

What Atonement Means to Husbands (D. Mar)

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,” (Eph 5:25)

If you are a husband, how well do you love your wife? What if this often studied verse was changed to read, “Jesus, love your church, just as a husband also loved his wife and gave himself up for her.” Would you be a good example to Jesus? Would you be an example to your son or other family members?

As impossible as this love may be, it provides an insight to the magnificence of God’s love. What does the phrase mean, “... just as Christ also loved the church...?” To understand how Jesus Christ really loved the church, one needs to understand His work on the cross. How did Jesus Christ’s atonement demonstrate His love for the church, and what can husbands learn from this?

Here is one verse that may capture the essence of how Jesus really loved the church and help a husband remember what it means to love his wife.

“.. just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt 20:28)

To begin this study, we will attempt to examine this passage from the perspective of the apostles. In contrast, most of us read the Bible with some knowledge of the ending. Thus the impact of Christ’s words may not have the same impact at the moment of their utterance. Would this approach inspire us to be more passionate for Christ as the apostles became when they discovered the ending to this story?

1. Examine Matthew 20:28. Before we attempt to understand the text in question, what is its immediate context? Who is the speaker? Who are the recipients? What is happening?

The mother of the apostles James and John requests that her sons have the best seats in Jesus’ new kingdom (Matt 20:20-21). While Jesus does not correct her about the nature of His kingdom, the other ten disciples become indignant when they hear of the request (Matt 20:22-24). Now Jesus calls the Twelve together to discuss the issue of ambition and authority.

In contrast to position, power or reputation, Jesus teaches that greatness, in God’s eyes, comes from serving and not ruling. Yet as we examine Jesus’ example during His ministry, it is not simply service, but the quality of that service. That service quality is what garners people’s trust and confidence; it is why people chose to submit themselves to that leadership.

We often think of quality in terms of a person with great prowess, intellect or charisma who is worthy of our trust, and we willingly submit ourselves to them. In a similar manner the apostles witnessed a supernatural display of wisdom, miracles and works and found Jesus worthy of submitting to.

But as we examine this passage further, we will discover that the measure of that quality is not by how much, but how genuine and sincere is the love behind that service. Here is God, the Maker of heaven and earth who is serving man.

Jesus spoke of service within the context of quality of love.

2. Did anything occur before this event?

A. Just before the story of this event and on the road to Jerusalem (Matt 20:20-28), Jesus reveals for the first time that He will be die by crucifixion; an awful death awaits Him in Jerusalem (Matt 20:17-19). By this time, Jesus had spoken of His death to the disciples at least three times (Matt 12:40; 16:21; 17:22-23).

While the disciples may not have truly understood what Jesus was saying or had some doubt, Jesus certainly knew of the agony of the crucifixion that lay ahead. Yet He did not waver in His approach to Jerusalem.

It was clear that despite knowing what the future held for Him, Jesus' act of love was intentional.

Jesus was intentional and purposeful. Jesus chose to serve and esteem lowly human beings despite being God.

B. There is second aspect to this prophecy of death. Jesus never mentions the true personal cost of His death; He knows that he would receive the full wrath of God. Jesus never spoke of His coming death as a sacrifice; the focus was never on Him. Only later the apostles would make the connection to the Old Testament sacrificial laws and prophecies and point out His expiation and propitiation of mankind's sin.

Even the popular verse John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."), does not reveal the true personal cost that Jesus experienced.

Jesus served without revealing its true cost nor kept an account.

C. There is a third aspect to Jesus' coming death. Jesus spoke of serving others with a view of dying soon. In this context, Jesus served others with the knowledge that He would not be alive to receive any reciprocal acts. He also served without a motive of pride or achievement.

Jesus served without expecting anything in return or for pride or manipulative purposes.

3. What does the term "ransom" mean? To whom was this ransom paid? For what was this ransom paid?

For the first time, Jesus tells the apostles the reason why He was to die. He is to "give His life a ransom for many."

The term "ransom" means "the actual price paid for a life."

The ransom price was the death of Jesus in substitution for many other deaths. This ransom was payment to God who was offended by the sins of man. It was to satisfy the judgment of God.

While on the cross, Jesus forgives before He dies (Luke 23:34, 43)!

Jesus gave His life to pay for God's judicial judgment of mankind's sins; His death made available to human beings the opportunity of restoring their relationship with holy God.

Jesus forgave and provided people a means to seek forgiveness for their sins.

What Atonement Means to Husbands (D. Mar) (page 3)

Viewing God's love through the prism of His work of atonement provides an insight of what a husband's love for his wife entails.

A husband's love is intentional and esteems his wife.

A husband's love serves the needs of his wife with genuine sincerity and worthy of trust.

A husband's love serves without expecting anything in return or for purposes of manipulation.

A husband's love does not count the cost nor reveal its true cost.

A husband's love forgives.

In understanding the essence of how Christ loved the church, husbands can apply these principles in a myriad of ways. And there is one more important point to consider when looking at the example of Jesus Christ: the assurance of that love.

A husband's love is everlasting, secure and assured with his wife.

The benefit of Jesus' atonement results when we forsake the public image and accept the truth about ourselves; salvation frees us from pretenses. This freedom from pretenses is the basis of honest relationships.

What Atonement Means to Husbands

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her," (Eph 5:25)

If you are a husband, how well do you love your wife? What if this often studied verse was changed to read, "Jesus, love your church, just as a husband also loved his wife and gave himself up for her." Would you be a good example to Jesus? Would you be an example to your son or other family members?

As impossible as this love may be, it provides an insight to the magnificence of God's love. What does the phrase mean, "... just as Christ also loved the church...?" To understand how Jesus Christ really loved the church, one needs to understand His work on the cross. How did Jesus Christ's atonement demonstrate His love for the church, and what can husbands learn from this?

Here is one verse that may capture the essence of how Jesus really loved the church and help a husband remember what it means to love his wife.

".. just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

To begin this study, we will attempt to examine this passage from the perspective of the apostles. In contrast, most of us read the Bible with some knowledge of the ending. Thus the impact of Christ's words may not have the same impact at the moment of their utterance. Would this approach inspire us to be more passionate for Christ as the apostles became when they discovered the ending to this story?

1. Examine Matthew 20:28. Before we attempt to understand the text in question, what is its immediate context? Who is the speaker? Who are the recipients? What is happening?

2. Did anything occur before this event?

3. What does the term "ransom" mean? To whom was this ransom paid? For what was this ransom paid?