

Church - Part 4

by Ken Baird

The church should be centered on Christ, not human leaders, and should resolve conflicts in a biblical manner.

Duration: 58:29

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:1

Topics: "Marriage And Discipline", "Holy Spirit Guidance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the potential distractions that can arise in one's life, particularly in the context of marriage. He references Paul's warning that marriage can bring about trouble and disagreements between spouses. The preacher also mentions the importance of discipline and accountability for both men and women in relationships. Additionally, he briefly touches on the topic of supporting full-time laborers in the ministry and the misconception that preaching the gospel is an easy job. Throughout the sermon, the preacher encourages listeners to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to attentively listen for the voice of the Lord in their lives.

Transcript

Shall we open our Bibles, please, to the third chapter of 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 3. In the epistles to the Corinthians, we have the practices of the church. It seems like, it seems as if everything was wrong at Corinth, and through the correction of those errors that existed there, those deficiencies that existed in that assembly, the apostle has given us a scriptural precedent for the settling of difficulties in the church down through all ages. We have noticed before that this is an epistle, the Corinthian epistle, is an epistle that in its scope goes way beyond the church which is at Corinth.

It's addressed to all of those that own Christ as Lord, as we read last night, under the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. So, these epistles, the Corinthian epistles, have been given to us by the Spirit of God for the solution of problems, the problems that cropped up in the early church. We were noticing last night in some detail the divisions in the early church, and we were noticing how juvenile those divisions were, that people should get their eyes upon men.

We noticed that those divisions were centered about men, the admiration for those men. They were not Apollos, they were not Paul, they were not Cephas as Paul named, but they were really their own brethren, their own local brethren at Corinth. Paul simply uses his name and Apollos' name to spare them the embarrassment of naming the real ones who were the leaders of these factions.

Now, this showed a carnal influence. Why wasn't Christ the head of the church? Now, incidentally, we didn't mention this last night, but there were a group in Corinth that said, I am of Christ, and Paul didn't put up with that either because when they said, I am of Christ, they inferred, you are not of Christ, which in itself divides the church of God. When I say, you are not of Christ, I am of Christ, I use that in a sectarian sense.

You are not of Christ. That's wrong, and they were just as wrong as any of the other factions or divisions at Corinth because Paul said, is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Now, notice everything that he says here leads them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? No, they were baptized in the name of Christ, in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Spirit.

They were not baptized in the name of Paul at all. Christ is not divided. Paul was not crucified for them.

They were not baptized in the name of Paul. Christ is the answer for all of these. In these arguments that the apostle gives to the Corinthians, they should have led them.

Christ is the center of the church. Why must you follow human leaders? It shows the lack of faith. It shows the lack of understanding among men that we would give men these high places, that we should so admire them that we would follow them.

A church that is gathered simply to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by faith realizes that Christ is the center of the church, is not going to be divided in this matter. Their eye is upon Christ and they're not going to be divided. But, you know, down through the ages people are so human they follow human leaders.

We were noticing last night of how men are lionized and how they are put upon pedestals. God wouldn't have that. And therein lay the fundamental reasons for the divisions in this church.

Now, thank God. If a man is a mighty man, in the word of God, thank God for that. But that doesn't mean that we have to exalt him without measure.

We thank the Lord for the gifts that he gives to the church. We don't worship them. We should be careful about this matter.

I say it with regret. There are some people in the world that worship Billy Graham. I'm sorry about that.

I'm really sorry about that. I suppose that Billy Graham is sorry about that too. But in this, it is so easy to worship personalities and just think of them as, well, they're just my choice.

But, you know, we do have our favorite drinking cups. Now, let's have a word about this. We just can't take anything from the Lord unless we get it through our favorite drinking cup.

And we go to a conference and instead of listening to hear the voice of the Lord, we think, we go because certain speakers are there. And if certain speakers are invited, you get a big audience. Oh, wait till you hear this man.

I get more from him than I do from anybody else. Now, this is getting too practical, isn't it? It's all right to talk about Billy Graham. But, oh, now about this.

This is different. No, it isn't different. Not a whip difference.

