

A Good Man is Hard to Find: A Good Man Leads

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A Good Man is Hard to Find

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Now, please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Genesis 1. Last week on Father's Day, we began to look at the subject of masculinity and seeking a biblical view of masculinity. Last week, this was the title last week, not today. And last week's title was "The Abolition of Man." We talked about the fact that the culture seems determined to reject God's design for humanity. From the beginning, God made them male and female. But the culture has set its sights on destroying the concept of gender in general and the concept of masculinity in particular. This idea of toxic masculinity is the rage. And there is understandably this concern, because masculinity is often associated with aggression, violence, unbridled ambition. I mean, when you look at the things men do that women don't do to the same numbers, the things that you find are murder, assault, violence, rape, murder, war. These are things that are expressions of toxic masculinity.

But the problem is not masculinity as God created it. We can agree on the problem of these evils that men do. But the problem is not masculinity itself. I referenced a quote from actually a young lady who, Allie Beth Stuckey, who says this really well. "Bad men don't become good when they stop being men. Bad men become good when they stop being bad." The answer is not to help little boys to be more like little girls, or to help men to be more like women, to get in touch with their feminine side, to express more emotions. That's not really the root issue. That will not solve the problem of toxic masculinity. Men don't need to subtract masculine traits from themselves. They need to add goodness to their masculinity. They need to be men as God created men to be. And as God created men to be, he created them to be good, to use those tendencies toward initiative, leadership, to bring blessing, not harm, to exhibit masculinity that is self-disciplined, that is good, to add the fruit of the Spirit to what it means to be a man, not to subtract what it means to be a man.

If men stop being men, the world will be in a much worse place. In fact, that's one of the real systemic problems to culture today is that men are stopping being men. Men are bad, and then they are also stopping being men. The reality is the world desperately needs men to be men, men to be the kind of men God designed them to be. That is to be good men. And in a world that is confused, it is becoming increasingly, astoundingly confused about what it means to be a human being. This is a great opportunity for the people of God to set on display the beauty and glory of God's design for man, male and female.

As the darkness gets darker and deeper, the light shines more brightly. On a dark night, you can see a candle from many, many miles away. And so, we, as we see the world becoming darker, we don't need to be discouraged. We don't need to retreat. We need to advance. We need to follow God's blueprint even more confidently, boldly, and joyfully. So, we need to be godly men, godly women, and to show the world the beauty and the surpassing excellence of living life according to God's design. The title of the message this morning is "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Borrowed that title from a short story that I don't recommend necessarily, but it's a good title anyway. "A Good Man is Hard to Find." Subtitle, as we are going to be here, Lord willing, next week too. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Subtitle "A Good Man Leads."

We're going to look at what the Bible says about masculinity, and we're going to go back to the very head waters of Scripture to the first chapters of the Bible and see that God places great emphasis on these essential realities at the very beginning of all that he has to say in Scripture. A good man is hard to find. A good man leads. And we're going to see next week, there are really three things. This is the two things for next week, Lord willing, are a good man protects, and a good man provides. Those are three pillars of what it means to be a man. But today we are going to look at exclusively a good man leads. That's our theme for this morning.

A good man is hard to find, but a good man leads. And before we get into the outline of what leadership is, and what every man is called to be in this arena, I think it's crucial for us to take note of something that is lost and is lost in the church. It's as if the biblical portrait of masculinity and femininity, the fact that we have lost it to the degree we have is just, I mean, the thing that resonates with me in the pages of Scripture is when, do you remember when Josiah became king in Judah, and Josiah, God began to work in his heart, and he had a heart to turn from his father Manasseh's sins, and so, he began to clean up the temple, and he sent the workers into the temple, and Hilkiah, the priest, found the book of the Law in the temple. The book of the Law was lost. The people of God had lost the book of the Law. He found the book. He brings it to Josiah and reads it to Josiah. Josiah hears it, tears his clothes, weeping as he hears the Law of God read, realizing how far we have departed from the law of God. The astounding thing is that the place where the Law was supposed to be lifted up, the temple, the priesthood among the people of God, Israel, they had completely lost it.

There is a sense in which our view and understanding of masculinity and femininity are to that level. We've just lost it. Completely forgotten. And the world reflects that deficiency in the church. The decay that we see in the world, in our American culture, is directly related to the church's failure to lift up the standard and to be what God has called us to be, which is bad news, but the good news is the opportunity that is before us to recover, to find like Josiah did and Hilkiah, to find the Law of the Lord, to find the blueprint that God has given us, and to walk in his ways.

