

The Psychology and Methods of Sin ***-contrasted with-*** ***The Mindset and Fruits of the Spirit***

“The heart is deceitful above all things...who can know it?” (Jer 17:9)

“Abuse and the Doctrine of Headship and Submission – Part 2”

December 12, 2010

Sermon Text: Ephesians 5

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 5:1 to 6:9

Introduction

The Danvers Statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood meeting in Danver, Mass in Dec of 1987. You can find it in the appendix of Wayne Grudem’s book Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood – A Response to Evangelical Feminism. Here are the first few of its affirmations-

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God’s image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.

(The abusive mentality rejects this proposition of course. His victim is in no way equal to him, but an inferior being by nature)

2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam’s headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
 - In the home, the husband’s loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife’s intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist

limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.

6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

- In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husband's authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husband's leadership.
- In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.

7. *In all of life, Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission – domestic, religious, or civil – ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.*

.....

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

This statement is indeed an accurate digest of Biblical teaching. In this study of the methods, mentality, deceptions and damage of the abusive man, certain elements of the Danvers Statement jump out at us. *Headship and submission in marriage NEVER commands a person to “follow a human authority into sin.”* And in all that we have been learning about the horrible sin of abuse, particularly as it works its evil in marriage, we have been helped to come to terms with just what ‘following the abusive man into sin’ might look like. It is far more than “You are going to help me steal from my employer.” No, following the abusive man's sinful commandments could include such things as –

- You cannot talk to anyone on the telephone today
- Don't you EVER tell anyone about this!
- I expect the house to be clean, my meal prepared, and the kids quiet every day when I get home for work!
- I make the rules here and your job is to obey them!
- You don't need to know what I do with the money.

Understand? These are wicked, sinful actions and commands. Headship and submission do NOT mean that the wife must simply and always obey her husband. To submit to sinful commands is never required of us. *"We must obey God rather than men"* – as Peter put it.

I. The New Creation

In the first 3 chapters of this letter, the Apostle Paul sets forth the gracious, free, life-giving gospel of Christ. This gospel is entirely of grace, completely for the praise of God's glory, and leaves no room at all for man to boast. In fact, we were still hostile to God, dead in our sins, without God and without hope in this life, when God, being rich in His mercy, saved us. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy he has saved us.* Even the faith by which we are

enabled to believe the gospel is a gift from Him.

And then, at chapter 4, Paul's exhortation to all who are in Christ is that *we live (walk) in a manner that is fitting to, which corresponds to, this calling, this redemption by which He has reconciled us to Himself. BE WHO YOU ARE! is the essence of his message. CHRISTIAN, BE WHO YOU ARE! Do not live as you used to. Come to a greater and greater understanding of what God's will for you is, and live according to His will. In fact, the person who still lives/walks as he or she has always walked turns out not to belong to Christ at all. And so –*

Eph 5:1-5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. (2) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (3) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (4) Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. (5) For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater),

has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Many, many professing Christians today do NOT believe verse 5! Paul's warning is serious – *Do not be deceived. The person who does not obey Christ does not love Christ nor does he know Christ.*

Eph 5:6-8 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (7) Therefore do not become partners with them; (8) for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

This is the most hated message that could be preached from many church pulpits today – and yet it is desperately needed! *“This morning, my thesis is – most of you here this morning do not know Christ, you are still dead in your sins, you remain under the condemnation of God, and if you passed from this life today, you would end in hell.”*

I have better hopes than this for most of you – I wish I could say for all of you. But some of you even here in this church are in serious need of self-examination with ruthless honesty because if I had to

preach your funeral tomorrow, I could not confidently tell those gathered that there is a confident hope that this man, this woman, this young person, this child - is with Christ. If the Apostle had to announce *“Let no one deceive you with empty words”* then surely we too must look to ourselves and throw ourselves on God's mercy, asking Him to reveal to us if we are deceived too.

“I you claim to be a Christian, if you come and sit in these pews on Sundays, and yet you in fact are still walking in agreement with the world, if your real comrades are the sons of disobedience, then your life is a lie. You are a hypocrite. But God sees and He knows. You are in great danger, and if you are a parent then you are placing your children in great danger.”

