. ⁴ *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training & instruction of the Lord*". For fathers have an awesome responsibility for their kids. They shouldn't exasperate them, or do things that they know will annoy them, they instead should point their kids to the true faith through teaching & example. They don't leave the Christian training up to the Church or to the school or even just to their wives, they know that this is their **#1 priority** in raising their kids, so they do it diligently & prayerfully.

As an aside can I ask the fathers that are here do you know what we are teaching your kids at Kids Church at the moment? Do you know whether the school you send your children to is teaching what you believe to them right now? They may be a Christian school, they may be a state school but what specifically are they teaching them right now? I went to a parent teacher interview last week for Joshua who is in Year 8 and the PHPDE teacher was talking about how they were currently teaching about ICE. I didn't know that. I should have known that. Only when I know what they are learning can I make sure they are being taught the truth. We need to be actively involved in our children's education and especially need to be teaching them and modelling for them the Christian faith.

If we do that we will be doing what is good, what has come from God & it will be different because most dads, most parents aren't teaching their kids spiritual things, let alone the gospel of Jesus Christ. But we will see this as more important than music lessons, even sport. So we will be committed to coming weekly to a good Bible obeying Church, we will speaking to them about the gospel of Jesus and we will keep them constantly in our prayers.

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3. Different marriages, different families and then **Different Workplaces**

Because in those days families also includes slaves. And the Ephesians Church would have included slaves as well. So here were people coming to Church week in week out & although they are all one in Christ, all equal before Christ, some were slaves and some were bosses.

⁵ *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.* ⁶ *Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.* Slide 18 ⁷ *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people,* ⁸ *because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.*

Slaves obey their masters. Obey with respect and fear, not to win them over, but to work as if they are doing it for God. Now the master slave relationship is no more, thank the Lord. But we still have the boss/worker relationship which is not dissimilar. So if you have a job, obey your boss, as if he or she was Christ. If you are a teacher, teach as if you were teaching Jesus. If you are our housewife, cook as if Jesus was going to eat the meal, if you are a shop assistant try and serve them as you would Jesus, if you are a doctor treat your patient as if Jesus could be in them, if you are a student, do your best for Him. Why?

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Because our jobs are an extension of our faith. We spend 30, 40, 50, 60 hours each week there & we want to show others & God that Jesus is an important part of all of our lives. Similarly if you are a *boss*, treat your *workers* the way you want them to treat you, with respect. Be willing to *serve* them. For the way you treat others is the way that God will in turn treat you.

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Why because we want to be good, different. Good, this is God's way of living and different because we won't be just after making the most money we can, we won't be doing the least amount of work that we can. We want to be different, unapologetically different. We want to stand up & follow Jesus. For that is both the motivation & the model of this good different life.

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4. Different Model

For the model to all these relationships is how our heavenly Father and His only son operate. How does *submission* work? Look at Jesus submission to his father's will. How does real childlike faith and obedience work out in practice? Look at how Jesus treats his Father and *obeys* his Father's will. What does it mean to really love? Look at how God shows his *love* to his world and especially to his Son.

You see God doesn't ask us to do things he is not willing to do himself. He himself models the sort of submission, the sort of obedience, the sort of love he requires the Christian to have. In fact when you think about it, the model is always Jesus. How should we love our neighbour? The way Jesus has *loved* us. How should parents train their children? In the same gentle way, Jesus trains us. What does true service look like, look again at Jesus who picks up the basin and the towel and washes his disciple's feet!

So if Jesus has done all this for us, our response to Jesus love and service and instruction is to submit, and to continue to obey in the same way that the son obeys and submits to his Father's will. For He is the one who has given us a certain order in life. He is the one who has given others authority over us. He is the one who is ultimately in authority over us. But his authority is one of care not control, responsibility not rule. He is the one who knows how you can best grow in your faith. So be more and more like Jesus.

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I like the story of the drunk who went into a mission centre and got a free meal and place to sleep. He stayed around and over time he noticed a guy called Joe there. Joe did all the jobs that no one else wanted to do. He cleaned up the vomit on the floors and the mess in the toilets, he served the down and outs their food, and he did everything without complaining.

And as time went on this drunk found out that Joe used to be a drunk himself but the mission had turned him around. One night there was a Church service at the mission and the drunk went forward after the service and in prayer he cried, "Lord, make me like Joe, make me like Joe". The mission director leaned over and said "you mean, make me like Jesus don't you mate?" "Why" replied the drunk "is he like Joe?"

Oh if people around here would be crying out make me like Greg, Robynne, Beryl, Simon. Because they could see Jesus in us & in all our relationships. That would mean we're good, different. How amazing would that be? And what a difference our lives would make!

Instructions for Christian Households

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing^[b] her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”^[c] ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”^[d]

⁴ Fathers,^[e] do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.