As we read earlier from Proverbs 3 not to trust in our own understanding, but to trust in the Lord with all our heart, to fear the Lord, to believe that his way and his design are right, and good, and worthy to live for, indeed worthy to die for. And one of the things, I

say that, because as I have been studying this subject and looking at particularly the Scriptures in general but Genesis in particular, I am struck by, this is the preliminary observation before we get into the outline of leadership. We're going to get back to leadership in a moment. But I think it's crucial to see this. And that is this. Preliminary observation. The surprisingly clear and emphatic declaration of the importance of the two genders in Genesis 1 and 2 is stunning. It is stunningly clear and emphatic.

God made man male and female, and it is good, and it is glorious. And it is right there at the beginning. Pick up your Bible. Open it. Bam! There it is! How could we miss it? And yet, that is what has happened. The emphasis on gender in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 is exceedingly clear. Let's look at this. We'll begin reading Genesis 1, and we're going to then read into Genesis 2 after we pray. Genesis 1:20. Genesis 1:20. We're going to read from here to the end of the chapter. Genesis 1:20. This is the fifth day.

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.’ And God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind’; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind” and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’ Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food’; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for your Word. That you have given us a perfect revelation of your heart, and your will, your design for us, and most of all, for the plan of salvation and the way to come home to you through Christ. We pray that you would open the eyes of our hearts. Open our ears. Make our dull hearts ready to receive the good seed of your Word. And bring forth fruit resulting in more holiness, resulting in more glory to our Savior. We pray this in his name, Amen.

A good man is hard to find. A good man leads. One of the things that we see here at the very beginning is this emphasis on gender. The gender of man stands out in a sense by relief. There is no discussion of gender when it came to the birds, the fish, and the animals. Not mentioned. It's not because they don't have genders. They do. In fact, it's going to be mentioned quite a bit. In fact, if you turn over to Genesis 6:19, you'll read this. This is Noah's instruction as he is going to take the animals on the ark. Genesis 6:19.

“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.” You got to bring a male and a female into the ark. Chapter 7 verse 3. “Also of the birds of the sky, by sevens male and his female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.” Verse 8. “Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.”

Verses 13 and 14. I'm sorry. Verses 15 and 16. “So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him.” So, they're male and female. The animals are all male and female, but when God creates them, he doesn't bother telling us that in Genesis 1. And by doing that, he underscores and lifts up the fact that man is made male and female. He brings up gender in chapter 1 verse 27 when he says, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

This emphasis is even more highlighted in chapter 2. Remember chapter 2 is like, I use the illustration of a slow-motion instant replay. I was reading a theologian recently who he says chapter 2 is a zoom lens of day six, because chapter 2 is a retelling of part of day six, okay, that we cover in Genesis 1. It's retold in chapter 2 verses 4 through 25, like a zoom lens or like a slowed down account.

And what you see is that when God made man male and female, he didn't make male and female at the same time like he did the animals. When he made the animals, he just said, he called for them to come up out of the ground or the sky to form them, and they were formed in their pairs. But when he made man, whom he made male and female, he makes man male, and he pauses for a long time. I mean, this is really something. It's the kind of thing you have to as you read your Bible, you stop and say, “Lord, why did you do this?” That's what he wants you to do as you read the Scriptures like this. “What was up with why you created man the way you did?” Why? Look at chapter 2 verse 7.

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” He's going to put man in the garden in chapter 2 verse 15. “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.” Man is just male. He's got all these other animals running around. They're in pairs. There's a whole bunch of them too. Not just one pair. There's all kinds of pairs. But they're all male, female.

But here man is. And he puts him in the garden. “Hey, get to work. Cultivate and keep this garden.” Then the Lord God commands him something. Verse 16, “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’” Really important information. And now listen, wouldn’t you have wanted, if you were Eve, wouldn’t you have wanted to be there for that? Seriously, I mean, if you think practically as, “Hey, Lord, I would like to change the way you did this. Let Eve be there, and that might have helped her when the serpent showed up.” Well, God does it right. So, we’re wrong by even wanting that, but it’s still okay to even think about it, because it helps you think about why did God do it in a way that seems sort of just surprising and unnatural almost.

He creates man. He puts him in the garden and says, “Get to work.” He gives him a command, and then the Lord says in verse 18, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him.” In the verses that we read, 20 to 31 of Genesis 1, you heard at the end of day five God saw all that he had made and behold it was good. At the end of the day, part of his going through day six, he says, “It’s good.” And then at the end of creating man, he says, “God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good.”

