

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

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Scripture Texts: Ephesians 5:22-24

Prayer: Holy Father, by your Spirit through your Word give us ears to hear what your Spirit would say and shut out every competing, conflicting, lying voice, for the sake of the truth and for the sake of the glory of Jesus.

Introduction.

For several weeks now we have been focusing on our culture’s war with Christ and Christianity. But as we have been doing that I have made it clear that this war is not just a war of ideas or opinions, its not impersonal, but personal. There is someone behind it. The war is not just with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers.

Satan hates God and everything good that God has made or God is doing. So we have seen Satan’s hatred of babies and children, of God’s image in man as male and female, of marriage, and of authority and submission.

Satan has stooped to anything and stopped at nothing. He has initiated weapons of mass destruction like abortion and sexuality immorality, and spread lies about what God has said and sown the seeds of doubt and distrust in God’s Word, calling good evil and evil good.

Last week I started the first half of two sermons on Satan’s attack on marriage by attacking God’s intentions for headship and submission. Satan has managed in our culture to turn headship and submission into things to be despised and resisted.

Satan’s attack on wives submission to help their husbands.

Another one of Satan’s weapons of mass destruction for the past sixty years or more has been feminism and the feminist agenda.

I am not talking about equal pay for equal work. I am not talking about ending injustices and abuse. I am talking about an ideological political movement that denies the order of the sexes God wrote into creation and is God’s design for marriage and family.

I am talking about feminism that hates any talk about differences between men and women and focuses only on women being equal with men, interchangeable with men, turning women into men.

Feminism that hates the mere suggestion that men and women might have different roles.

Feminism that tears down marriage and family, that mocks stay at home moms and femininity and a quiet and gentle spirit.

Feminism that balks at the thought of being a helpmate, chafes at the idea of submission.

Feminism that marches for and celebrates killing babies.

Feminism that can't bring itself to stand against abortion, pornography, prostitution and calls the Super Bowl half time show women's empowerment.

Feminist who don't want men to protect them, who don't want men to open the door for them.

Being a wife and a mother have been denigrated and dishonored in our culture to the point too many women and girls believe the lie that a career is more meaningful than marriage and children. Just ask any mom who has had to leave a child in day care how they feel about that.

The homosexual lie is that two men or two women can have a marriage. The feminist lie about marriage is very similar. While the two people are opposite sex, they are essentially the same, interchangeable. Call it enlightened, liberated, progressive, egalitarian, by whatever name it is Satan's lie meant to challenge what God really said.

Under the guise of treating women with dignity and respect, no movement has shown more contempt for what it is truly feminine.

Submission.

Submission is a dirty word in our culture today.

Our culture calls headship tyranny or dictatorship or oppression or domination. It calls submission slavery, servanthood, being oppressed, dominated, a doormat.

That's Satan's lie. Our troubles start right away if we hear submission or helper or helpmate and we think inferior. If we start out thinking superior/inferior, greater/lessor, better/worse, then we will never understand God's design and purpose.

Why is it in a culture that loves to talk about diversity, can't we talk about diversity in the marriage relationship without getting into arguments about who is better?

Feminism hates that men and women are created by God to have different roles. They think differences somehow equals inferiority but that is nonsense, the sort of nonsense that G.K. Chesterton so poignantly captured when he wrote:

If I set the sun beside the moon,
And if I set the land beside the sea,
And if I set the flower beside the fruit,

And if I set the town beside the country,
And if I set the man beside the woman,
I suppose some fool would talk
About one being better. (G. K. Chesterton)

There are different kinds and levels of glory, male and female glory are different but one is not better. We don't need to tear one down to lift the other up.

I have posed the question before, which is more important, a hammer or a tea cut? It's a dumb question. They are entirely different things. What about a violin and a bow? Well now we are talking about a difference of an entirely different sort. Those differences are complimentary. Like a lock and a key, or a hand and a glove. They are different but they are differences that go together, that work together in harmony.

Some things don't fit together because of their differences and other things fit together precisely because of their difference. God didn't make us to be different *from* each other but to be different *for* each other.

That's what happened in the garden of Eden when God said He would make a helper fit for Adam. God had Adam name all the animals so that he could see all the differences and see that he didn't fit together with any of them. Not one was compatible or suitable, no complementary differences.

Then God made Eve, the perfectly suited, complementary, compatible helper and companion. Adam immediately saw someone very much like him, an equal in some ways and yet completely difference though compatible in other ways, but never for a moment inferior in any way.

That's what God said, and it was good, very good.

What did God say?

First, Biblical submission is positive, beautiful and holy. We should note that everywhere in Scripture where submission to husbands is talked about, it is done so in a positive way. It's never cast in a negative or demeaning light. It's not spoken of as a result of sin or the fall.

Any definition of submission that is not good, beautiful, noble, strong, dignified and worthy of a woman's heartfelt delight is not a Biblical definition. If it is not that, then it has failed to live up to what God intends it to be.

Any definition of headship and submission that doesn't have the wife thriving and growing, feeling nurtured and loved, is not living up to Scripture and the mystery of marriage found in Christ and His relationship to the church.

Headship and submission reflect good and holy things, not sinful and evil things. They are connected to eternal, heavenly realities, to the things of God.

