

Concern for the Created Order

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

The Condition – a future-minded perspective

Some Corinthians believed that the kingdom had come and that Christian suffering and humiliation showed weakness. Luther said that they had embraced the theology of glory and rejected the theology of the cross. They no longer believed that the body was important. Consequently, various problems arose: fornication (Chs 5-6), an improper view of marriage (Ch 7) arrogance (“knowledge puffs up, but love edifies” (1 Cor 8:1)), blurring of the roles between men and women, abuse of Lord’s suffer and neglecting the poor (Ch 11), over exaggeration of tongues (Ch 14), and no need for the future resurrection of the body (Ch 15). They believed that since they had the Spirit, lived in the Kingdom, and were speaking in the tongues of angels, they should not concern themselves with the things of the world.

Thus, the Corinthians thought they had fully arrived. They did not need sex in the present (Ch 7) or a body in the future (Ch 15). They believed they were in the kingdom. Thus, the distinction between men and women was unnecessary. Some wanted to erase the distinction and live as if they were already experiencing their heavenly existence.

The background – equality for all

Gal 3:28 – neither male nor female

1 Cor 10:23 – everything is permissible but not edificial

Rom 6:3-8 – old self is gone

Conclusion – equal in being not in function or authority

Argument → Shame (v5) Propriety (v13) Custom (v16)

Text (1 Cor 11:2-16)

Dishonoring the Head

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. 3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved.

- *Head communicates = origin and authority*
- *How should we see submission in light of Christ’s submission to the Father?*
- *What was the underlying issue that Paul was addressing?*
- *How does this problem manifest itself today in society? The church?*

Don’t Just Unveil, Cut It Off!

6 For = [My strength for the fact that a woman with an uncovered head shames her head is,] if a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. 7 [For,] a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

- *Is this hyperbole, sarcasm, or is Paul being literal?*
 - In Paul’s day, there were feminist movements where women would take off their veils and cut their hair to look like men.

- Chrysostom said that women caught in adultery had their heads shaved and were marked as prostitutes.
- In Jewish law, a woman proved guilty of adultery had her hair cut off (Num. 5:11-31).
- Paul was saying, “If you’re not willing to look like a prostitute by cutting off your hair, don’t pray or prophesy without a head covering.” So, if she wanted to reject the symbol of authority, she might as well go the whole way.
- *What would this have conveyed in the first century?*
- *What would a veil/short hair convey today?*

Woman Created for Man, but Both Are Interdependent

8 For = [My strength for the fact that the woman is the glory of man is,] man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have ~~a sign of~~ authority on her head. 11 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

- *What does “have authority on her head” mean?*
 - Woman was created to convey the glory of man. The head covering was a sign of her new found freedom in Christ and her submission to her husband.
- *How do/should we show our interdependence on a daily basis?*

Woman Came from Man, But All Comes from God

12 For = [My strength for the fact that man and woman are not independent of each other is,] as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

Application

- Head coverings were everywhere. They probably meant modesty.
 - Romans coins - The civic virtue of *pietas*, "piety," was personified as a woman with such a head covering.
- Could a woman have walked through the market and then into church, with her head covered, without being noticed?
- What would happen today if a woman did that?
- Head coverings may not be for today, but the created order is still in effect. Man has authority over his wife just as the Father has authority over Christ. Our relationships image the glory of God.
- Lord’s supper follows (bread symbolizes body and wine symbolizes blood). If we take one literal, why do we not follow their use of wine and unleavened bread?