Seven times in Genesis 1 it was good. It was good. It was good. Here we have God saying, stopping, and looking at things, and saying, “Hey, it’s not good.” Now, just think about that for a moment. Why did God do that? It almost makes it look like he forgot. But he didn’t forget. He doesn’t forget anything. The Lord can’t forget anything. He’s doing this to emphasize something. But think about it. I mean, we have a God who does all things well. Everything he made, when he finished everything he was making, every day he says, God saw all that he had made, and it was good. He looks at it the next day. It was good. God saw all that he made, and it was good. It was good. It was good.

And here, he invites you and I into the thing, and he makes man halfway, and he stops, and he says, “Let’s survey what we got here. It’s not good.” Now, God hasn’t made a mistake. God hasn’t done anything wrong. He’s like a master craftsman who stops his work to survey it and says, “Look, this is not yet what it needs to be.” Or like an artist who stops his painting before it’s finished and invites people to look at it and see how deficient it is. It’s not yet what it needs to be.

And then, he wonderfully finishes it and causes those who are pausing at it to gasp in wonder. That’s what he is doing. He is saying, “Stop and look with me at how incomplete man is as male only. Look at that.” And then he finishes the work in chapter 2 verse 18 after he says, “It’s not good for man to be alone.” And look at this. It’s really cool even this part of it. I’ve been always kind of wondered about this. When he says, “It’s not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him,” out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called the living creature, that was its name.

So, he's saying, "Listen. God knows where he is going. He's not sitting there wondering, "Do we have a worthy counterpart?" No, he knows. But he brings all of these animals before the man, and what's man thinking? He sees pairs of all these different animals. And like, the Lord is wanting him to see, he's like wanting to underline it, circle it, highlight it, underscore it, you know, all caps, all bold. Whatever you can do to make this stand out, God is doing to say, "Adam, do you see how incomplete you are?"

And as we look back at it, man as male, to see how incomplete you are. So, that's why he lets the man, part of why he lets the man do that. He lets the man give names to all the animals. But for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him, so then the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, verse 21. He slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'At last this is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called "woman," Because she was taken out of man.'

He finishes the work. He brings her to the man, and the man is overjoyed. And he does this. I think there is two reasons. And I think one of the reasons, I mean there is two reasons, the biggest reason is to show off the glory of God in his perfection of his creation. But I think in one sense, what he was doing was he was trying to continually elevate femininity in the eyes of man, male, in the eyes of man. He wanted man at the very beginning of the Bible to see this, to see and treasure what God has made in the female sex.

And what sinful man has done throughout history, and the reason that toxic masculinity is even a reality, the idea that it's a reality is because men have failed so miserably throughout history again, and again, and again to be good men. And God, in a sense, was saying at the very beginning, elevating femininity, because men would devalue, misuse, and exploit females throughout history. Because God made the female sex the weaker sex. Beautiful in its own right. Equal in dignity. Equal in value. Yes, yes, yes. But less powerful. In a position of support and dependence rather than authority.

And so, God highlights this so that man will see how he should see his wife, how men in general should see women. And he's correcting this. He's helping them see what Peter is reminding the believers in 1 Peter 3:7 when he says, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way," that is according to knowledge, because your wife is the weaker vessel. And you must "grant honor to her as a joint heir of the grace of life."

There is a tendency, because you're stronger, you're bigger, to devalue. And God says, "Don't do that. You're joint heirs of the grace of life." The fact that you have more physical strength, the fact that you have a stronger position, you're not to devalue women. And so, the Bible is continually elevating women. That's not what you would think from hearing the culture respond, would you? But see, they don't understand. And they haven't seen, and they've seen. And so many people have been misused. So many

women have been misused, mistreated, exploited by wicked men, and the scars, scars are painful. The wounds are unhealed.

But the answer is not to retreat from what masculinity is. It's not to become less manly. It's to become good, and to show the world the beauty of goodness. But listen, what this also does. It doesn't just elevate femininity. By elevating femininity, it even more redounds to elevating masculinity. It shows that masculinity, as wonderful as the woman's position is and the gift that she is, and remember helper suitable, actually just Ebenezer, you know, means stone of help. Actually, eben is stone in Hebrew, eben actually. Nezer, ezer is help. So, when you think, you know, like Ted said, it's a sign of victory, a sign of blessing. It's a stone of help, actually. It's a stone commemorating God's help. Ezer is God's help. Helper suitable is Ezer. It's the key word for helper. It's help from God.

But if the helper is this wonderful, then so also is the one to whom the help is given. There is a sense in which this even elevates properly seen, when a woman is all that she's supposed to be, it actually elevates her husband. There is an interesting verse in 1 Corinthians 11:7. We're not going to unpack it today. It's complex. But I want you just to think about this. This is what it says. It says, "A man is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man."

