

Sunday Flow August 14, 2016

10:30 Call to Worship: Worship Leader

10,000 Reasons
Great Are You Lord
It is Well/Through it All
Amazing Love (You are my King)

Pastoral Prayer:

Slides:

James 5: 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up.

Congregational Prayer:

Review Summer Theme:

Empowered Summer Service:

Slide:

- **Empowering Service – God calls us to impact our community through empowered service, each one stepping up, knowing that we are blessed to be a blessing.**

Pastor Burns: Offering

1 Cor. 16: (the Corinthian church was much more wealthy than the Jerusalem church.)

1Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia.

Slide: Each Person Gives

1 Cor. 16: 2On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

Sermon: Empowering Summer Service

Subtitle: Gender Equality

It was surprising the buzz after the sermon last week. There was some good and deep discussion, regarding gender equality, that has surfaced on the topic of Empowered Service.

Gender equality is pretty well accepted in the culture at large, and we should not just believe in gender equality, because the culture does.

We, who allow scripture to be our authority, are to allow the scripture to serve as our authority on a topic so important that man and woman are a balanced pair, with no one gender being given more weight in the relationship.

Are you ready to read, ““a text so difficult that it has defied our best scholarly guesses over centuries” (Gordon Fee)

So, here is week two on 1 Cor. 11: 2-16

As we stand for the reading, ask yourself, why shouldn't you take your computer out into rush hour traffic?

Because it might crash

May God help me, not crash as an attempt will be made to clarify, what the bible says in 1 Cor. 11:2-16

Slides:

2I am so glad that you always keep me in your thoughts, and that you are following the teachings I passed on to you. 3But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4A man dishonors his head if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. 5But a woman dishonors her head if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head. 6Yes, if she refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off all her hair! But since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or her head shaved, she should wear a covering.

7A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God's image and reflects God's glory. And woman reflects man's glory. 8For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. 9And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. 10For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.

11But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. 12For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.

13Judge for yourselves. Is it right for a woman to pray to God in public without covering her head? 14Isn't it obvious that it's disgraceful for a man to have long hair? 15And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering. 16But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God's other churches.

**The Word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.**

Prayer:
Lord,

In Jesus name,
Amen.

I humbly approach gender equality, and realize that it is quite possible to not get the scriptures correct.

I also say, that it is possible that others also don't have it correct, and in a relationship with God, we have the opportunity to search the scriptures.

My proposals are that let us push back on a human's understanding of what the scriptures say. We do want to be under scriptural authority, and I am saying, that instead of the default understanding being that the male is

always to dominate a woman is an understanding that I am NOT seeing in scripture.

I don't see the scripture giving the husband, two votes and the wife one vote in decisions.

I don't see the male, simply on the basis of being a male, claim scripture authority to force himself and to force his authority on his wife.

I certainly do not see in scripture that in every day relationship, those females are the lesser gender and that simply on the basis of gender that a female should defer to a male.

I do see the first person to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ was a female.
I do see that at least one female in the Old Testament was given a God given position of authority over males.

I do see that the office of prophetess was filled by females and gave authoritative Words from God.

I was producing a video on this and was cautioned in my spirit of how strong some feelings are on this topic. Males and females, will find it hard to transition to another view, if you are very, very locked into your understanding of scripture as it relates to male and female gender equality or inequality.

This is one reason, that on this touchy topic, that 1 Cor. 13 is right in the middle of Paul addressing this issue.

There were some good questions, after last week's sermon; Here is one that has many levels and layers:

If these texts were so specific to a certain culture, why were they included in the canon?

It is acknowledged that there is no absolute certainty what exactly the women were doing, that was shaming the men, and what the men were doing that was shaming Christ. We can only guess, and in guessing, we cannot duplicate it, or follow it, or obey it. The principles that are brought up, are cross cultural, and are not specific

to that culture. Just one, is, relational responsibility takes precedence over individual freedoms.

