

Title: H3 (Hierarchy, Hats and Hair) pt.1

Text: 1 Corinthians 11.2-10

Theme: God-honoring relationships

Series: 1 Corinthians #43

Prop Stmt. Authority is God's order to reflect Himself.

During the week of Easter, many of our students helped do a great deal of clean-up around here. I would like to acknowledge these students and thank them.

Together for the Gospel conference – (greetings from Don Whitney)

Terry O'Brien was checking out a church's website the other day. Their slogan was: "Quite possibly better than nothing." I told him, that may describe this sermon.

Read Text: 1 Cor. 11.2-10

1 Corinthians is a book that is designed to confront us and change us. How serious do you really want to be about this thing called the Christian life? God is not satisfied with token attention to His Word and token singing of His truth. God is not satisfied until every part of your life and every part of our life is drawn into complete, happy and harmonious submission to Himself. He is committed to you finding your complete happiness in Him. That satisfaction of the soul, that rest of heart only comes through humility and faith-driven obedience. All other ground is sinking sand. God has made you and called you to live in a relationship so true, so intimate, and so holy that it will change everything about you including your eternal destiny, your identity, and your relationships now. God stands at the center and the focus of our entire lives. God is a personhood. Therefore, He has personality and as a tri-unity, God relates to Himself. This unity of God is the reason why God has called us to live in unity with Him and with each other. Anything, therefore, that attacks the unity of our relationships in Christ is an assault upon the reputation and the image of God. That is why we have to guard our relationships in our homes (the little church) and in our church, because those relationships are a living, breathing illustration and example to our world of what it means to live as we are called and designed by God. We show our world what value we place upon God by how accurately we reflect Him.

The believers in Corinth missed it – big time! Hey, this is not a Corinth problem, this is our ongoing challenge.

"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor. 1.10)

This church had huge problems because there was a fundamental failure to live in light of the cross and the gospel of Jesus Christ. They believed it, but they did not apply the implications of the gospel in a consistent way across the board. What happened is that they were dividing themselves up over things they should not be divided over and they

were ignoring things they needed to be addressing. In other words, they were dealing with things that should not be dealt with and were not dealing with things that should be dealt with. Certain groups of people in the church were finding artificial and superficial ways to make themselves appear to be more spiritual than others. It was killing the church because their divisiveness was a fundamental repudiation of the gospel they claimed to believe. They believed the gospel, but needed to learn how to live it consistently. They argued over who was more important or spiritual based on who baptized them, who their favorite teacher was, who had the most important spiritual gifts, who had the most money, who was or was not eating meat that had been offered to idols, etc. And while they were dividing themselves up over those ridiculous things, they were not dealing with the fact that immorality in the church was not being addressed, members were suing each other in court, and many marriages were a mess. After giving a nod to the common source of the problems (pride-driven divisions), Paul, in the opening chapter of this book heads right to the cross. He reminds them (and us) of the gospel because when you come to faith in Christ, you are made to become part of a family, a network of relationships through which we put God on display. Through these relationships we provide to our world a taste of what the kingdom is going to be like. Through these relationships, we give our world a picture of God. Do you think God is the least bit concerned over how He appears to this world?

All of our lives, and every aspect of our lives matters to God. Everything that you do matters because what you do is driven by what you believe, and what you believe has to be in line with what God says. Every part of your life is to be lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in glad submission to Him. Everything is significant. Everything matters. A walk in the park becomes a worship concert. A conversation becomes a gospel-moment. A parenting issue becomes a theology lesson. Everything is connected. So, as we embark on the next section of 1 Corinthians, I want to preach in such a way that you not only see the unity of this book and its message, but I want you to see how critical it is for you and me to live this. We are going to be looking at some interesting topics such as speaking in tongues, should women wear hats to worship, what is appropriate clothing, etc. Those topics are dealt with in this section and they will be the occasion for some great study and perhaps discussion. But, there is a fundamental issue that stands over all of this that you absolutely have to get. You may or may not agree with me on the hat issue, the tongues issue, but you have to get this.

God's honor is set on display in our humble obedience to His Word and in our careful consideration of every part of the body.

Here in His Word...

1. **God has established order for His entire Creation.** (11.2-14.40)

Look at the text. After providing some needed encouragement in v.2 They had not forgotten everything that Paul had taught them. Clearly some were holding on to these better than others, but while they had serious problems, they were not as bad as they

could have been. Then in v.3 we are given 3 couplets. The context is both marriage relationships and church relationships.

Christ is in authority, or has preeminence over the man.
The man has a functional authority over the woman.
God (the Father) is in authority over Christ.

The word, and I might add, the lighting rod of this section is the word “head.” Does that mean source, or does that mean authority? The overwhelming evidence is that the word means authority. Ephesians 5.22 is a clear example of this. While we will unlayer the particulars of this in the weeks to come, at this point I want you to understand the big picture. God has established an order of authority for our lives. We show our honor and love to God as we follow His established order. Therefore, we have to order our lives according to His order. In this section (11-14) of Corinthians we see how the church at Corinth when gathered together for worship was not reflecting that order. Their worship services were like my 10th grade geometry class – it was monkey hour where the inmates ran the asylum. The issue of head-coverings, protocol for communion and whether or not we should speak in tongues are issues that are all related to a fundamentally deeper issue. That issue is this:

A. God is a God of order. (11.3)

This point is a major, major premise in Scripture, and therefore in all of life. In this text (vs. 7-9) Paul appeals to creation as the foundational and seminal point that drives our understanding of this issue of order in our relationships. Creation is that inaugural time in human history when God made. (Point – Who God IS affects what God DOES, and what God has done is what God has made. Therefore, what God has made is an intentional reflection of Who God is.) God made man as a finite reflection of His Infinite Self. (Point – Man was made to reflect God’s image in position, partnership and practice.) Since God is a relationship (tri-unity) and God is a perfectly structured and functioning relationship, He has made us to reflect His structure (order) and His relationship in all of our relationships. Therefore, because God is a God of order and God made us as a reflection of Himself, God made us to relationally function within the order that He established. It is...

