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Sermon Notes

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Headship, the Trinity, and Headcoverings, Part 2

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Perhaps no generation in church history has so needed this challenging passage as ours... no generation has been so confused about the meaning and significance of gender as ours

A Nebraska school district has instructed its teachers to stop referring to students by “gendered expressions” such as “boys and girls,” and use “gender inclusive” ones such as “purple penguins” instead. “Don’t use phrases such as ‘boys and girls,’ ‘you guys,’ ‘ladies and gentlemen,’ and similarly gendered expressions to get kids’ attention,” instructs a training document given to middle-school teachers at the Lincoln Public Schools. “Create classroom names and then ask all of the ‘purple penguins’ to meet on the rug,” it advises.

The document also warns against asking students to “line up as boys or girls,” and suggests asking them to line up by whether they prefer “skateboards or bikes/ milk or juice/ dogs or cats/summer or winter/talking or listening.” “Always ask yourself . . . ‘Will this configuration create a gendered space?’” the document says.

We need to drink in God’s wisdom like life-giving water to our thirsty souls, and see the truth of God’s Word bring peace and order in our homes and our church

I. The Timeless Principle: Headship (Last Week)

A. Addressing Issues Concerning Public Worship at Corinth

1. The role of women in public worship
 2. The Lord's Supper
 3. Spiritual gifts, especially tongues and prophecy, in public worship (chapters
- B. Paul Commends the Corinthians for General Obedience to His Teachings (vs. 2)
- C. BUT there are problems he must address
1. First is the proper place of women
 2. Greco-Roman society did not esteem women properly
 3. Christianity elevated women greatly, especially as equally created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ; equally able to receive Christian doctrine and grow as disciples, equally indwelt and gifted by the Holy Spirit, equally heirs of heaven
 4. BUT some of the women, it seems, were going too far with their newfound freedom
 5. He wants to create proper order between the sexes in public worship; there is still a basic submissiveness of women to men that Paul wants to uphold
 6. And he wants that basic submission of women to male leadership clearly on display in public worship
 7. He doesn't want outsiders to come in and see disorder, as he will later say when it comes to the proper exercise of prophecy in public worship

This is a matter of godly order... NOT of intrinsic worth or value before God

The elders are not worth more in a church than non-elders, even though they have authority to lead the church; parents have no more value in the eyes of God than children, even though they have the God-ordained right to command them; husbands have

no more value than wives, even though they are head and the wife must submit to her own husband in the Lord

Our modern-day egalitarianism and feminism and concerns about authority and power and tyranny and equal rights has a very hard time with this timeless ordering and sees it as a claim of the essential superiority of men to women, but that is absolutely false. It has nothing to do with ability or intelligence or skills or achievements or knowledge of worth. It is an ordering God has established

D. The Principle Restated

1 Corinthians 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

1. Head = authority
2. “The head of every man is Christ”: authority over the human race

Matt. 28:18 All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

3. “The head of woman is man”
 - a. Not best to see this primarily in terms of marriage as the ESV
 - b. Paul is including marriage here, but also male leadership in the church... that elders and teachers and leaders in the church be men, not women

1 Timothy 2:12-13 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

- c. Paul is saying that a person’s gender actually IS a factor in the role he or she plays in the home and at church
- d. God has ordained male leadership in the home first, and in the church second, and that that principle is timeless and in all cultures, and it originates from CREATION

4. The Head of Christ is God

- a. This is the final step of Paul's overall principle... Jesus Christ, though completely equal with the Father in his essence as God is willingly subordinate to him positionally
- b. He obeyed the Father every moment of his life on earth; he didn't even speak a word unless the Father told him to say it; he obeyed him even to the point of death, even death on a cross; and he will wrap up all the universe and give it to the Father so that God may rule over all things (1 Cor. 15:28)
- c. No one in the universe was as willingly submissive as Jesus is to his Father... yet he is perfectly co-equal with the Father in deity... EQUALITY WITH GOD—equally omniscient, equally omnipotent, equally wise, equally loving, equally GLORIOUS

Philippians 2:6-7 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant

- d. There is nothing demeaning at all about this subordination of the Son to the Father

E. So... this is the timeless principle... male headship in the church and at home; now, we have to see how Paul applied this to the Corinthians in the case of HEAD COVERINGS

II. The Principle Applied to Headcoverings (vs. 4-6)

1 Corinthians 11:4-6 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-- it is just as though her head were shaved. ⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.