Now, all of Scripture is God breathed. That's our conviction. That's our confidence. Every single word of God, none of it falls. None of it is to be dispensed with. All of it is brought in. And what it's saying in there is, there is some sense in which God has made male and female to be together that the man, the position in some sense, is reflective of the glory of God in a way that the woman is. There is a sense in which her greater glory comes in giving honor to her husband as she gives honor to God.

And it comes from the fact, 1 Corinthians 11 a few verses before that he says, "For indeed man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man." Paul is arguing from the creation order. The idea of hierarchy is not a function of the Fall. And those who tell you that are just misled, and they are teaching error. A careful reading of the Bible leads you to conclude that. 1 Corinthians 11. 1 Timothy 2. The fact that man was created first put man in a position, male, of authority and leadership.

But what happens is when we become what we're supposed to be, both sexes are elevated together. And the glory of God is set on display. A man becomes a leader who loves, and serves, and restrains his base instincts, but still exhibits his manliness in leading, and protecting, and serving his family, starting with his wife. But these things don't just apply in marriage. This is what you're supposed to be as a man single or married. You're supposed to be a leader. Men are made to lead.

So, the surprisingly clear and emphatic declaration of the importance of gender right here at the beginning of the Bible is to help us see the beauty of God's design, the perfection of his design, in a world of confusion, in a world of increasing darkness, in increasing

despair. This world needs God's people to set on display the glory of his design, the glory of his design, man in his image, male and female.

So, a good man is being part of that. If we're going to represent that, we have to be good men and good women, and our theme this morning is a good man is hard to find, but a good man leads. What makes a man good biblically is the acceptance of the high calling of leadership. What we need is men to stop abdicating, to stop being tentative, and to start being, taking the initiative and leading. That's what needs to happen. And you and I have been, I mean like the proverbial frog in the kettle, because I don't think you could really cook a frog that way. You know the old story. If you turn the water up slowly, supposedly the frog stays in there. Sometime, the frog, he's smarter than we are, he jumps out.

But we are not as smart as the frog in some ways. And so, the culture has a way of roughing, I mean of just messing with God's design so much that we begin to see God's design in a very foreign way to how we should see it. We don't see it the way it really is. We forget. And so, we find ourselves having to recover it in the same way that Josiah and Hilkiah had to recover the Law of God.

Now, what I want to think about, I want us to consider three points this morning. The good man leads. Men are called to lead. All men are called to lead. And there are three aspects of leadership that I think we see in the Scriptures. And the first is, positional leadership. Positional leadership. This is inescapable here in the Word of God. And you see it here again in the first chapters. Genesis 1:28 gives man his work in a real sense, what man is called to do, how, what the image of God really means even. Like when he said in Genesis 1:26. Go back to 1:26 for one minute.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule.’” There is a lot of things that are communicated by image of God. The one thing you cannot miss is the idea of ruling, because God says that right after he says, “In the image of God let them rule.” You see God is a sovereign king over all his creation. He makes man to rule over the earth in submission to him, but to rule, nonetheless. And so, the work is to rule.

Now, he explains that a little more in verse 28. “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Then he gives him the plant worlds. He says, “Rule over all of the animals. Rule over all of the plants. You're to do this. You're created to rule.” That's what it means to be a human being. We're all called to that. According to Genesis 1 it happens that we're all called to that.

He said to, it almost reads like he said this to man and woman. But when we get the slow-motion instant replay, we see there is something interesting about that. Chapter 2 tells us that when man received the work that he was called to do it was only one gender that was there to receive the work. Chapter 2 verse 15. “Then the LORD God took the man and put

him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.” The woman has not yet been created.

He gives the man the work. He gives the man the positional authority over the work. He directly calls the man to the work. You see this idea of rulership starting with the man even more emphatically in the fact that the man alone gave the names to the animals. Verse 20. Remember after he says, “It is not good for man to be alone,” in chapter 2 verse 18, he brings all the animals before the man in verse 20. “The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”

Now, here again, I would think that the woman would have done a better job with the names. I mean, at least compared in my family, I would have asked Patti to do that. I would just be like, you know, I can’t even imagine what the names would be. There would be no creativity. I would get on a certain sound and probably run that into the ground. But God put it to the man. Why? Because the man is the one who has been given the work. God is making this emphatic too. Do you see that?