It seems like it calls in to question the authority of scripture if there are so many different ways to interpret things and if one needs outside information to understand it.

The bible is God's Word. It is written, and being written, it is full of texts that are easily understood and others, not so much. Some texts are so easy, a child can easily grasp, others, it takes years of study, and in the case of Gordon Fee, and his study of 1 Corinthians, a lifetime of study and research to bring about one commentary. ON the pathway to receive ordination, to serve as your pastor, I experienced differing levels of bible education. One, was taught through the local church, and was qualified to serve as the bare minimum to being my credentialing process. It was a bible institute. The next level would be a bible college, and the level after that would be a graduate level, or a masters Degree. Beyond that is a Doctorate program.

So... to study the bible, with so many different ways to interpret, it is highly valuable to become formally educated, by trained professors, with earned doctorates in their field of expertise.

This is a question I've had often about several texts. Like if the Holy Spirit inspired it, couldn't he have made things clearer and not so open to abusive interpretation? Or is it yet another indication of the fallenness of man that we cannot interpret well and mistake the meaning of the spirit- inspired scriptures? In many ways the bible can be one of the most dangerous books around because of the things it says that are used out of context or 'correct' interpretation.

One's lifetime is to be spent studying the Word of God. As one matures, one will grow in the level and layers of knowledge of God's Word. Some refer to scripture as a legal contract, or covenant between Holy God and fallen humanity. Just as an attorney is required to handle certain contracts, and to represent a client in a disputed contract, even more so, does it require a deep layers and

levels of study, and the passing of tests, to ensure the principles of interpreting text are followed.

Here is another one, from Ephesians 5 and to me, the key to unlocking this mystery of gender equality is found at the beginning and end of the passage that speaks of a wife submitting to her husband.

Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

21And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (vs. 21 speaks of a husband submitting to his wife. Later we are told a wife is to submit, but his passage also says, husband, being a part of the “one another” are to submit to their wives.

It appears that for emphasis, it was the wives who needed the instruction to also submit.

32This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

This whole passage is about Christ and His Church, more than about a husband and wife relationship. This says, Christ and the church are one.

This does not give a man, equal status to Jesus.

This does not make a woman inferior to a man.

It still speaks of a balanced pair, with both having equality.

Let us love and submit to one another as we journey together.

Slide: Context

What is more valuable in figuring out what specifically was the wrong behavior of the Corinthians, is to figure out the right behavior the Apostle Paul was emphasizing, which is the unconditional love of God, found in 1 Cor. 13. Loving relationships trump independent freedoms.

WE humbly approach the scripture with this understanding.

1 Cor. 11 has within it, a passage of scripture that is described as “this is one of the truly difficult texts” and

Slide:

“a text so difficult that it has defied our best scholarly guesses over centuries” (Gordon Fee)

Here is the text so difficult that it still defies the best scholarly guesses over centuries of study.

Slide:

10For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.

Last week I spoke of

Slide: Relational Responsibility Takes Precedence Over Individual Freedom

man/Christ

woman/man

Christ/God

(Within the context of relationships will be found the answer to overcoming the abuse that was occurring over head coverings and hair styles)

Relational responsibility over individual freedom is the focus.

Christ is the source of man: Adam was made from the dust of the earth by Christ.

Woman was made from the side of Adam. By Christ.

All human beings come from woman by act of procreation.

The passage does NOT subordinate women under men.

This passage does not give more weight to a man, in a relationship or job setting than a woman.

The passage uses the metaphor of head, as source of, to bring the point.

Slide: Metaphorically use of Head

“Source of”

“Not authority over”

The headwaters of the Potomac are the source of the Potomac River, not the authority over the Potomac River. In the mountains of WV is found the source, or the headwaters of the Potomac.

Let us land on the understanding that the use of head in 1 Cor. 11 speaks to source of, not authority over.

WE ended there, and here is where we will continue.

There is no evidence that short hair or a shaved head by a woman was the mark of a Corinthian prostitute. There is also not enough historical evidence that short hair by a woman is considered “mannish”, and therefore brings shame on the man.