A. Focus: the Public Display of the Timeless Principle

- 1. Paul wants this order clearly on display in their public worship
- 2. If an outsider walks in, he wants it to be clear that men are in leadership, and that women are in willing submission

B. What is the Adornment Paul Has in Mind?

1. Two possible explanations
2. First: the custom Paul recommends is women to wear a prayer shawl; or...
3. Second: Paul objects to women wearing their hair loose, long, hanging down the back; he wants women to follow the usual custom in their culture of piling their hair in a knot on their heads
4. There are decent arguments for each of these possibilities...
 - a. For example, there is no evidence that Greek women wore veils; also, in Greek society, a woman wearing her hair long and loose in public would be suspected of being a prostitute; respectable women did not appear out in society with their hair loose and flowing down their backs
 - b. **HOWEVER**, despite these arguments, it seems Paul is actually arguing for women to wear shawls of some kind
 - i) He wants the men to pray with their heads uncovered; but if Paul were talking about hair, he would seem to be advocating that all men become bald... having no hair at all
 - ii) The word “covering” in verses 6-7, and 13 implies something other than her hair
5. Either way, Paul is arguing for women in Corinth to adorn themselves in a certain way that lines up with the timeless principle of submission to headship that he gives in verse 3
6. **The principle is timeless, but the specific outworking in each culture will be different**
7. In every culture in the world, there are certain customs having to do with appearance—with hairstyles and dress and mannerisms—that **mark out clearly the difference between men and women**
8. The principle here is that **men should clearly be men** and leading in the church; **women should clearly be women** and submissive in the church

C. The Timeless Principle Applied to Men

1 Corinthians 11:4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.

1. For a man to pray or prophesy with his head covered like a woman would be disgraceful
2. Paul specifically says he would disgrace his head by wearing a prayer shawl like a woman
3. What does it mean that he “dishonors his head”?
 - a. His head might refer simply to himself... like saying “Your blood be on your own heads...”
 - b. But it could refer to Christ as his head... he is bringing disgrace on Christ by carrying himself like a woman

D. The Timeless Principle Applied to Women

1 Corinthians 11:5-6 And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-- it is just as though her head were shaved. ⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.

1. There is much debate about whether Paul is assuming that women would pray and prophesy in the public worship service
2. The problem is that three chapters later, he forbids women speaking in the church... so we'll deal with that issue in its time
3. At any rate, Paul says that if a woman doesn't wear a head covering while praying and prophesying, she is dishonoring her head...
4. Again, that can either be that she is bringing dishonor on HERSELF or it could refer to verse 3 again, to her head, man
5. She is violating the timeless principle by taking a man's adornment and outward display...

6. Paul says it would be as dishonorable as if she had shaved her head, which would be an even more vigorous step toward acting and dressing like a man

III. The Timeless Principle Rooted in Glory (vs. 7-10)

1 Corinthians 11:7-10 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

A. Man as the Image and Glory of God

1. Paul expands his reasoning here to the issue of “image” and “glory”
2. Paul is in no way saying that women are not in the image of God; he knows Genesis 1:27 better than any of us

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

3. Furthermore, in Christ and in eternity, redeemed women will be every bit as conformed to Christ as the redeemed men
4. What does “image and glory” mean?
 - a. Man, both male and female, bring the greatest glory to God of anything he created on planet earth
 - b. We are his crowning achievement... the greatest display of God
 - c. Certainly lions and eagles and dolphins glorify God... lions with their mighty roar and awesome strength, eagles with the way they ride on thermals hundreds of feet in the air and swoop down on prey they have seen from a mile away; and dolphins with their amazing power in swimming and jumping
 - d. But no created thing reveals the nature of God more than human beings with their minds, their hearts... the ability to think and reason and plan and imagine and invent and communicate

- e. So, man is the image and glory of God means the greatest thing that ever came from God is man (both male and female)

B. Woman as the Glory of Man

What is the crowning achievement of man? What puts man's uniqueness and attributes most on display? Masterpiece of all that ever came out of him – like Michelangelo's "Sistine Chapel" painting, or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony... the crowing achievements of a lifetime

Paul would say the GLORY OF MAN is... WOMAN

1. The most glorious thing that ever came out of any man was woman... an utterly unique moment in history

Genesis 2:21-23 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man."