This is how I am saying masculinity is elevated, even as femininity is elevated, when you understand biblically God’s design. He gave man the work, the authority. Man is told to cultivate the garden. Man is told to name the animals. Man, you are the one to know that you rule over the animals. Now, when your helper comes, you need help. Yes, you need help. I’ve got the perfect help for you, and she’s going to help you in the work. She’s going to provide invaluable aspects to this that you cannot, I mean, it’s not good for you to be alone. Do you understand that?

But she is coming to help, not to be your head. You are the head. It’s obvious here in the first two chapters of the Bible. And it continues throughout the whole of Scripture. Pre-Fall man is in the positional role of leader. You see this throughout the Scriptures, the idea of male headship. That’s a key word in Ephesians 5:22-33, most important passage on marriage in the Bible. I mean, the fullest description of what marriage is supposed to be is Ephesians 5:22-33.

What does it say there? It says, “Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church.” Head, Kephale Greek word. There are some theologians today who want to argue with the fact that the word head, like English, the same word Kephale in Greek that was the inspired word that Paul put down on the paper when he was writing Ephesians 5 where the husband is the head of the wife, the word kephale does have in its semantic range the idea of authority and the idea of source. The idea of source is a much smaller area of meaning when you look at all the ways the word kephale is used in modern, I mean in ancient Greek, literature. But it’s similar to English. The head waters of the river. That’s source. But just like in English, head normally means authority. He’s the head of the organization. Oh, he’s the one in charge.

And so in Greek. And in fact, even if you, it's so often it's used, like ten to one, or maybe even more than that, twenty to one, I don't know exactly the number, but what I was reading was like a very obscure references to source that some people who are writing from an egalitarian viewpoint. That's two important terms. In evangelicalism today, there are two perspectives on male and female relationships. Two main perspectives. One is the egalitarian perspective that makes men and women basically equal. The no authority structure. And then there is the complementarian position, which sees man, male and female, as having different functions, different roles.

Well, the Bible clearly teaches the different, the complementarian view. But you have to watch out. Sometimes people say they are complementarian, and they are really egalitarian disguising themselves as complementarians. Not surprising. That's always the way it is. But when you look at the Scriptures, this idea of source. How would you decide, even if it were fifty fifty. It could be source. It could be authority. And I don't believe that at all. It's not that way at all. But if even if it were, how would you decide what Paul meant when he said, "The husband is the head of the wife."

Is he just merely the source of the wife? He's just to provide? Is he not also to lead? How would you decide? Context. Usage of the word. You might note the fact that right after he says, "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ," he says, "Wives to your husbands." Implicitly submitting to one another, starting with wives submitting to their husbands. But you might also look back at all of Scripture. You might go back to Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 and say, "Wow, God gave Adam the commands. God gave Adam the instruction. God gave Adam the authority. God created man first. In 1 Timothy 2 when Paul says, "I don't allow for women to teach men, because Adam was created first, not Eve." You let Scripture speak, and it's just clear.

You can't escape it. Now, the problem is, what happens is, people want to be politically correct. It's not politically correct to say men are supposed to lead and women are not. Now, let me say something here for a moment, just to clarify. We're talking about in here. What I mean is, we're talking about the people of God. I don't mean we just talk about this here. We talk about it out in the world too, but we understand that, I am not saying that women can't be president, or women can't be the president of a corporation.

I mean, it would be better between you and me if it were men, but if I were voting on president, and there was a woman who represented better positions, that is to me, when you look at somebody you're going to vote for, you ask the question, "Are the policies they support against the gospel?" And if they are, I am not voting for them. Are the policies they support for the gospel, or, they're probably not going to be for the gospel, but are they at least not against the gospel? I am going to vote for that person. I mean, if I were in Britain, I would have voted for Margaret Thatcher in the 80s, a wonderful prime minister.

And so, many of you are going to have to have female bosses, and you don't need to be going around telling them, "Hey, I am supposed to lead." You can lead your way with your pink slip to your car and clean out your desk. No, I mean, and God has, even in

Scripture, at moments, he has raised up women in positions of leadership. Look at Deborah in Judges. But listen, when that happens, part of that is an indictment on the failure of the men.

We're to say, "Where were the men?" But you see, and listen, to keep being balanced, Scripture elevates women. It really does again, and again, and again. One of the most beautiful ways it does this to me is in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. And I mean, there is some really interesting stuff going on there. Because you have all of the different fathers of Jesus, from Abraham all the way down. But what you have is, you have four women make the list. And the four women are really notable women, and they're notable in extraordinary ways.