Well then, the Apostle continues to outline for us just what this new life in Christ looks like. And one of the central issues of the relationships of life comes up at verse 21 –

“...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Now, we have already mentioned that many people try to take this single verse to prove that what Paul means is that Christ wants us all to submit to all. Everyone submitting

to everyone else and then there will be unity and harmony and so on. A bit of reflection will show us that this simply cannot be Paul's meaning. *Where there is no authority and submission to that authority, there is chaos and anarchy – not peace.*

But more – as we continue on through this chapter, we find Paul applying this submission to certain institutions of life –

- Marriage
- Family
- Masters and slaves

And all of this submission to a particular authority – especially in marriage – models the submission of Christ, the Son – to the Father. Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul calls upon Christians to submit to the king, as does the Apostle Peter –

Rom 13:1-2 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (2) Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

1Pe 2:13-15 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human

institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, (14) or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. (15) For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Focus On Husbands and Wives

Alright then, in our study of abuse and domestic violence, it is the authority and submission structure within marriage that we are primarily concerned with here. Let's look again then at Ephesians 5:22-24.

Eph 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

[You will notice first of all from the general context down through verse 33, that the great majority of the instruction is given *to the husband*].

A. Wives, submit

Alright then, there is that *word*. It is not one that any of us like that well. None of us like to submit naturally – we prefer to be submitted to, right? This is our flesh, our sinful self, in action. It is our rebellion that agrees with our flesh.

And yet, under the overall “headline” of submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ, we have this call to the wife that she submit to – not men! – but to her own husband. Her submission is as to the Lord because, as explained in verse 23, she is submitting in a divinely-ordained “chain of command” from the Father to the Son to the husband to the wife.

What is this submission? We can learn a few things from a word study, but far more light is shed on its meaning simply from the context here. The word Paul uses is hupotasso. It simply means to subject oneself, to be subjected or subordinated. It is used in Scripture for submission toward the husband, toward masters, to secular authorities, to Christ, to the will of God, to the Law of God.

Here in Ephesians 5, hupotasso is pictured *as the submission the Christian gives to Christ, the Head of the Church*. “As the church

submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”

There is a perfect picture of this headship and submission to be found in 1 Peter chapter 5 where Peter is speaking to the elders and members of the local church. Listen to this passage and I think that you will see just exactly what this submission is that Paul is calling wives to –

1Pe 5:1-5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2) shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

You have the same word and, I believe, the very same idea here in

verse 5 – “*you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you with humility toward one another.*”

So what is happening here in this hupotasso submission?

1. You have a head who understands that he has been entrusted with *someone who belongs to Christ, who is a sheep in the flock of God.*
2. A head who understands humbly and in the fear of Christ that he is to exercise oversight – to *actively watch over and watch out for* – the person or persons GOD has placed in his charge.
3. A head who understands that he will be held to account for what has been entrusted to him – the Chief Shepherd is going to appear!
4. A head who watches over his charge with willingness and eagerness, setting a Christlike example for his charge *to follow/submit to.*
5. A head who rejects the abuser’s power/control over mindset – who hates the notion of domineering over his flock or, in marriage, his wife.

And then, it is against THIS backdrop, that Peter speaks to those who are to submit to the elders’ headship –

“*Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.*” And this word “be subject” is the same, hupotasso. This scenario then of believers submitting to the elders of the local church is the same “atmosphere” that Paul calls wives to submit to their own husbands in.

“Submission is submission to Christ. It is in the same manner as the church is in submission to Christ. It is a submission to a headship that is consistent with Christ’ headship over the church. THEREFORE THERE IS A HUGE AND PLAIN ASSUMPTION FUNCTIONING HERE AS PAUL WRITES ALL OF THIS – NAMELY, THAT THE HUSBAND IS IN SUBMISSION TO CHRIST, LOVING HIS WIFE AS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH, HAVING THE SAME DESIRE FOR HIS WIFE AS CHRIST HAS FOR THE CHURCH. Thus she can submit “in everything” to her husband, *and in doing so she is submitting to the Lord – her husband’s leading is conformed to that of Christ’s.*

Look at the parallels back in Ephesians 5 –

Husband is the head of the wife AS...	Christ is the Head of the church
Wife submits to her own husband	Church submits to Christ
Husband does not watch over his wife grudgingly but willingly and humbly without domination	Christ watches over His church sacrificially <i>and even humbly!</i> He leads without domination, but with serving.
Husband's goal is the spiritual sanctification of his wife – her well-being in every sense	Christ's goal for His bride is her sanctification so that she be holy and without a spot of sin
The husband is to understand that he and his wife are one flesh	Christ and His Church are mystically joined into one body – we are “in Christ”

THIS is how the thing looks, this is how it functions as ordained by God. Headship and submission. THIS is what wives are called to submit to. Men, our wives should be able to follow us, to submit to us – and know in their conscience that in doing so, they are following Christ!

