

“DID GOD SAY ... ? SATAN’S ATTACK ON HEADSHIP.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: Genesis 2:7, 15-17, 20-24; Ephesians 5:22-33

Prayer: Holy Father, may the words of my mouth and the responses of all our hearts glorify you, exalt Jesus, honor your Word and edify your people. Deliver us from Satan’s efforts to distract us and keep your Word from bearing fruit. Come, Holy Spirit, help us I pray. Amen.

Introduction.

This series of sermons on “Did God Say?” is really a series on the battle of authority. Which authority are we going to follow? What voice are we going to believe? Is God’s Word true and authoritative or is the world’s view authoritative?

Satan is assaulting the authority of God and His Word, to undermine the truth and credibility of God’s Word and erode our confidence in it.

By sowing the seed of tolerance in our culture, Satan has made all social and moral issues seem neutral, we all can believe whatever we want; and we have to affirm the validity of everyone else’s opinions and beliefs. Tolerance and plurality and political correctness are king and God’s Word is bigoted, intolerant, insensitive, out dated and irrelevant.

In the words of a Christian, French scholar from long ago:

“Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it” (Blaise Pascal).

This is why, in the words of Jude 1:3, I am “appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” by God from the very beginning.

I am making my appeal to you from God’s Word, not from my opinion or the world’s opinion. But we can’t be naïve about this.

“The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it” (George Orwell).

Satan’s lie.

Satan hates the truth, there is no truth in him (John 8:44). He is the father of lies and he has been lying from the very beginning as we see in the garden. “Did God really say?”

This morning we are considering his assault on the truth of God’s Word concerning headship, an all-out assault carried out in every corner of our culture. How has Satan tried to destroy headship?

Satan’s attack on husband’s headship, leadership and authority for their wives.

Everywhere you look in our culture husbands and fathers are buffoons, idiots, ignoramuses, selfish, petty, insensitive, laughing stocks and jerks.

We see it in Hollywood movies, TV, cartoons, daily comics in the paper (5 or 10 in Herald). There are very few portrayals of husbands and fathers as honorable, self-sacrificing, wise, respected, loving, caring, self-controlled.

This assault is furthered by pour gas on sinful abuses of headship and authority that run in one of two directions, the ditches on either side of the road of this truth, abuse or abdication.

The truth of God is undermined or obscured by husbands who assert their authority in ungodly and unbiblical ways, belittling or brutalizing women in countless ways.

I am the boss. It’s my way or the highway. I get to do whatever I want.
I don’t have to listen to her, she can’t tell me what to do, she has to respect me no matter what.
I am better than her. If there are any problems it her fault or the kids.

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg, underlying this attitude is all manner of verbal, emotional and physical abuse.

The truth of God is also undermined and obscured by husbands who abdicate or neglect their responsibility, are absent, passive, uninvolved, distant, unengaged, silent.

What did God Say?

We are all familiar with what God says in Ephesians 5 and the mystery of marriage that I referred to last week, that marriage is meant to be a God-glorifying picture or reflection of the relationship that exists between Christ and His bride, the church.

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church and lays down His life for her.

Wives are to submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, the head of the body.

But I want us to hear what God says from a different text, from the text Jesus quotes when He was challenged on the meaning of marriage. He quoted from Genesis 1 and 2, from the beginning of creation, before the fall.

Genesis 1 and 2 are foundational for our understand of what God says about His purposes and design for the sexes.

Genesis 1 focuses on our equality. Man as male and female is uniquely and equally created in the image of God Himself. No other creature in all of creation can make this claim, not even the angels. We are morally and spiritual equal, equal heirs of the grace of life (I Peter 3:7).

Genesis 2 focuses on the differences between us and what it means to be male and female.

God created man first and then woman, not simultaneously and not the other way around.

Adam is derived from the earth, woman is derived from the man.

Adam is the representative head of humanity, and by Adam, not Eve, humanity fell.

God created man with a responsibility for moral and spiritual leadership. God told Adam what He expected and gave Adam the responsibility of communicating and teaching that to Eve. This is Adam's priestly responsibility in the family.

God said He would create a suitable helper fit for Adam. She is from man and she is for man. He needs help and she is the only suitable helper who can help him.

Without her help he has no way of fulfilling God's mandate to multiply and fill the earth.

God gives to man the responsibility of naming the animals and naming woman.

This signifies leadership and authority. This continues to be implied when a woman takes a man's name.

God could have done all of this very differently.

He could have created man and woman at the same time.

He could have taught them both His commands at the same time.

He could have made both of them independently of each other, rather than woman from man.

He could have named them both. But He didn't do any of that.

From creation God has designed a man to be a head, to take authority and initiative, a head who is willing to sacrifice himself. The roles are no more interchangeable or reversible than Christ's relationship to His Bride the church is reversible.

We are created equal and different. And our differences reflect our different purposes and roles in creation. Man by reason of his strength and makeup is to take dominion and conquer, to name, tame, divide and rule. He is made from the ground to till and take dominion over the ground. Woman by reason of her makeup is to generate life, multiplying, filling, nurturing. She is made from man to bear and nurture more life.

Neither can fulfill their purpose alone, but must rely on each other and cooperate and assist.

God did not intend for our differences to polarize us or pit us against each other, but to unify us in the closest of intimacy and human bonding. God didn't make us to be different *from* each other but to be different *for* each other.

That what God has done and the way He has done it is part of His beautiful plan and design is also evident in how Satan comes to attack and destroy God's work. Satan comes to reverse what God has done.

