

Tying up loose thoughts, so as to be abundantly clear:

Men are not in Christ's place - only Christ is in Christ's place.

If we men are dishonored, how ought we respond? Well - Christ was dishonored, how did He respond?

Women are not to be oppressed or shoved in a corner, that is unbiblical and unscriptural. Our precious ladies are bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. They are a precious treasure to our Lord. We don't mediate for them, we are equal in that regard.

Considering how this works together, having discussed authority, and headship from last week: [1Co 11:3 NKJV] 3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman [is] man, and the head of Christ [is] God.

Think critically on how God's kingdom is structured bearing in mind that God's kingdom is not a typical hierarchy, shaped like a pyramid with the boss at the top. For a couple of reasons.

1. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are co-equals in power, authority, and glory. This is the nature of the trinity, the Godhead.
2. The Son and the Spirit are not created, subordinate beings. Christ is not created - He is begotten - God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made (Nicene Creed).

3. Christ instructs his disciples in the organization and shape of God's holy org chart! It's an upside down pyramid - whereby we are all supported, held up by Christ [Mat 20:25-28 NKJV] 25 But Jesus called them to [Himself] and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- 28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Bearing in mind what we discussed last week - each gender has as special role to fill in the Body - I cannot overstate the importance of God's design for order in the Body because some bad authoritarian doctrine has crept into the church over time that subjugates women and usurps the authority of Christ.

*What would our children's ministry be without women!? Who would keep our church in order without women? We are so blessed by women with soft, obedient hearts in our Body.

Now - moving into our text this morning. Head coverings. The previous discussion regarding God's design for order in the churches is not cultural in nature. It is enduring. It speaks volumes about Christ and His bride the church.

As we move into head coverings we do move into some cultural territory. Why, as I look around this morning I don't see not even one head covering. And that's okay.

1 Cor. 11:4-16 READ THRU

Here Paul is entering into the practical application of the doctrine of headship and being under the authority of another.

I want to point out that the Corinthian church is seemingly the only church that had this issue. As we've studied through this letter we get a picture of what mattered to this church. They needed some work didn't they? They received so much correction from Paul - the patience of a saint. May the Lord help us to be correctable and humble.

But this church made a big deal out of stuff. One of those things is what do I wear to church? Do the ladies have to wear head coverings?! Hats? Long hair? No other New Testament church had this issue - as far as we can tell from the literature.

v.4 - dishonors his head - who's his head Christ? What about Kippah (Heb) or yarmulke (Yiddish)? The priests wore turbans during their service in the temple as dictated by the Law.

Men in Corinth were not held to this standard or tradition - they were predominantly gentiles and this was unnecessary. Paul was not a legalist. Keep that in mind moving forward.

v.5-6 - every woman who prays or prophecies - women did have a role in prayer and prophecy in the church.

[Luk 2:36 KJV] 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

[Act 2:17 NKJV] 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

[Act 21:9 NKJV] 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. (Philip the evangelist)

[Act 16:13-15 NKJV] 13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met [there]. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard [us]. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged [us], saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

BUT - it's not what you say, it's how you say it.

In first century corinthian culture it was customary for women to wear veils or head-coverings as sign of propriety and modesty. Much as it is in the muslim world today - whether you are a muslim or not.

Example of US service members

This was a huge deal in Corinth because ritual prostitution prevailed in their culture. One of the distinguishing marks of a prostitute in Corinth was an uncovered head and/or shorn hair.

So let's paint the picture: a born-again, Jesus loving woman, comes to church and she's asked to pray or share a word with the Body - all eyes turn to her and she's presenting herself as a prostitute. Shocking really.

Now, let's run this thought out based on Paul's earlier words -

[1Co 6:9-11 NKJV] 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

If the gospel was present in Corinth then people were getting saved. No doubt prostitutes were hearing this message and getting saved - AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU!

If the Corinthian culture was one where prostitution abounded, and the marks of a prostitute were her uncovered head and shorn hair -

Well...shouldn't the new saved girls coming out of that lifestyle grow their hair out? Shouldn't they be new? As opposed to the girls in church looking like the world and conforming to the world - new believers are to be new in Christ. Not shocking for the sake of being shocking or recklessly exercising liberty for the sake of stirring up controversy - but putting on the nature, the heart, the character, the humility of Christ. Taking the bottom place - lifting others up.

That kind of behavior dishonors all present because the only person it is focused on is that person who is so wrapped up in themselves, being the center of attention, that they are unconcerned with others including Christ.

v.7-10 God's order in creation.

[Gen 2:18, 21-23 NKJV] 18 And the LORD God said, "[It is] not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." ... 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This [is] now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

v.10 - Angels are among us! That's exciting huh? And we ask, why does this matter then? Well, the angels are uniquely positioned to view heavenly and earthly things. Would they celebrate our worship as authentic and glorifying to God or would they be offended that we are running amok doing our own thing because - hey man it's a new era, we have liberty, we need to be relevant man.

v.11-12 Nevertheless - we are for one another

[Eph 5:21, 29 NKJV] 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God. ... 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord [does] the church.

All things are from God - Again, Paul refocuses us on the center, not ourselves which is easy to getting carried into during this discussion.

v.13-15 one of those issues that becomes a big deal that shouldn't - guys with long hair, girls with short hair.

judge among yourselves - the Paul uses a natural illustration

doesn't nature teach you - not the Holy Spirit, not Christ, nature - Not a big deal anymore in our culture. We wouldn't be able to say that yes, nature indicates to us that guys should have short hair and girls short hair.

v.16 - the FINAL WORD -

contentious - let's not be that - let's not make a big deal out of little things like hair cuts.

we have no such custom nor do the churches of God - there it is, all of that to say - decide for yourselves - there is no universal custom.

Flip flop story.

What we should keep in mind is - are we loving the people that come to meet Jesus? Are we introducing them properly? Are we erecting artificial barriers by our dress, or behavior, or unkindness? Let's point people to Jesus and not to ourselves.