2. That moment would never be repeated again; but it is written down in the Bible to let us know the origin of woman... from man

C. Paul Restates the Principle Here

1. A man ought not to cover his head, because as he exercises his authority in the home and in the church, he is acting in the pattern established when God made Adam first, alone, for a time... and gave him the responsibility of naming the animals and then naming the woman
2. Male leadership was established by this creation order; therefore, he should not adorn himself like a woman when he prays
3. In like manner, a woman should accept her submissive role as God established in creation by covering her head... hearkening back to the created order and delighting in her existence as the glory of man... the most glorious thing that ever came out of man

D. The Timeless Significance of the Original Pattern

1 Corinthians 11:8-9 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

1. The original order matters... it establishes the reason why men should lead in the home and at church
2. Paul will state it plainly in 1 Timothy 2

1 Timothy 2:11-13 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

3. Paul goes beyond this to remind us of God's statement:

Genesis 2:18 "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a HELPER suitable for him."

- a. The word "helper" is well connected with Paul's concept here
- b. Man was NOT created FOR woman, but woman FOR man
- c. These words imply a leadership function for men in the work God has assigned to him, and a helper function for the woman
4. Practical outworking of this: a man must have a mission, a task, a work he is called to; and a woman who is considering marriage should require of the man that he have a mission in life; and she has to sense from the Lord whether he is calling her to HELP HIM in that mission in life
5. Again, this is not to say at all that a single woman cannot have a mission in life, despite the fact that she has no husband; but even single Christian women must work in the context of male leadership in the church
6. To men is entrusted the leadership of every local church in the world; a godly Christian woman will gladly submit herself to that leadership, whether she is called to overseas missions, or to secular

employment here in the US; she is called to HELP the men accomplish the mission God is leading them to do

E. The Perplexing Mention of Angels; some possible ideas

1 Corinthians 11:10 For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

1. First, angels have a continual role as servants of the elect

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

2. Second, angels are active in worship

a. They delivered the word of God to prophets in the Old Testament and apostles in the New Testament

b. And they deliver the prayers of the saints up to God

Revelation 8:4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

3. Third, angels are perfectly submissive to God-ordained authority

a. They cover their faces in the presence of the glorious Christ (Isa. 6:3)

b. They submit to other angels called arch-angels

4. Fourth, angels evaluate human behavior

Revelation 16:5-6 Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; ⁶ for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."

And the angel that appeared to Daniel and to Mary commended them as HIGHLY ESTEEMED

5. So, for this reason, the angels who observe our public worship... would condemn any defiance of God-ordained authority

IV. The Beautiful Balance (vs. 11-12)

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

A. Paul Shows the Beautiful Balance God Intended

1. We sinners always tend to go to extremes
2. To prevent men from using verses 3-10 to excuse a rude tyrannical domination of women, Paul shows how God arranged men and women in a beautiful balance, a beautiful interdependence... to **work together** for the glory of God

B. The Argument of Origins

1. As we've said, the first woman came from the body of man
2. BUT from then on, every man on Earth got his body from his mother at conception and birth
3. This is especially poignant in that by far the most effective evangelism and discipleship in the world is within families, from parent to child... especially MOTHER to GROWING TODDLER

C. BUT Childbirth is Just a Symbol of the Interdependence

1. It is clear from biology that men and women need each other
2. But we need each other in far deeper ways... men and women each bring unique approaches and perspectives, difficult to define
3. "A woman's touch" is a very real thing... women sense things, notice things, take a certain approach that men don't... so a wise man will listen to the godly input of his wife; and wise elders will listen to the godly input of wise women
4. This is what COMPLEMENTARIANISM is all about... the idea that men and woman complement each other in the church