The first is Tamar. The second is Ruth. The third is Rahab. Actually, second would be Rahab. Third is Ruth. Fourth is Bathsheba. Bathsheba is not named. She is called the wife of Uriah. And all four of those women did some things that were pretty extraordinary. They took action in situations where the men were not taking action. They really did. I mean, the story of Tamar, Judah and Tamar, Genesis 38, is an extraordinary story. It is, there is some ungodliness mixed in, but the reality is, the action Tamar took was because of Judah's colossal failure to be a man. And her action kept alive the genealogy of Christ!

Rahab acted boldly in seeking a harbor under the people of God in Jericho. Remember, she was part of the city that was going to be destroyed, but she hid the spies. She risked her life. She saved them and protected them. Ruth, the Moabitess, the Moabites weren't supposed to be able to come into the kingdom of God according to the law, but God showing his grace and his mercy shows us and makes Ruth the hero of the book. Naomi is really the main character of the book in a real sense if you look at it carefully. But Ruth is the hero. Boaz is second. And Ruth takes the initiative in a really borderline inappropriate way with Boaz, and she becomes a part of the line of Christ, the great grandmother of David.

And then you got Bathsheba who takes action to make sure David doesn't squander things in his old age and let his sons be fighting, and she takes action to make sure Solomon is put on the throne. So, you understand. The Scripture, I mean, it is, and I mentioned it back on May, whatever Mother's Day was, May 10th? May 9th? Somewhere in there. We talked about femininity, and the glory of it, and how all the women were the ones that had the discernment to see what was going on when Jesus was nearing the cross. It was the woman who broke the vial of perfume on Jesus. It was the women who stood by at the cross. It was the women who were making sure that his body would be anointed for burial. It was the women.

But we cannot escape the fact that God still, even though he has exalted the position of male, man as female, he has also exalted the position of man as male. He has made man the head. And that means authority.

So, positional leadership. Secondly, though, we see back in Genesis, that not just positional leadership, but spiritual leadership is given to the man. I mentioned earlier,

wouldn't you have kind of voted that God told Eve also? I mean, aren't you like, some of you guys have to be like me. My wife reminds me of things that I am about to forget, you know. Aren't you glad that you have a helper that helps you remember things, essential things, key things? Hey, Lord, you should have told Eve this. She would have made sure that this was like, talked about. Well, no, the Lord had a reason for telling the man. He didn't make, there was no design flaw in this. I am not trying to imply that. No design flaw at all, because Adam was not yet a sinner.

Adam though was given the command by himself without Eve, verse 16 of chapter 2. "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" What does that tell us? That tells us the man was supposed to teach his wife. God wills that male leadership, that part of being a leader is taking spiritual responsibility to teach those to whom you are in position of authority over.

You see this throughout the Scriptures. I will just mention this as an example. Deuteronomy 16:16. It's also in Exodus 23, but Deuteronomy 16:16. When God, you remember we talked about the pilgrimage feast when we talked about Ezra/Nehemiah? We've talked about how the different feasts of the year, there were a number of feasts that the Jews celebrated. But three were called pilgrimage feasts. Three times a year they were to report to Jerusalem to the temple to worship God. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is Passover basically. The Feast of Weeks which is Pentecost. And the Feast of Booths which we saw is sometimes called Tabernacles. They were to report there three times a year.

But the Bible is really clear in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. All men are required to appear before God every year at those three feasts. Men must appear. Do you hear that? It didn't say men and women. Now, the women often went. Look at Luke 2 when Jesus is at the Feast of Passover with his dad and his mom at twelve years old. But the very fact that God is, he is talking to the men. And this idea that spiritual leadership is also seen in Genesis 3 when God speaks to the man. When after the sin has happened, he doesn't go to the woman. God knows who ate of the fruit first. God knows who tempted her to eat of the fruit. He only asked the questions because he is letting man, God is wonderful about this, and Jesus was too in his earthly ministry, they asked questions, not because they need information. They need no information. They know all things. John 2 says, "Jesus knew what was in the heart of man, but he was always still asking them questions.

Why? Because there is something about a question that makes the person who is asked the question to examine himself in a different way. Rather than make a declaration, you ask a question, and you are forced to see yourself. When God says, "Where are you?" God doesn't really know? Adam hasn't really hidden himself somewhere so well that God can't see him. Where are you means, Adam, look at yourself. Look at what you're doing. You are hiding.

When he says, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat?” He wants Adam to have the opportunity to reflect on those questions, deal with his heart, and respond. But the fact is, he comes to Adam first. He doesn’t come to Eve. Why? Because Adam is in the position of spiritual leadership. He is a spiritual leader. I mentioned 1 Timothy 2. You might turn over there for a moment. I’ll show you this in Paul’s letter to Timothy.