Satan attacks God's order by bypassing the man and going to the woman and putting her in the role of leader and spokesperson. And Adam fails in his role as protector and moral leader and is passive, abdicating his responsibility as the leader.

Satan gets them to reverse roles and in so doing sow the seeds of doubt and mistrust of God and His goodness. Sin completely corrupts God's good plan of loving headship and willing submission into what we experience today, tyranny, domination, abuse, neglect, manipulation, struggle.

But here is the hope of the Gospel. When Jesus comes to bring salvation and redemption He shows us His intention to restore headship and submission to their original beauty and purity by the power of His own life and example.

How are we to live what God says.

God is the one who created us and created marriage, so He has the authority to tell us how to live and order our relationships.

One of the reasons this topic is such a minefield and so hard to talk about is all the bad examples and sinful abuses on both sides. Few things are more broken in our culture than our understanding of headship and submission. So instead of calling sin sin and repenting, we decide it's just best to throw out the whole concept all together. But that dishonors God and God's Word and authority and it dishonors the hope and help that ours in Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

So let's just clear away a couple of misconceptions or misunderstandings of headship.

Headship.

Headship and authority should not be dirty words. They are God's words and they are good words. Without authority and submission to authority our world would be chaos.

Just go to a country where traffic rules and lane markers and stop lights are a suggestion (Albania, India).

We wouldn't have jobs without submission to authority. We wouldn't have a functioning government without submission to authority (Somalia). Schools, military, businesses, churches would all be chaos. All of us submit dozens of times a day to someone in authority.

A car can't have two steering wheels.

God designed marriage to be permanent and one of the protections of that permanence is to create an order in the home, a rule of life, a way of managing conflicts. God gives just one rule for ordering the home, male headship.

If you had to define headship or authority in one word, what word would you use?

If you use words like boss, in charge, superior, give orders, you don't understand headship. If I could use one word, I would use the word responsibility, to take responsibility, to be responsible.

Husbands and fathers take the primary responsibility for their wives and families, to love, support, serve, protect, provide, lead, show the way, and if necessary, to die.

Consider God. God has all authority in all the universe. God is the final say in all matters. He has ultimate responsibility for the universe. And what does God do? He goes to the cross.

The husband's honor is to take responsibility to lead and to love his wife with all his heart, to love her even as his own body, even as Christ loves the church.

Headship/leadership doesn't mean he is the only boss and he makes all the rules and decisions and plans. I have known husbands to completely distort this principle to harsh extremes.

The wellbeing and success of any institution, whether military or business or the home depends on having a leader who is secure enough to not just allow but invite input from those he leads.

Good husbands and fathers are open to input and correction from respectful wives and children, he is willing to listen to advice and counsel that is contrary to his own thinking. He knows he isn't perfect or infallible, and he knows God has given him those around him to help.

A good husband will learn to respect his wife's wisdom and authority in the managing of the home and nurturing of children will defer to her many times.

Did not King David defer to Abigail when confronted by her, and commend her for it.

The bottom line, a husband who has never been put in his place by his wife is either a fool who is ruling sinfully with too strong a grip, or has too passive a wife who is not a true helpmate, and he needs to lead her to being more of a true help.

I never say "yes, dear" to my wife, because it comes off too demeaning, but I do say "yes, ma'am." And affectionately refer to her as "she who must be obeyed."

Implications and application.

Christians have an opportunity to be a great witness to a watching world, to be salt and light, to reflect the Gospel, to be a God-glorifying reflection and picture of the relationship that exist between Jesus and His Bride.

Husbands show Christ when they are lionhearted and lamblike. Jesus was the lion of Judah and the lamb of God who laid down His life.

Husbands are to take primary responsibility to lead, to be the head, to be like a priest in his home giving spiritual leadership. It is a loving, serving, sacrificing leadership that looks out for the best for his family, what will enable them to grow and thrive in every way, spiritually, physically, emotionally. This is a kind of headship that his wife and children can honor, respect, affirm, and willingly submit to.

He is the primary protector, stands up for, defends from evil and the evil one. He does spiritual warfare through the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God and prayer. He takes an active role in how the culture impacts his family through music, TV, movies, screens, computers, modesty in dress.

As protector if there is a noise downstairs in the middle of the night, husbands don't say to their wife, "I went down last time, it's your turn."

He is the primary provider, taking responsibility that the needs of his family are met. He works hard to do the best he can.

Primary responsibility does not mean sole responsibility, you have a helpmate, look to her for help, affirm her gifts and abilities, work together.

As protector and provider, this has implications physically, financial and also spiritually. Take the lead in dealing with sin and anger, not letting the sun go down, be the first to repent and ask forgiveness. As Jesus took initiative with us to deal with sin, so take initiative.

The wise husband will do these things not in his own strength or wisdom, but in dependence on the Lord, submitted to Jesus and His Word.

Be Jesus in your home. What is Jesus doing for His Bride right now? He is praying for her. Husbands, this is your first calling, to be like Christ and pray regularly for and with your wife. That will make more of a difference than anything else you can do.

Fear God, love Jesus, humble yourselves before God and each other, pray earnestly, live as heirs together in the grace of life.

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on us all and help us I pray. Help us husbands to want to live with our wives in a manner that our prayers are not hindered. Help us seek and strive to understand our wives, to be to her what you want us to be, to honor her, to live with her like an heiress of heaven, like a fellow heir of your grace.

Father, change our hearts and change our marriages so that increasingly they reflect the relationship that exists between Christ and the church. In the name of Jesus. Amen.