When you go to a conference, you listen to the voice of the Lord. You know, I go to conferences sometimes and I marvel at how the Spirit of God works among those speakers. And I say, my, I'm glad I'm not a speaker at this conference.

My, I'm certainly glad those men are up there. They're just right. And I'm just enjoying this.

And how do they do it? How do they dovetail like this? Have they had some collusion? And I just marvel as I see the workings of the Spirit of God. And I say, well, stupid, if you were up there and depending on the Lord, maybe you'd get some help too. Well, it's the Lord that helps his people.

And listen, when you go to a conference, just a word of advice, please. Listen for the voice of the Lord. The head of the church.

Don't go because your favorite drinking cup is there. Let's get our eyes above men. Let's get them on the Lord.

Now, he ends up this section with just a word in verse 21 of the third chapter of 1 Corinthians. Therefore let no man glory in men. There's the crux of the whole matter.

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. And ye are Christ, and Christ is God.

Now, notice here this progression. These men, and he's naming himself an Apollos and Cephas to spare the real causes of the divisions there in Corinth, these men are your servants, not your lords, not your little gods. These men are your servants by whom you heard the word of God.

They are yours, and you are Christ, and Christ is God. How completely was Christ possessed of his Father? How completely was Christ gone? God gone. In every detail, how completely are we Christ? I hope in the same detail.

And all of these things that God has brought into the world serves the church of God. And the apostle Paul, as great as he was, he was a servant. And, regardless of how high that we rise in spiritual spheres, we're only servants.

And that's what the apostle would say. So, he says, therefore, let no man glory in men. You do, and you're going to be disappointed.

The Lord wants our thoughts, our minds, our worship centered upon him. He is the head of the church. He is the center.

He is that grand and glorious gathering center. And the people who worship where they do because of their attraction to the Lord Jesus, and because of their mutual attraction with other saints to the Lord Jesus, you have a stable situation because Christ is the center. So much for this.

We'll not spend too much time here because we must travel quickly. We have so much to consider. In the book of 1 Corinthians, we see that they have to deal with moral evil at Corinth in the fifth chapter of 1 Corinthians.

Let's see the precedent that is set for us there. 1 Corinthians chapter 5. It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife that is, his stepmother. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this thing might be taken away from among you.

There was a grievous sin at Corinth. It was reported commonly, this was common knowledge, that there was moral looseness at Corinth. This was not to be surprised because of the Corinthians' background.

Corinth was a synonym for evil in those days. It was a wicked city. It was a city of great wickedness, and unfortunately, at the time that the Apostle writes this epistle, they had not been cleansed from all their old ways.

This wickedness, this evil, clung to them as grave clothes. The Spirit of God can do much in our lives, and thank God he did much in their lives, as we see by reading the second epistle, how they took this to heart. But he had to deal with it.

They were so puffed up, their eyes were so high that they would not see this moral evil, and the Apostle demands that it be handled, that it should be put away. Now, he says in verse 6, Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth a whole lump? You permit evil in your midst, and it's going to leaven the whole lump.

And evil is of that insidious character that, first of all, we hate it, we loathe it, we despise it. Then, if we let it continue to any degree, we tolerate it, and then perhaps embrace it. That's the history of it.

Says, There's evil among you, and it will leaven the whole lump. That's a serious thing. That's a serious thing.

Moral evil in Corinth, and he demands that they judge it. Now, this is the way that they judged it. This was the way they were to judge it.

He says, verse 9, I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters. For then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, would such an one know not to eat.

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within, but them that are without God judge it. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Now, here we have a precedent of what has to be done in case some fall into these categories, and categories they really are.

They are to be put away, excommunicated by the saints of God, until, of course, with the thought in mind of their complete restoration. Now, in the second epistle of Corinthians we have this man's restoration. Shall we look at it, please? This man of whom he has been speaking.

Second Corinthians, chapter 2. He says in verse 5 of the second chapter of 2 Corinthians, But if any have caused grief, and he's thinking particularly of this one man, he has not grieved me, but in part, that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, so that contrarywise he ought rather to forgive him, and to comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be

swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also. For if I forgive anything to whom I forgave it, for your sakes I forgave it in the person of Christ.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. Now, this man had mourned. He missed the company of the saints of God.