Verse 9 of 1 Timothy 2, Paul says, “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness. A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

Look what he says. That’s some pretty bold things that he said, but here’s the reason. Here is the proof of why this is true. Verse 13. “For it was Adam who was first created and then Eve.” The reason that women are not to teach men is because Adam was created, and then Eve. And he goes on to say, “And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.” He’s actually saying that men are to be spiritual leaders, because women are more spiritually vulnerable.

Now, listen. Some of you are, your wives know the Bible a lot better than you do. And what that means is, you need to start studying the Bible a lot more. But it, there is something that you will never catch them completely. Yeah, but you ought to try. You ought to die trying to catch them. You ought to be able to tell him that “I gained on her. I gained on her, Lord.” When you get to heaven. But even though she may know more Scripture, you are the spiritual leader. Your wife needs to come to you, otherwise she may be deceived.

This is actually also makes sense of some verses in 1 Corinthians 14:31 and following. I can’t remember exactly what verse it starts on, but I will just mention this. It’s talking about how prophets were to speak. This is before the Bible is fully, the New Testament canon is nowhere close to being assembled, because God is giving his Word through different letters from Paul to different places, and it takes a while for copies to be made. Nobody has got their New Testament Bible that you can hand out and give out in 60 A.D.

So, when Paul is talking to the Corinthians, and he is writing to them, actually more like 58 A.D. he says to them, “Listen, when you guys are together, you know what God is doing right now is he is speaking through prophets.” That is, he would give a word to someone in the congregation, and they would get up, and they would speak the word. and he says, “When they speak, they must be tested. You must test what they are saying to see if it’s true.” 1 Thessalonians 5 says the same thing. Test everything. Hold to that which is good. The idea is test the prophecy.

Well, in 1 Corinthians 14, the verses I am talking about, he says, basically, the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets. That is, when someone speaks, the other guys are

supposed to evaluate. And this is where he says, “Let women keep silent in the churches.” Now, I think in context, he doesn’t mean that you are never to talk. You never have an opportunity to share. But he is saying, when it comes to testing the prophets, this is for the men. When it comes to evaluating error or truth, this is for the men. Do you understand that? No matter how much you know the Bible as a woman of God, it is for your husband to provide leadership in this key area. It doesn’t mean you don’t, and what he goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 14 is, “Wives, go home and talk to your husbands about it,” basically.

And part of that is, he wants you to go home and help your complacent, sometimes apathetic husband to be motivated to speak out next time. Because he intends that to be the way. And the glory of femininity is seen when a woman supports her husband like that, and her husband becomes more and more a man of God. This is what Proverbs 31 is describing. A woman who resourceful, who is doing all kinds of things to support the house as well, she’s got all kinds of abilities, all kinds, and she is using them, but what it says, the man is praised in the gates. Her husband is praised in the gates. Everybody respects her husband, because she has learned how to use all of her gifts in such a way that she is not competing with her husband. She is helping him. She is being an ezer to him. She is assisting him. She is coming alongside him, and then they together are leading the charge.

That’s what God intends. And that is beautiful. And a man who has a wife like that, the Bible says, “A good wife, a man who finds a good wife has found a good thing.” And you find a good wife, man, that’s something! And woman, you find a good man, that’s even more amazing. And the reality is that all of us fall so far short of the standard. You know, the third point is accountable leadership. And I have kind of covered that under the previous point. Genesis 3:9 he comes to the man.

But basically, men are going to have to give an account for their families. This is clear. Spiritual authority takes with it spiritual accountability. Hebrews 13:17 says, talking about elders, that you are to submit to your elders and to obey them as those who will give an account. Elders give an account for those under their charge. Husbands give an account for their wives. Husbands, fathers give an account for their children. Mothers give an account for their children as well, but under the overall account of the father. And we understand that. We have to stand before God and give an account. What a humbling and frightening prospect that is.

We’re made to be a positional leader. We’re made to be the spiritual leader. We don’t feel able, do we? And the reality is, we’re not in our own strength able. This is where the gospel is so wonderful. Faithful is he who called you. He also will do it. He calls you to be a leader. He will make you a leader. And this is because to be a leader, and this is really the key for masculinity, what we’re going to talk about next week, as well as today. The prototype of masculinity, the most glorious expression of masculinity the world has ever seen is in the man Christ Jesus.