B. God’s order ordains authority (11.4-16)

There is nothing arbitrary about God. “Well, that is just the way things are.” This is a statement that we use to acknowledge that there are times when reality defies logic. You may be looking at a situation at work and asking yourself, “How on earth did such a half-witted, infinitesimally, incompetent goon ever become my boss?” There are relational structures that we have created that appear to be done in open defiance of all intelligent life. But that is not so with God. God’s order ordains authority.

C. God’s order affects church life (11.17-34)

There is a theology that drives our observance of communion as we will see. God's order is to be accurately reflected in this important and sacred ordinance.

D. God's order affects worship (12-14; 14.40)

I have no inherent right to tamper with and play games with worship life in the church. Again, our theology has to drive what we do. Our worship is not fundamentally driven by our history, nor driven by what is hot and trendy. It has to be driven by our theology.

E. God's order facilitates relationships (11.3)

Where do you fit? How are you supposed to relate to people? What is your place? All of these things are addressed by the truth of verse 3 and by what follows.

2. **Everyone is under the Authority of the Father.**(11.3)

Now, this thinking is quite a bit different than how we tend to pull rank isn't it? Bill Cosby humorously related that his dad's explanation for his authority rested in the fact that, "I brought you into this world and I can take you out." That is authority derived from power. We also have authority derived from the gun, "do this or I will shoot you." Authority derived from fear, "Do this or I will make fun of you, make you look bad, or reject you." Authority is sometimes derived from money. "Do what I say because I control your paycheck." In school it can be the grade-book. We do not tend to see authority and order as going high enough. Why do I have to order my life under you? Why should you pick up your socks when your mom tells you to, or be home at 11p when your dad tells you to? Because Almighty God is a God of order and He has established you to function in line with that. Your dad, is in His place because God has not only put him there, but he is there as a representative of God. Husbands, Dad's do you understand that when you fail to lead or when you abuse your leadership, you are presenting to your family a twisted and wicked image of God? I will say more about that in a second. Submission is not a bad word. Notice that from this verse...

A. Submission is God-ordained.

God established relationships to have those who lead and those who follow the leadership. Every person is under authority except the Father; even Christ is under authority. That is why...

B. Submission is Christ-like.

Christ happily submitted Himself to the Father and in so doing established the pattern for us. The man is called to submit himself. The woman is called to submit herself. That is a little scary isn't it? There are plenty of people who will abuse their position of leadership. That is why girls, it is so much better for you not to marry than to marry someone who is not a follower of Christ. When you try to place yourself under the care

and direction of a man who does not place himself under the authority of God, you are placing yourself in a very critical position.

Sometimes people get upset with me because I will not perform weddings when one or both people are not followers of Christ. Who are you, they are tempted to ask to deprive me of what I want? Who am I? I am under authority? I am under the authority of Christ and His church. I do not have the authority to marry people outside of Christ. Sure, the state of Michigan doesn't care, but the state of Michigan is not my final court. Now you can see that...

3. **Christ is the Example for all.**

A. **He is a model for leaders.**

When you are leading, your goal should not be, how can I get every person to do what I want? Your goal must be, how can I most accurately reflect the character of God to the people who are under my care. The Lord is my shepherd, I have to be that kind of a shepherd. The Lord washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord died for his church. Therefore, we do not lead by living private lives driven by an insatiable thirst for personal fulfillment, seeking the ever-elusive illicit satisfaction in the raw and infecting sewage of this world's culture. Leadership is the terrifying and awesome privilege to visibly, physically and verbally incarnate the truth of God to those around you. Christ does not abuse His wife, the church. He went all the way to the cross and poured out his life for her! That is how we lead! Christ not only shows us how to lead...

B. **He is a model for followers.**

He loved to do the will of the Father. He trusted Himself to Him, completely. The submission of Christ to the Father did not in any way demean Christ or make Him inferior. There was a difference in function and role between Christ and the Father, but not a difference in essence. Christ loved to do the will of the Father and the Father loved to exalt the Son. The Son was so secure in the love of the Father, that He Himself loved his own disciples all the way to the end of ends. The entire picture defies words to explain it, songs to sing it, and artists to paint it. But, yet we recognize that...

4. **God's relationship as God is a pattern for relationships.**

A. **For marriage**

God's relationship as God is functional, personal, intimate and true. Sometimes we settle for only functional.

Illus. – if time

B. **For the church**

The church does not exist to simply get a job done. We exist to reflect God in such a way that we are a taste of the kingdom to come.

Concluding Observations:

Christ saves me from the hopeless and empty life of isolation that comes from seeking to be my own god, my own ruler, and my own law. Christ saves me to be part of an orderly, vibrant, happy, growing, authentic relationship in Him and with His people.