

8/11/24

[Connection] Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. Thank you for joining us. If this is your first time worshiping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

[Title] While you're doing that, we are going to dive into our sermon series called 'Church in Crisis'. Where we have been studying the book of 1 Corinthians. We are in week 15 of our series. In this letter Paul is addressing issues and questions in the church to help them remain separated from the culture and to put them in a position to be the most effective for the Gospel. This week we are going to be talking about our Appearance in Worship.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **1 Corinthians 11:2-16**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there, if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one, we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, let's read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of **1 Corinthians 11:3**. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in His Scripture.

[1] SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 11:3

"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] Before we dive in, I want to acknowledge that some scriptures can cause us to have large feelings, good and bad. Not bad as in scripture is bad but rather that our flesh may respond negatively to the Word's commands. As we dive into scriptures that may have this effect on us, we want you to know that you are not just left alone in processing these elevated feelings based upon an understanding.

The elders and I are available to help process if need be and answer any questions you may have. Even though we have a potential to have large feelings about something, we should never avoid these kinds of verses. What I have seen is that typically a proper understanding of these verses are the ones that change us the most to grow in a deeper and more intimate relationship in our walk with Christ.

When we look at passages like we are today there are a couple things that we have to consider and decipher. We first must understand in context that this is a first century book. Especially the letters in the New Testament, they were written to a specific group of people for a specific purpose. When we read through these things we must understand the culture of the time to understand the truth that is being conveyed.

[3] Because of that we must look at scripture and try to understand from the context what is cultural and what is a transcendent principle. Meaning what is instruction that was for the people specifically that

was meant for them and only them. Or what is a God ordained principle that is transcendent or outside of time that is to be applied no matter the cultural context or time in history.

This is the struggle for much of our culture, especially in the Christian perspective. Someone that is more progressive will attempt to make things that are principles into something that is just cultural so that it can be dismissed into something that does not apply to world today. By doing so we attempt to make the Bible fit into our cultural worldview. When, in reality, the Bible should be the thing that alters our view of the culture. Our text today is one where people often struggle with this understanding of cultural custom and transcendent principle.

As students of the word of God, we always want to er on the side of principle as opposed to cultural because the consequence of taking a transcendent principle and making into a cultural instruction bears the consequence of sin. Where, on the other hand, taking a cultural custom and making it into a principle does not have the same consequences.

In an argument or formal debate there is this concept when someone makes a claim that they possess what is called the 'burden of proof'. Meaning that if they are the ones making the claim then they must support their claim with the proof that their claim is true. If the bible is the word of God, everything written in it should be taken and understood as the word of God. Someone who claims something is a cultural custom and not a biblical principle will always bear the burden of proof.

Our topic today is about women wearing head coverings in church. We have to look at our text and the support for Paul's claims, to understand what is cultural and what is transcendent principle. If we make the claim that something is just cultural, we will have the burden of proof. So, we will have to understand what Paul is claiming in these verses and what are his reasoning for it. Like in our passage, Paul makes the claim that women should wear head coverings because of what was outlined in creation. Some modern scholars will look at this and say that in the first century Corinth, prostitutes would not wear head coverings to identify themselves as prostitutes. Since that is they case some scholars will claim that is why Paul says that.

[4] When we look at the bible and attempt to understand its context and application we have to look at it exegetically. Meaning we are trying to understand the true interpretation of the text and the application of a passage in scripture. The exegetical principle that we have to acknowledge is that if the author gives a reason for his instructions or claims, we cannot ever replace their reasoning with another one. Especially if the reasoning Paul gives makes it a principle and we replace his reasoning to make it something that was cultural. So let's dive into this passage to understand what Paul is instructing and his reasons behind his instructions.

BODY

In chapter 11 Paul has shifted his focus in his instruction from the behaviors of the believers outside of the church community and is now instructing them about their worship practices inside the church. He will actually be addressing these issues for the rest of this letter, addressing the practice of Communion, their misuse of spiritual gifts and this week in our passage he is dealing with head coverings.

[5] 1 Corinthians 11:2-3

"Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."

Paul begins by saying that he praises them that they remembered some of the things that Paul taught them when it comes to their worship practices, but he says that to lead into the things that they are doing wrong, the things that He cannot praise them for.

