



September 21, 2025

United - Ephesians 5:31 - Soil of Marriage

SUMMARY: Today's sermon explored the foundational truths of marriage through the lens of Ephesians 5:31 and the Genesis creation account. Using the metaphor of marriage as a garden, we examined how agape love—selfless, sacrificial love—is only possible through the Holy Spirit, not by human effort. The “soil” of marriage, as described in Genesis, is not perfect but good, and it is in this soil that God calls us to subdue sin and grow in sanctification. The sermon highlighted how the fall introduced shame, blame, and conflict into marriage, transforming it from a place of vulnerability and safety into a battleground for sanctification. Ultimately, marriage is not about achieving happiness or perfection, but about God using our spouse to shape us into the likeness of Christ, with prayer and humility as essential tools for this journey.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:31; Genesis 1-3; Proverbs 21:19, 27:15

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. The sermon challenged the idea that marriage is about finding happiness or the perfect spouse. In what ways have you expected your spouse (or future spouse) to “complete” you or make you happy? How might this expectation need to change?
2. Think about a recent conflict or disappointment in your marriage (or a close relationship). How did you respond—did you blame, hide, or become defensive? What would it look like to respond with humility and honesty instead?
3. The sermon said that agape love is only possible through the Holy Spirit. What is one area in your marriage (or close relationship) where you feel unable to love selflessly? How can you invite the Holy Spirit into that area this week?
4. The “soil” of marriage is not perfect, and there will always be “thorns and thistles.” What are some of the “thorns” in your marriage right now? How can you work the soil faithfully instead of wishing it was different?
5. Pastor Matt shared that his wife prays for him regularly, and that prayer changes hearts. How often do you pray for your spouse (or close relationships)? What is one specific way you can start praying for them this week?
6. The sermon reminded us that Christ covers our shame and gives us a new identity. Are there areas of shame or failure in your marriage that you are still carrying? What would it look like to bring those to Jesus and receive His covering?
7. Instead of focusing on fixing your spouse, the sermon encouraged focusing on your own growth and sanctification. What is one area where God might be using your spouse to shape you into the likeness of Christ? How can you cooperate with that process this week?