This is absolutely the most stringent, this is absolutely the most extreme form of punishment that we, you and I, are permitted to administer. The punishment of excommunication for these sins that are named, and they are categories. Actually, the least sin of the category is named, and also the sister is not named.

To prove that they are categories, I heard of a case in an assembly, and I can't even remember where it was, of where there was an infraction of one of these rules on the part of a sister in the assembly. The brethren, the oversight were going to discipline her, and her relatives absolutely would not have it, and they based their reasons upon the fact that they were going beyond the scriptures. Because it says, if any man that is called a brother be these things, and they say she's not a brother, she's a sister, and you're going beyond the scriptures absolutely to even touch her, and they wouldn't put up with it.

The relatives. Well now, just a moment. These are categories.

The sister is not to be exempt from these sins, nor is she to be exempt from the discipline that is necessary. These are categories. Let's remember that.

For instance, stealing is not mentioned, but certainly stealing is covetousness proven. Now, in these categories we have sins of public nature, and two things are to be... Well, really, actually three things are accomplished by assembly discipline. We clear the assembly before the unsaved, that we do not permit evil in our midst.

We seek the restoration of the person that is disciplined, and then thirdly, it serves as a warning to those who might commit the same error. Them that sin rebuke before all that others may fear. Now, this threefold reason for discipline is given.

We're not referred to all of the scriptures, but it's an extreme form as far as you and I are concerned, because excommunication to be cut off from the people of God, I think, is the most severe form of punishment that we can possibly endure. I know there may be times when we're too tired to go to meetings. There may be times when we fear the distance is too great, and we stay away by our own choice.

But, believe me, when we're told by the saints of God, stay away and don't come around, that's a different matter. Oh, how that hurts. But, it must be done in extreme cases, but yet upon restoration there is to be forgiveness.

Remember this, David said that one so forgiven is washed whiter than the snow. Thank God for the precious blood of Christ. Now, in this, and we're not going to talk about it more, because we have so much ground to cover, but these are scriptures that have not been revised nor changed.

God does not change his moral values, and I think that there is a tendency in this day and age of the new morality, which is, after all, simply the old immorality. In this day of the new morality, I think our young people especially need to be reminded that these scriptures have not changed, and those that are faithful to the scriptures only have one recourse, that is to carry them out. May God spare us from the pain of all these things.

Now, to go on quickly, in the sixth chapter of 1st Corinthians we have another precedent set. Let's read about it. Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world, and if the world should be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels, and how much more things that pertain to this life? If any have judgments of things pertaining to this life, let them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brother, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbeliever? Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brother.

Now, Christian's quarrels are not to be aired before this world. Isn't this a paradox? The Corinthian epistles are full of paradoxes, but isn't this a paradox that the judges of the world should go to the world for their judgment? Isn't that a strange thing? Here you and I are the judges of the world. Now, sometimes differences do arise between brethren.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could carry out this sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and also the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and just call a few of our brethren together and show them our differences and let them decide? Have you ever heard of that being done? Why not? We have a scriptural precedent for it here in Corinthians, and then abide by their decisions. Now, you know, you and I are so prejudiced in our own interests, and on our own rights, and in our own position, that sometimes our minds are a bit blinded, a bit prejudiced, a bit biased in our own behalf, in our own favor. Here's a simple way to take care of differences like that.

Call some of the brethren together, lay the matter before them, and let them decide the matter. Now, lest I cast a snare upon you, some of you have liability insurance. Now, if you were to hitch your... Well, you wouldn't do that.

If you should drive your car into one of the brethren in the meeting, let me set your mind at rest here. It won't be that you'll be suing your brother, because the insurance companies have to take it into court to be sure that a just and equitable settlement is made. So, don't worry about that, please.

But, as far as the recovery of personal funds are concerned, it's a shame for Christians to have to go to the world for their judgment. We who are the judges of the world. And, Paul rather uses a bit of sarcasm.

Sarcasm is all right. It's like Falco. Believe me, a little bit of it, it's his reason.

You know, it goes a long way. But, he says here, he says, Is it so that there's not a wise man among you? That's really rubbing it in, and with salt. Because, these Corinthians thought they were so wise.