This biblical submission we are speaking of is a thing of beauty, like a radiant bride adorned to receive her husband. He bows, she curtsies; he extends his arm, she takes it; he asks, she answers; he initiates, she responds; he sings, she harmonizes; he sets out and she follows. He lays down his life and she responds in kind. It's a parable of Jesus and the church.

Second, it is consistent with full equality. Everywhere in Scripture where submission is mentioned, it's never hinted to be as an inferior to a superior. As Peter says, wives are co-heirs of grace (I Peter 3:7). In both creation and redemption, wives are fully equal with their husbands in value and worth.

That's what Galatians 3:28 is talking about when it says there is no male or female. Clearly Paul is not denying or abolishing our differences. He is saying that in Christ Jesus, we are equally children of God and heirs of the eternal promises of God (Galatians 3:26-29).

The idea of women being equal with men isn't a feminist idea, it's a Biblical idea. Paul talked about it long before Gloria Steinem came along.

We are equal and different, equal and distinct. We find the same reality in the Trinity, the three members are equal and distinct, equal yet having different roles. One is not superior or inferior, greater or lessor.

When an equal willingly submits, what happens? It makes her more glorious. She submits not out of servitude, but out of love. Christ is an equal to the Father and willingly submits to the Father, and He is praised (Phil 2:6ff). For a wife, submission and glory go together.

Third, it is a joyful obedience. As with all obedience in Scripture, a wife's submission is an act that is intelligent, thoughtful, voluntary, joyful and willing obedience. It is grounded in a confident trust in God who has made His commands known to us for our blessing and benefit.

Obedience becomes joyful when we trust God's ways more than our ways. It reflects the glad obedience the Son of God gave to the Father and the joyful, thankful, free and voluntary obedience the church gives to her head, Jesus Christ.

When a wife submits to her husband she is showing to the world something that is holy, divine and eternal. She is doing something that reflects the glory and grace of God. She is a living picture of faith and love in action.

Is this hard to do? Of course, we have a sin nature that fights it, we all have pride and pride always resists submitting. But let's face it, there is nothing new here, we are all surrounded by authorities we are called to submit to, and few there are who like it, especially of course, when we disagree.

And if our homes are ordered in this way we have to realize there will be consequences. We will be completely out of step with our modern culture and we will be inviting the wrath of an enemy who hates our God and hates our marriage and hates all authority and submission. An enemy who by the way is a living and breathing example of complete and utter rebellion against the authority of the God who created him.

Implications and application.

Submission does not mean a wife can't confront and call out her husband for foolish or sinful or abusive or godless behavior. There are plenty of times when if a wife's doesn't confront certain behaviors she is being no helpmate to him and his eternal soul.

And yes, I understand the confrontation may not go well. Few of us respond well and humbly when confronted about our sin. He may get angry, defensive, deny it or find a way to push the blame back on her. Or he may pull the headship trump card and say leave me alone. If it is serious enough she may need to call in help from church elders (Matthew 18).

Any husband who acts infallible or uncorrectable or as if he has no moral or spiritual weaknesses or defects is completely out of touch with his fallenness and his constant need for help.

How should she correct him? The same way Scripture teaches all of us when the need for correction is evident whether married or not.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Is there ever a time when a husband should submit to his wife? If he is smart he does. If he is leading that means he is also delegating, giving responsibility and authority to others in the house. So if her realm is to manage and care for the home and the children and to prepare the meals then he should receive efforts with gratitude and thanks without complaining. When there are things she needs and she asks, he should respond.

Ponder that in the book of Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman. This means there will be plenty of occasions that require her to inform, question, advise, and correct her husband. And if he is wise he will listen.

To summarize. Husbands are called by God to exercise godly headship and leadership, to take responsibility for their families, to protect and provide, to care and serve and if need be to lay down his life.

Wives are called by God to willingly support and help him in his leadership responsibility and not resent it or seek to sabotage or undermine it.

The wife who wants to dominate or control her husband dishonors him and the husband who doesn't love his wife dishonors her, and both dishonor the glory of God.

They are to give to each other the honor God calls them to give. The wife's honor is to be a help to her husband, and the husband's honor is to love his wife even as his own body, even as Christ loves the church.

Headship and submission are gifts of God's grace to us and they are His means for helping keep our covenant with Him and each other. They are His tools for us to resist the enemy and reflect Jesus.

Headship and submission are both made difficult by our sin. Sin and selfishness thoroughly gum up all the works and there really isn't much hope for the two to get along without repentance and forgiveness and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Without constant prayer and humbling ourselves before God and each other, it won't be as beautiful as God created it.

Jesus has come to redeem and restore God's order and design for life and home. He who is in us is stronger than he who is in the world. Jesus has given us the truth to counter the lies, He has given us His example to show us the way.

Let us order our lives and our marriages according to His Word and will, that it may go with us all the days of our lives. May God cause and enable our marriages to be a God-glorifying reflection of the relationship that exists between Christ and His Church. He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Prayer: Holy Father, that indeed is what we ask for, that you would cause and enable all our marriages to increasingly be a reflection of the love relationship that exist between Christ and His Church. Lord, begin today to spread a revival of marriage vows in this place that more husbands would love their wives the way Christ loves His Church and more wives would respect their husbands the way the Church honors and regards Christ. We ask you for this in the name of Jesus, for the sake of Him and His glory in the Church. Amen.