Now, have any of us succeeded at this? Of course not. There is not a man here who loves his wife as Christ loves His bride, the Church. And therefore, there is not a woman here who has submitted herself to her own husband as Christ submitted and humbled Himself before His Father. But this is the thing – this is the goal toward which Christ is moving us. And we should see this kind of headship and submission increasingly in our marriages.

“Men, Christ calls YOU to be growing in Him. He calls YOU to shepherd your wife whom He has entrusted to you. He calls YOU to stop serving yourself, to stop domineering yourself over you wife, and to love her and give yourself for her. He calls YOU to take up your cross and follow Him so that your wife can submit to and follow YOU.

Men, how can you ever expect your wife to submit to you if you are a man who is careless and worldly? If you never read your Bible? If you do not lead your children and family in regular study of Scripture and prayer? Do you understand that the husband who serves himself, who is arrogant and proud, is a man that God Himself is opposed to and therefore, why

should a Godly wife not also be opposed to such a husband?"

Men, do you see that there is not a single instruction given to husbands here in regard to "Husbands, you get your wife in submission to your authority. You make sure that she obeys you." No. Nothing like this. If you do not believe your wife is submitting to you, then get off of your soapbox, humble yourself, and do some real self-examination. If you have to "tell her" to submit to you, then something is wrong and most often the "glitch" will be found in the husband. Remember, we are considering CHRISTIAN marriage here! Do you think that your wife is a Christian? Well, if the answer is yes you don't think she is submitting to you, then you need to look to yourself. The Church is the Bride of Christ. The Bride submits to and follows the Bridegroom. That is how it is. And that is how it should be in our marriages as well.

Now, at this point some of you might think that I am being too hard on the husbands. But I am not, and I can prove it to you. I remind you again that in this entire large section – vss 22-33 – only 3 ½ verses are directed to the wife. 8 ½ are directed to the man. A Godly,

Christian wife will follow the lead of and submit to a Godly, Christian husband just as naturally as the Church follows and submits to Christ. Not perfectly right now. Not without our struggles. But this is how our walk will be and this is what our marriages will increasingly become.

The Abuser and all of This

Alright then, we have been dealing with the abusive man (and woman sometimes). Let's come back to him as we close.

Consider the abusive woman/wife first. This is who she is. She is Jezebel. She is not a Christian. Yes, it is conceivable that we might run into cases sometimes in which the husband has come to Christ and is doing his best to shepherd his wife as the head of his home, but she will not. She has enjoyed domination and she will not give it up. To such a husband, we say the same thing as we have said to the woman who is a victim of abuse – ultimately God has called His people to peace (1 Cor 7). A husband married to an abusive woman may find that she is simply not willing to live with him as a Christian. He may choose to finally let her depart, having done all he could to be at peace with her.

And then the abusive husband. If his façade (and remember, the abusive man will ALWAYS have a disguise of some kind), if his disguise is Christianity, then you can be sure that the abusive man will make much of Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3, and such passages, lording them over his wife to ensure she submit to him and obey whatever he says.

But the fact is, as I hope that all of us have seen this morning, these very Scriptures he makes so much of, *in fact condemn him*. The real truth of these Scriptures are *truths that the abusive man hates*. His entire purpose is to be superior, to domineer over, to use his wife for his own selfish purposes, not to love her and serve her and give himself up for her. Such a man is Nabal, the fool. He has lost any authority over his wife because he is not in submission himself to Christ. And like Nabal, the Lord will eventually expose such a hypocrite – and may even kill him. *The Church of Christ is a very dangerous place for a Nabal, for an abusive man, for the hypocrite*. And that is how it should be.

Now, you may already be wondering how all of this fits with what we find in Peter's instruction to husbands and wives in 1 Peter 3, specifically –

“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.” (vss 1-2)

What? Isn't Peter telling us then that in fact a wife IS to submit to her husband in literally EVERYTHING – *even when he is sinning?* This is the text we plan to consider next time.