They doted on wisdom. They were Greeks. And, wisdom was their long suit.

It really was. Now, he says, if you were really wise, you could settle little problems like these. Why don't you do it that way? So, he says.

Isn't that a lovely precedent that you and I have in connection with these difficulties? So, let us move on. In the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, we have marital problems dealt with. And, of course, that which affects us as individuals will affect the assembly in the long run.

Now, this is a chapter that cannot be discussed in its fullest details in public, but I'd like to read what I consider to be the key verse of the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. Now, this will help you to understand the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, if you remember this key verse. It says in verse 35, And if I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast the snare upon you, but that for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

Now, that is why we have the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians written, as it, so that we might attend upon the Lord without distraction. Now, for some, to be unmarried might constitute a distraction. Paul says, go ahead and marry.

You're not sitting to marry. God established marriage. Don't permit that distraction in your life.

To others, to be married might introduce a distraction. Paul warns of that. He says, if you do marry, he says, such shall have trouble in the flesh.

You never found two people that looked at everything just exactly alike. And a husband and a wife have just about as many opportunities to disagree as any two individuals that I know of, any place in all of God's universe. And Paul says, you're not going to look at everything alike, so you're going to have trouble in the flesh.

I remember a story that Henry Van Ryn told on one occasion, and I like the story. Three ladies were gathered together, and maybe you've heard it. Three ladies were gathered together, and they were talking.

One of the ladies had just celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary. And they were congratulating her, and she was talking about their married bliss. And she said, and to think that in all of those 25 years we've never had a quarrel.

And the second lady spoke up, and she says, my, I wish I could say that. And the third lady spoke up, and she says, well, go ahead and say it. She just said it.

It's easy to talk, isn't it? Such shall have trouble in the flesh. Paul says, I would spare you. Now, let's be careful who we marry.

And let's be careful that we don't contribute more than our share to distractions, because Paul wouldn't have distractions of that kind spoiling our service for the Lord. Now, in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, in reading through the chapter, he calls upon both parties of marriage to have the utmost consideration for the other person, lest he drive him into a distraction. And God would not have that.

He wants us without distraction that we might serve the Lord. And so, that's the key verse of the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. And he says, and I repeat it too, not that I may cast a snare upon you, and neither would I cast a snare upon the people of God, but he says that ye may attend upon the Lord without

distraction.

Well, this furnishes a precedent, doesn't it? That we don't upset each other. May God help us in these respects. Then, in the eighth chapter, we have Christian liberties brought before us, and this furnishes a real area of difficulty among the people of God.

Christian liberty. What we permit in our lives, and the apostle brings before us the fact that we are not allowed to upset people in the assembly more than we are permitted to upset our life partners. Paul wants them in a frame of mind where they can serve the Lord without distraction.

Although, that key verse, I wouldn't say that it carries over into the eighth chapter of 1 Corinthians, but certainly that's the thought in mind, because of the anguish that can be caused to a person by someone else taking too much liberty. Now, let's be specific. In the eighth chapter of 1 Corinthians, now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we have all knowledge.

Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up, edifyeth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, and there be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father of whom we are all, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him. Albeit there is not in every man that knowledge, for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

But meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat meat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worst. But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hath knowledge to eat meat in the idol temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols? Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died.

But when ye sin so against the brother, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh, while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Now, there's more of this in the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 23.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's well.

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience's sake. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is kept before you, eat, asking no question for conscience's sake.

But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake, that shewed it, and for conscience's sake. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other.

For why is my liberty judge of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be partaker, why am I evil spoken of, for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Evidently, this principle must be observed in all of our human contexts, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved. Let's notice also Romans chapter 14.

This subject of Christian liberty is a subject that deserves more time than we're going to give it tonight, but at least we can touch upon it. Romans 14. Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

For one believeth that he may eat all things, another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth. For God hath received him.

Who art thou that judges another man's service? To his own master he standeth or calleth. Yea, he should behold him up, for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another.

Another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.

He that regardeth not the day to the Lord, he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. And he that eateth not the Lord, he eateth not, and he giveth God thanks.