5. Paul will make this idea plain later in his teaching about the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:18-23 in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

D. So... Everything Comes from God!

1 Corinthians 11:12 But everything comes from God.

1. It is a wonderful thing for a man to be a man... because that's what God wanted him to be from the moment of his conception
2. It is a wonderful thing for a woman to be a woman... because that's exactly what God wanted her to be from the moment of conception
3. It is Satan that is viciously attacking this concept of gender and saying it means nothing; and he is the one fostering jealousy and warfare between the sexes
4. Humble men and women in the church of Christ accept God's ordering and delight in it and walk in it as he intended

V. What Nature Teaches (vs. 13-15)

1 Corinthians 11:13-15 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.

A. Paul is Arguing Here from NATURE... What Nature Teaches

B. This Goes Back to Romans 1 and the issue of Human Sexuality

Romans 1:26-27 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.

C. Nature... Biology... Teaches the Significance of Gender

1. The bizarre modern conception of a difference between sex and gender is absurd
2. They teach sex is a physical/biological, but gender is self-evaluated and constantly changing and malleable
3. They are rejecting God's clear design in nature

D. So, the Outward Adornment in Every Culture Flows from the Biology

1. In most settings over centuries, long hair has been associated with women; especially the ADORNMENT of long hair
2. In our culture, that distinction has been somewhat reduced
3. However, the principle stands: there is a clear adornment in every culture that loudly proclaims the gender of that person... you can identify them as a man or woman immediately
4. To blur that distinction is shameful; no Christian should ever do it

VI. A Warning Against Contentiousness (vs. 16)

1 Corinthians 11:16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice-- nor do the churches of God.

VII. Applications

A. Come to Christ!

1. Properly understand gender roles in the church is important
2. But nothing is more important than knowing that your sins are forgiven through faith in Christ
3. Jesus calls you to come to him, to take his yoke upon you and learn from him and he will give you rest

Now... for the believers

B. Understand the Attack on Gender in Our Society

1. Perhaps no society in church history has so needed to hear this suddenly controversial teaching of the significance of gender
2. Satan's attack on gender is widespread and pervasive
 - a. Now government forms that you fill out have the gender: Male, Female, Other, I'd Rather Not Say
 - b. We are being told that to declare "It's a boy" or "It's a girl" at birth is a form of child abuse
 - c. Even liberal traditional women's colleges like Wellesley are having a very difficult time defining what a woman is
 - d. The transgender movement has elevated a tragic form of mental illness not much different from anorexia to a normal state
3. In the midst of this craziness, we need to go back to God's clear revelation: God made them male and female and assigned the role of leadership both in the family and the church to men
4. So... Scripture is commanding us not just to embrace this but to DELIGHT IN IT and see it bring healing to people damaged by Satan's lies
5. So, the eldership of FBC will always be men, if we are to be faithful to scripture

C. The Headcovering Doctrine Also Teaches that Men Should Be Clearly Leading in Public Worship and Preaching

1. The teaching ministry of adult men must always be men; although women can and should teach children and other women... women should not teach or preach to men, as 1 Timothy 2:12 says

In this I am disagreeing with Beth Moore and with J.D. Greear and others that say that a woman can in fact teach and preach to men if they do it under the auspices of male eldership

2. Beyond this, the elders of FBC have thought it best to have men lead in other key ways on Sunday mornings

D. Embrace Masculinity as a Man, or Femininity as a Woman

1. The outward display matters...
2. More and more, we see people who have intentionally blurred all distinctions by their dress, manner, hairstyle, so that you truly can't tell whether that person is male or female
3. Parents should raise their children up delighting in what God made them
4. Train your sons to be masculine boys who will someday be Christ-like leaders at home
5. Train your daughters to be feminine girls who will someday play a submissive role like the church does to Christ

E. Delight in the More Significant Equality of the Genders

1. Equally created in the image of God
2. Equally redeemed by the blood of Christ
3. Equally fruitful in good works by the Spirit
4. Equally heirs of heaven