The short summary of the misunderstanding and the subsequent abuse of the

relational responsibilities is that whatever it was, the core issue was a **breakdown in sexual distinctions that was bringing shame to relationships.**

One cannot be literally obedient to this text, one can only be symbolic. This text is tied to cultural norms and literal obedience is NOT mandatory for obedience to God's Word.

Unfortunately, what tends to surface when this text is read is the subordination of women, and this is absolutely NOT the proper discerning of the scripture.

Back to the most difficult texts in the bible to translate:

Slide:

10For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.

(FYI: There are no gender distinctions among the angels. There aren't male angels who lust after female humans. Angels, may be portrayed with male characteristics, such as Gabriel or Michael, but they are not capable of lust towards a woman, so this has nothing to do with a woman dressing in such a way as to tempt an angel)

(Because the women thought they spoke in the languages of angels, they may have thought they had become angel like, without male and female distinctions)

The most important take away from this passage is this.

Some argue that a woman has someone other than herself (as in her husband) function as authority OVER her. Some say, the "covering" is a sign that she is under the authority of her husband. The problem with this view is that there is no known evidence that authority, (from the Greek word, exousia) is ever taken in this sense According to Fee, "In the 103

occurrences in the NT, nor in the Greek Lexicon, Philo or Josephus, does it say, that a woman is under the exousia or authority of someone else.”

Here is an example of who it applies.

1 Corinthians 7 gives us clarity.

3The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs.

Slide: 4The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife.

The scriptures do NOT give the male authority over a female in a marriage relationship. The scriptures give the woman the freedom to choose to give the authority over her body to her husband, but she doesn't have to. It is in her will to do so.

Equally, it is the husband freedom to give authority over his body to his wife.

There is to be freedom to choose whom a person gives authority over their body, both male and female in a marriage, gender distinct marriage.

So... what if there is NO consensus view that a man is to have authority OVER a woman simply on the basis of gender?

Does the possibility exist that the genders are equal?

It makes just as much sense as the genders are unequal, so you can choose whichever view you wish, and still be true to the text.

In matters, where there is not absolute consensus on, you have the freedom or right to choose.

I choose to say, there is equality among genders, and am pretty sure I have the scriptural authority to do so.

So, those of you, who really, really want to remain in the position that your gender makes you dominant and have more votes in all decision, just be clear about it to your spouse.

Look her in the eye and say, “as a male, I am superior, I am dominant, I have the majority vote in all decisions, and I am the superior gender”.

And, then see how that works for you.

Here is what is important for those of us, who call this church your home to come to terms with. It is a reason we encourage women to be empowered and step up into leadership.

Slide:

All women have the “freedom or right to choose”

Authority, from the Greek word, exousia is the woman’s own choice as to whether or not to be covered. Since one day, all saints, including women, will judge angels, women, **should already exercise authority over their own lives in significant and insignificant issues. A woman is to make her own choices.**

There was an independent spirit in this assembly. Their church customs were not to be elevated to the level of the Canon of Scripture. Their custom made it impossible to transfer “cross the board” to the multifaceted cultures in which the church finds itself.

Even if we knew exactly what it was we were to transfer, which we do not. In each culture there are surely those modes of dress that are appropriate and those that are not.

Distinction between the sexes is to be maintained, with relational responsibilities taking precedent over individual freedom.

(Pause for question or discussion)

How does it make you feel, knowing that woman as a gender has the authority, in Christ to be free to make your own choice?

How does it make you feel, that in this age, there are male and female distinctions, and to try to be like the angels, and deny our distinctions brings shame on relationships.

How do we apply this to our lives?

Here is an application.

Slide: Application

(at mouse click) Proverbs 4: 23 Guard your heart above all else,

for it determines the course of your life.

The Holy Spirit manifests itself in diverse ways, within the unity of body of Christ, and in this community of God's people, be encouraged toward a summer filled with empowering service which will be varied and diverse if it is led by the Holy Spirit.