He is my italics. But for none of us liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself. Now, verse 20.

For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure. But it is evil for that man who eateth with offense.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

And he that doubteth is damned that he eat, because he eateth not of faith. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin. We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, not to please ourselves.

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good edification. For even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproach thee fell on thee. And he says in verse 5, Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.

Now, on the matter of Christian liberty, we don't all see things alike. Now, in that 14th and 15th chapters of Romans, we see Jew and Gentile brought together in one church. The Jews would have prejudices against certain kinds of food, and the Gentiles would have no prejudice against that sort of food at all.

Now, one ate that food and gave thanks to God for it. The other thanked God that he didn't have to eat it. And I think God was pleased with both of their prayers.

I can say, if I had a nice lean pork roast, oh Lord, thank you for this pork roast. And a Jewish Christian in that day, he might say, thank God I don't have to eat pork. And thank the Lord that he didn't have to eat

pork.

And I think the Lord would be pleased with both prayers, because they did it in faith. But now Paul says this, In the law of love, don't offend your brother. Now, remember, you may be doing something, the apostle says, that you feel perfectly free to do.

Now, don't assume the attitude, and these are not Paul's words, don't assume the attitude, I'm paraphrasing. If they are Paul's words, you wouldn't recognize them. But, it would seem to me the apostle is telling us, now, if you have the liberty to do something, don't despise that brother, because he doesn't see things just like you do.

And, for instance, if you can't do certain things, and you see another brother do it, don't judge him. That's the word there, judging him. The Lord will judge him.

Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or followeth. Aren't you glad you don't have to judge everybody? Now, that's hard work. I'd hate to be a judge.

I'd hate to be a judge. That's the Lord's, that's the Lord's work. I'm sure glad I don't have to.

But now, listen, 1 Corinthians 10 tells us this, why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? Our liberty is not regulated by somebody else's conscience if we, out of love, don't do something to offend him. We have exercised our liberty, rather. It is our liberty not to do it, as well as to do it.

That's perfect Christian loyalty. Now, this is the way it works. No Christian is going to say, is going, should be able to say to another Christian, now you can't do that.

That interferes with my conscience. Paul says, why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? I won't take that. I won't stand for it.

Neither will you, will you? Of course you won't. Not when they come at you with that attitude. Now, you can't do that, because I think it's wrong.

But you, I know how you feel. You say, well, I'll show you whether I can do it or not. Well, we'll go ahead and do it.

Now, that's not permitted. The Apostle Paul says, why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? Paul says, no, I'm not going to look at it that way, but I'll tell you what I'm going to do. Paul says, if what I am doing offends my brother, and might pull him off base, if what I'm doing might embolden him to do something that is wrong against his conscience, I've caused him to sin against the Lord, because whatsoever is not a faith is sin.

Paul says, I'm not going to do that. If meat makes my brother to offend, I'm not going to eat meat. Now, that's not that he makes me a slave by his conscience.

It's my prerogative out of love to him, not just something. That's the law of love. That's the law of Christian liberty.

I don't have to do that, and I don't need to feel when I listen if it weren't for him I could go ahead and do that. No, no, that's not the attitude at all. Christ please not himself.

And it's your privilege and mine to spare that weak brother. It's your privilege and mine to abstain from certain things. That's our liberty, to do so.

We don't have to do so, but love enables us to do so, to keep that brother from sinning against the Lord with his evil conscience, or with an evil conscience. And that is the law of love in perfect Christian liberty. Now, it mentions the weak brother, and it mentions the strong brother.

Now, if you want a little consolation, say, well, all right, I'm the stronger brother. So, all right, if it's going to offend him, I'm not going to do it. I don't want to offend him.

I don't want to interfere with the work of God. I don't want to upset him, so I won't do it. Now, you know, if we just exercise the law of love, all the difficulty over questionable things would disappear, if we just exercise the law of love.

And that's what the Lord would have us do. Now, to go on. Then there is the support of full-time laborers, seen in chapter 9. I don't think I'll take that up, the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians, but they that live by the gospel, or preach the gospel, shall live by the gospel.