And we need to recalibrate the way we see Jesus in some ways. Sometimes we have him just as meek and lowly. He was meek and lowly, but he was also a mighty warrior. He was bold, and he took action. He was a fearless leader who came for his bride, who took on the ruler of this present darkness, and he smashed his reign. He came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and he succeeded. Fearless. Be strong and courageous, the Scripture says again, and again, and again to men, because he knows we tend not to be strong and not to be courageous. But there is one who is always strong and courageous. And if you know him, if your heart has been surrendered to him, if you are believing the gospel, if you believe in his death and resurrection for you, and you are trusting in him, then he will make you strong with his strength. He will give you his courage. You are now in union with Christ in man, male and female, both of us.

Women, you need him the same way. He is your righteousness. Men, he is your righteousness. We cling to Christ, and we become all that we were made to be. We walk in our own strength. You try to do these things in your own effort. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing." Like a branch of a vine cut off from the vine itself, straining to bear fruit. It is good for nothing but to be burned. So, abide in Jesus. Go to him and understand that in him we find a leader who understands what it means to be a leader. He was a man who took initiative.

I mean, we're studying Mark's gospel. Todd Guthrie's teaching on Sunday morning Bible study, and one of the things you see in Mark's gospel is Jesus as a man of action. Mark is constantly using the adverb "immediately." I mean, it's really kind of amazing. It's like Jesus did this, and immediately he went here. And immediately he went there. And immediately this happened. I mean, he's taking action. He's boldly taking initiative. And what does a leader do? A leader is willing to take risks. A leader does not play it safe all the time.

That's something that has become way over valued in our culture. Play it safe. I mean, there is some balance here. I am glad we have seatbelts now. We had them then, but we never used them. You remember, some of you took, like I did, took, you know, journeys across the country, and nobody had a seatbelt on. I remember my brother laying up in the top of the back of the car, because he could sleep up there, and I could sleep on the seat. He was small enough for up there. Man, if we had had an accident. Pow! He would have been right through the front. I am sorry. I don't mean to make light of that, but the reality is that we weren't overly, now I think we should have everybody a seatbelt, let's be clear on that.

Bicycle helmets. I am not against bicycle helmets, but I want to tell you, when we were kids, I remember comedians saying, "If you had shown up at a bike ride with a bicycle helmet, you would have needed the helmet, because the other boys would have been throwing rocks at you. "What are you doing with that silly helmet on?"

Diving boards. Whatever happened to diving boards? Are they really that dangerous? I mean, how many, I know that people will get hurt with them, but do you see an over concern with safety means you stop living life to the full. If you want to be safe, stay

home in your house and do nothing. Never ride in a car. It's much more dangerous than flying on an airplane, even though I do think flying on an airplane is always a little nerve-wracking to me too, but it's much more safe to fly on an airplane than it is to ride in a car. It doesn't feel it though, does it? It just feels like we should not be up here.

But the reality is, we can't play it safe. And men are supposed to lead the way in not taking unnecessary foolish risks, but in being willing to take the initiative. If you never take a risk, you'll never get married. You might get married, and you might have a bad marriage. Jesus says, "Take a risk." If you're following Jesus, you must take a risk. Jesus was the one who went up to all these different people and said, "Follow me." And then he led the way every day. And if you want to be manly like Jesus, you have to be willing to do that.

Now, the best way to have other people follow you is that you are following Jesus. You're clinging to him. But families, children, wives, need somebody saying, "Follow me as I follow Christ." We have to be willing to take action, to take risks, but as we do it, we need to be like Jesus, which means not only are we bold, but we are also humble and loving in our leadership. I mean, the images of Jesus in this, and we will end with this. Matthew 20:28. Jesus says this. He says, "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over one another. It's not to be so among you. But he who would be first among you must be servant of all. He would be greatest must serve everyone."

So, if you want to be a leader, a godly leader like Jesus, it means you serve those whom you lead. You don't use your power and your strength for self-fulfillment, but for the glory of God and the good of others. That makes a man a good man. The power of Christ available to anyone who will follow Jesus. No matter how much you failed as a leader, you can begin becoming a better leader today. Give your heart to Christ. If you already belong to Jesus, and you're convicted, like I am, of ways you're failing, follow Jesus harder and firmer and be willing to take risks and lead. And your family will be better for it. The people around you, if you're single, will be better for it, and God will be glorified.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for your Word that it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Lord, we acknowledge the supreme beauty of your design, but we confess how far we fall short. Lord, we as men who should know better have your Word, and yet we forget. We're too often timid when we should be bold. We're too often complacent when we should show initiative. We're too often selfish when we should sacrifice. Lord, make us like Jesus. Raise up men of God. Make us like Christ. Make our wives to know the joy of following a more godly husband. Make our children know the security of following a more godly man, and the let the world see the beauty of all that you have made, and may it redound to the glory of the one who is the truly good man, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his name, Amen.