[6] In verse 3 Paul is laying out this hierarchy of authority. The word for 'head' here is the Greek word 'kephale' which means authority. Paul says that Christ is the authority over all, obviously but he says specifically Christ is the authority over Men¹. Men are the authority over women². I say men and women, not husband and wife, because the Greek words that is used could be either or, but Paul is not talking about dynamics in marriage. Paul is addressing the structure and practices of the church. So, wherever it says 'husbands' a better translation based on context would be 'men' and where it says 'wives', a better translation on the context would be 'women'. Finally, in our hierarchy, God the Father is the authority of Christ.

Paul is presenting this as a biblical principle. There has been no instruction yet just establishing the basis for what he is about to instruct. Paul will talk more about this, but this biblical principle comes from creation. It is something that God established in the garden of Eden. Paul points this out to show how this structure should be playing out in the culture and in the church community, and how their practices do not match up with this transcendent principle.

[7] The best way to understand the relationship with authority between a man and a woman in the church is to see it as the relationship with God the Father and Christ the Son. God the Father is the head over Christ. As the head, the Father exercises authority over the Son³. Christ under this authority submits to the authority and accomplishes the will of the Father⁴. Even though Christ shares in all of the divine attributes of the Father, he still submits to the one that is his authority.

[8] Man is the head over the women. Men exercises authority over women in the church⁵. Women submit to the authority of men in the church as they lead to accomplish God's will. Even though men and women share in the same attributes, both being created in the image of God, Women still submit to the authority of men. This is not an issue of value or one being lesser than the other. This is about roles and responsibilities outlined by God for each gender to fulfill.

This is the same principle and evidence for his instruction that he uses in 1 Timothy where he instructs for male leadership in elders and male pastors. That in order to follow the system of authority that God has established in creation in the context of the church it requires male overseers and teachers in the assembly. In this letter to the Corinthians, he goes into a lot more detail as to the why.

The passage in 1 Timothy, Paul was writing to one of his disciples so it did not need much of the why because it would have been something that Timothy already knew. In Corinth, this letter would have been read to the entire church and the people asking this question about head coverings was more than likely the women in the church. So Paul includes more details as to the 'why' in the instructions of how

¹ Ephesians 5:23

² Ephesians 5:22-23

³ John 14:28

⁴ John 5:30, 6:38; Hebrews 10:9

⁵ 2 Timothy 2:11-12

to apply this system in the church culture because he needed to include a much fuller picture of his instruction.

Paul has established the principle which is the motivation for his instruction. He is going to show how the church has applied this wrong in their worship practices and even how it affects their ability to share the gospel.

[9] 1 Corinthians 11:4-6

“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, ⁵ but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. ⁶ For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head.”

First, he talks about male head coverings being dishonorable to Christ. At the time in Corinth, the Roman pagan priest would cover their heads in worship to their pagan gods. It was meant to be a sign of their subordination under their god, as they carried out the practices in the temple. It would have clearly identified them as a priest even outside of the temple. By following the ordinances of the pagan temple practices, they dishonored their head, which is Christ, by reducing him to be like these false gods.

Later Paul will identify that man was made to be an agent of God, his representative. In this order of authority Man is to represent God. God has no authority over him, so for men to wear a sign of subordination would be inappropriate as they were God’s representative. Now don’t think that this is a Sunday just honing in on women. Men who are hearing this take notes, not about the place and appearance of women but understand the gravity and the weight that comes with the position of authority and representation that you are being called to.

[10] A women’s head covering, in the culture was a sign that they were attached or under the authority of a man, that being a father, husband, fiancé, whatever. This head covering was also a sign of virtue. It identified them as a woman of morally respectable character. Head coverings were a garment, scarf or a part of a dress that would cover their head. This was something that was expected all the time in the public space. If you were in a place to be seen by other men, women wore these head covering to display this sign of virtue.

In our modern context this would be like dressing modestly. A lack of covering would be an indicator of an openness to entertain advances from men. Might even be a sign of questionable morality. Although with all the people on reality TV that claim to be Christians that have questionable morality modestly has become an old school practice or something that is pliable in our understanding of it.

More than likely the women would have removed these head covering because they were seeking equality in authority with men. Paul says by doing this they have placed themselves in the same category as a woman whose head was shaved, whose reputation was immoral. Husbands of adulterous women would have their wives head shaved as a sign of her immorality and infidelity. In the same way prostitutes would remove their head covering to identify that she was a prostitute. Paul issues a challenge saying if they desire to have the same position of authority as a man, they should shave their heads to bear physically their lack of virtue. If they are not willing to do that then they should replace their head coverings and act like respectable women.