God calls us to impact our community through empowered service, each one stepping up, knowing that we are blessed to be a blessing.

What if a person, male or female is going through Chemotherapy, and they lose their hair? Does this make them less than right with God?

Slide: Picture of me on chemotherapy.

Is a woman, with long hair, because she thinks this scripture tells her to not cut her hair, but have long uncut hair and not worn loosely, and that is put up in a bun, more righteous than a woman, who is going through chemotherapy and has no hair?

It is a position to land on.

After chemotherapy, my hair came back fluffy and wavy. After prayer, and agreement by the board, and Ms. Patty, I let it grow out long enough to donate to others.

Slide: Picture of me with long hair.

Now, was I more right with God, when I was bald and fuzzy headed, or when I was a long hair?

Or... at what point, when my hair began to grow back did I become unrighteous? Was it $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, 1 inch, 2 inches, all the way up to 12 inches? When did my length of hair make me unrighteous?

What is a church had such an attitude. Would chemotherapy patients feel welcome in that church?

Would those who have overcome chemotherapy and want to donate their hair, would be welcome in such a church?

We are to be witnesses, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the length of one's hair is not what empowers a person, but a relationship with God, through Christ Jesus.

Acts 1

Slide:

Vs. 8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

An empowered woman, who exercise authority over her life by choosing freely what to wear, and how to act as long as it does not shame the relational responsibilities of life is to receive power to witness to males and females, adults and children.

Acts 2 states:

Slide:

4And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Everyone, included women. How could they be encouraged to be silent in church if they were filled and spoke out loud?

A woman has a God given purpose, and women exist for that purpose. NOT for a males' purpose as though in some kind of subordinate position to a males aims and will. God has so arranged things, that "in the Lord" males cannot exist without a female and females cannot exist without the male, and as believers male and female are mutually dependent on each other.

Woman and Man is a balanced pair.

Both man and woman are from God. God made the one from dust, the other through man, and now final both through woman.

Distinctions between male and female must be maintained, neither gender being subordinate to another.

Slide: Conclusion

Slide: Love Never gives up (I Cor. 13:7)

At mouse click (insert picture from our reunion) or a general generic picture of a family.

This is a picture from the Burns Boys reunion. The three Burns boys were

all married, and in a female/male relationship children were born, both male and female. Male and female, at least in the C.Burns family are a balanced pair.

May your Holy Spirit empowered prophetic voice be one that constantly says, never give up on your empowered relationship with God, through Christ Jesus?

Men and women, wealthy and no so much, Christ has empowered everyone to be His witness. Encourage them.

(It should be observed that it is possible that women also put down other women, not just men putting down men)

Should women be paid equally for the same job? Of course, and in situations or jobs they should be paid more, because they are better at it.

Men and women. Consider your relational responsibilities. Do not wear or do things that bring shame on your family.

All of us. Don't wear, don't do, and don't say things that would shame one another, or our relationship with God, through Christ.

We all have relational responsibilities and those relationships take precedence over individual freedoms.

Male/Female
Female/Male
Male/Male
Female/Female
Adult/Children
Adult/Adult
Children/Children
God/Human being.

Let us be empowered to not abuse this relationship.

2 Timothy 1:8

2 Timothy 1:8 (NLT)

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.

Luke 9:26 (NLT)

If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

The answer is in the God who is all-powerful and empowering.

A: Accept the fact that you need and want a relationship with God, through Christ Jesus.

Everyone faces terrible and minor tragedies that leave a person destitute and hopeless.

But in a relationship with God, and his people, the situation never truly is hopeless.

B: Believe that since God raised Jesus from the dead that he can raise you up as well. (You can use this passage, and believe that since God filled the empty vessels, soon, he could also fill your empty vessels sooner than later.)

Then,

C: Confess that belief, openly, publically, and more importantly privately, in your self-talk.

Altar call and prayer