[11] 1 Corinthians 11:7-10

“For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”

Adam was created as the first image bearer of God, created in God’s image and likeness⁶. It is not possessed in part or something that is attained gradually. It is an immediate and inherent part of being a human being and distinguishes humanity from all other creation. Man is then as we said before God’s agent and representative in all of creation. He is ruling and reigning over creation with God to bring God glory.

God created Adam from the dirt in his image as his glory in creation. Likewise, God created Eve from Adam to be Adam’s glory in creation. Both men and women possess the nature as image bearer, but both have been given different and distinct roles and responsibilities. Paul is pointing out the greater implications of this failure to follow the order of creation that God set in place.

Paul is not suggesting that woman was created to please man, but he is focusing on the created order and Eve’s role as a partner and helper in maintaining creation. Adam was assigned the role as leader with the responsibility to cultivate and keep, or a different way of understanding these responsibilities, Adam was tasked to worship and obey. Man was specifically orientated towards God in a way that women were not.

Eve was created to help Adam in his tasks. Therefore man is the glory/honor of God and woman is the glory/honor of man. Which is why her submission to the authority is a part of her role. This sign of a head covering, is a protection of virtue and subordination under an authority would be appropriate to women with this role and responsibility.

[12] 1 Corinthians 11:11-12

“Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; ¹²for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.”

Notice Paul is not saying that women are unimportant. Men and women need each other. Men and women were created to fulfill different roles and responsibilities. Very intimately in these different roles, men and women need each other. These roles and responsibilities were outlines in creation in order for humanity to thrive and individuals.

[13] Different roles do not determine value, they determine responsibilities.

There is an inter-dependent relationship, woman was created from Adam to set the natural order. Because that doesn’t happen anymore, as in all married men are not walking around missing a rib because they are married. Men are now born from women, but the natural order of this hierarchy has been established and determined by God for his purposes, by the initial creation of Adam and Eve. Paul almost cuts off the rabbit trail before it starts here, so that no one can accuse him of saying that women is somehow inferior to men, because that is simply not the case.

⁶ Genesis 1:27-28

To say that women are inferior because Eve came from Adam, applying the same logic could be applied to men being born from women. Paul is not saying anything about value, but He is addressing the roles that were established through creation. The roles that have been assigned to men and women do not make one to be somehow lesser than the other. Paul says that this instruction the church is to apply about head coverings, is based upon the established roles. However, Paul application in this instruction is not perfect and he is aware of that.

[14] 1 Corinthians 11:13-16

“Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, ¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.”

Paul has stated his case by the authority of God’s word and the determined things from creation. Now he gives further argument for these instructions by pointing out the things in nature, as in the things that have developed naturally that are reflected culturally, the general understanding.

[15] Paul’s goal is to resolve tension in the community and ensure that the spreading of the gospel is not hindered.

Men could grow their hair as long as they wanted, but it would have gone against social norms. A man growing their hair out would have been seen negatively as an attempt to feminize himself in many regions of the first century, but especially in Corinth. This perception would have been problematic to their ability to share the gospel to people in the city.

A woman’s hair on the other hand, does not bear the same restrictions, in fact it is the opposite. Long hair for women was her glory. In the culture it was a sign of her respectability and femininity. It is a glorious covering, given by God and not intended for men. To reject this covering, given by God as a sign of respectable femininity, was to reject her role as a Christian women.

Paul is pointing to the men and women of the church to present themselves as they are in the gender the role and responsibilities that God has given to them. Earlier we talked about principle and cultural customs. The transcendent principle that Paul has established is where men and women fall in the authoritative hierarchy that has been established by God in the creation of humanity.

[16] The cultural aspect of this, is how the principle is applied. As a church they are to present themselves as they are and to live in the roles of male and female. For the church in Corinth, Men wore no head coverings and by nature were the ones that held authoritative positions in the church and in the home. Women wore head coverings and kept their hair long and were under the authority of the men in leadership in the church.

Now there were cultures at the time where it was normal for men to have long hair like the Spartans or the Nazarites. The transcendent principle is not that men have short hair and women have long hair because in the culture of the Spartans or the Nazarites that would have been weird for the men to have short hair. Remember our first assumption this letter has a specific audience. He is not writing to the Spartans or the Nazarites, he is talking to the church in Corinth.

[17] He is telling them the believers should embrace their cultures symbols of masculinity and Femininity whatever they may be as they live into the roles of their gender that were outlined by God in creation. As Christians we are not to blur or diminish the line between male and female in appearance and role. God created each as male and female for a specific role and purpose. The responsibilities of each are freeing and life giving when we live into them and God's word instructs. Men and women can depend on each other in beautiful harmony because God designed us with intentionality and purpose.

GOSPEL

[18] Our world is completely pitted against the design of God in his creation. We must remember that we were once a rebellion against God as well. We sometimes live to defy the roles that God has given us. Some of us even despised the roles that God mandated because from our perspective in our rebellion they were oppressive.

For women you may have one time thought that a man or your husband were not allowed to be in a position of authority over you. For you men we may have not wanted the responsibility of leadership and would much rather avoid the cost and responsibility of the position we were designed to fulfil.

That is not how God designed us. We were made and designed to thrive within the system that God has created. I have heard countless stories online from people who have detransition transgender individuals. They have gone back to their gender they were given biologically and are thriving more that they ever thought possible because they are living in the role and responsibility that God designed them for. Even from the men and women in our own congregation, that when they finally began to live in the roles that they were made for, their children thrived, their marriages came alive again and the people around them noticed a difference in the way that they lived out God's word.

APPLICATION

[19] This transcendent biblical principle that God organized and ordained, beginning with creation, is a beautiful and life-giving system. When we understand that it is something that we are to live by it will defy culture, context and time. The only thing that is cultural about this passage is how the principle is applied. Paul knew who he was writing to, and he knew that there was a chance that this letter would be circulated to other churches, so he said that they are to judge for themselves if his instruction was right.

Paul's purpose is for the health and well-being of the church and their ability and effectiveness to share the gospel. When the church falls into the system that God designed, where men take the responsibility of Adam to cultivate and keep, to worship and obey as God representative on earth. Where women operate as the helper under the authority of their husband or the authority in the church and follow that leadership. We see this harmony develop where, as Paul says women are not independent of men nor men of women. The church will stand as a testament to the glory of God. Which we talked about last week that we should seek to fulfill in everything that we do.



Men when you take seriously the fact that you are God representative, it completely changes your interactions with everyone around you, because you understand the weight your actions have. You then seek to represent him well in everything. As one in a position of authority, your dependance on God becomes so much greater, because you want to lead your family and your church well. You seek every opportunity to bring God glory, because you have adopted the role of Adam, to cultivate and keep, to worship and obey.

Women when you fulfill your role as the helper you help to push and create the environment that allows your husband, and brother in Christ, the freedom to fulfill his role of being the glory of God. By doing so, you then are the glory of the men in your life. Fulfilling this role preserves your virtue as the women that God designed you to be.

When men and women whole heartedly dive into these mandates, the church thrives as well. When the body of Christ is thriving, it creates the community that is contagious for those that are lost. It becomes this place where people want to know what you have that they don't. It is a beacon of hope to our communities and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to anyone and everyone.

[20] The only way that we can have the strength to see our role and to be able to live in them that is in accordance with God's word, something that is the complete opposite of the world out there, it is only ever done through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. When we are renewed through the gospel sometimes even on a moment-by-moment basis, we can see the temptation of the world and live contrary to it.

The world would like you to believe that this beautiful design is somehow oppressive, or it is burdensome, and if it were a cultural custom, we would be able to dismiss it all together and claim that it is just a cultural custom from the first century. We would have the ability to pursue whatever we feel is right. Looking at the text we do have the burden of proof to support that claim and the text from Paul's instruction does not give us the ability to be so dismissive.

Remember the exegetical rule. Paul gave a reason for the things that he instructs, and it is not because of the things in the culture. It was not because Paul sought to demean women and elevate men. This is not about value. As he said, we need each other. We must see the biblical principle that we are designed to fulfill a specific role in the world and in the body of Christ.

When we reject our design, we reject our designer.

When we live into these roles that God designed us for, not only do we thrive as individuals in the kingdom of God, but the kingdom is added to because the gospel is preached. As a church we are to be the model and example of what it means to protect women's virtue. To present ourselves as respectable and morally upright.

As a church we boldly claim our masculinity or our femininity and boldly proclaim the truth of the role and responsibilities that we are designed to fulfill. By doing so we create a health body of Christ. As it says in Ephesians 5:23, a body where Christ is working as the head, to make his bride holy and blameless before the Father.

These roles and our responsibilities that we fulfill in our worship to God are not a cultural custom but a transcendent principle that we are to follow. These things we live into that are above culture, above our fleshly desires, and above our modern context. We live in them to be presented as the body of Christ where Christ is working to build in us his righteousness and exemplify the kingdom of God here on earth. Do not miss this. Your families, your church and your communities will thank you because their eternal salvation is what is at stake.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

COMMUNION