I know there is a tendency upon the part of some people to say about preachers, well, nice work if you can get it, drink tea, eat chicken, travel. I wish I didn't have to travel. There's nothing that I would like better in this world than to have a, oh, I'm not going to do that.

I was going to say to have a good job, have regular hours, you know, have a decent job. The apostle Paul says that they who live, who preach the gospel, shall live by the gospel. But do you know, the attitude of some is, nice work if you can get it, I'm not very sympathetic with some of the supposed advantages.

Don't ever go out into the preaching of the word of God for what you may think will hold for you some supposed advantages. It doesn't work that way. But God does take care of his servants, thank God, I can testify to that.

But I don't think that I'll go into the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians, except because my dear wife is here, I think I'll touch on one verse. Verse 5 of the ninth chapter, have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? Now there are some who say, now preachers should travel alone, they should never take their wives with them. Well, I've got the power to, just like the brethren of the Lord and Cephas, to lead about a wife with me, take her along.

And I know that you tolerate her here, I know that you love her. But there's a lot of practical considerations in the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians in connection with full-time workers for the work of the Lord. We won't touch.

Now, in the eleventh chapter, we've already noticed the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians we have the head covering mentioned, and the Lord's table. Now, in connection with the head covering, I think we should take this up, because I think probably here's an area where if we don't touch on this, and we don't cover the teaching of this, we might be included to think that this is one of those traditions in the church which is simply a matter of our convenience, it's simply a matter of etiquette, and it's not a matter of etiquette at all. It's a matter of the direct statement of the Word of God.

Now, some have argued against this, and we'll talk about that in a little bit. Let's read in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. He says in verse 2, Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all

things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.

But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. And every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonors her head.

For that is even all one, as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

For this cause ought the woman to have power, the margin has it, the sign of authority, on her head because of the angel. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. God has a way of relating us together and interdependence in such a manner that we cannot boast, we cannot assume a superior attitude.

He says in verse 13, Judging yourselves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her. For her hair is given her for a covering. Now, some say that the covering mentioned above is the woman's hair, and that's all that she needs to have on.

Well, that's not true. This is simply nature trying to corroborate the word of God, and we could prove it by just a little examination of the text, that that liberty is not permitted. She is to be covered.

Now, why? First of all, it's because of the angel. It's not because of the brethren. Now, the angels are looking on, and this is not the case of a husband and wife.

Now, if you examine this portion of Scripture carefully, you'll find out it's a man and a woman, and in no place, and in no place, is the word translated wife. It's woman. It's man and it's woman.

It's Christ and it's God, and that's God's order. Now, no dear sister in subjection is going to be the least bit upset about what I'm saying, because God does things right, and I know that you won't be upset by what I am saying at all, or you will not, I hope you will not, in fear that I am giving you an inferior place. The word of God simply does not do that, but this is God's order.

Now, the woman covers her head because she is the glory of man. The man uncovers his head because he is the glory of God. Now, he in types pictures our Lord Jesus Christ, and we want his glory to be uncovered.

A man indeed ought not to cover his head for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. She was created after the man. She was created out of his rib, but she is the glory of the man.

Now, you sisters in wearing your head covering are showing us brethren to keep out of sight as far as God is considered. She covers her glory. She covers it so that it may not be seen, and she in type is showing that the church should cover her glory that the glory of Christ may be seen.

That let no man glory in men. That glory is God. You teach us brethren a lesson when you sisters cover your heads, for you tell us that we are members of the church, and we should keep out of sight, and that God should have all the glory.

Now, it's specifically mentioned that it's because of the angels. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, or the sign of power on her head because of the angels. The angels are looking on.

Now, let's refresh our memories once again. Ephesians chapter 3. Verse 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and make all men see what is the better ship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities, now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. God is teaching the principalities and powers, angels.

He is teaching them his wisdom as they gaze upon the church. Might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. We're being observed.

The angels are looking on, and the woman wears her head covering because of the angels. The angels are looking on. Paul, in this Corinthian epistle, says we've been made a spectacle unto men.

I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were, appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. The angels are looking on.

They're observing closely. Now, I think probably the Old Testament saints, the Israelites, had too high a regard for angels. The reason I feel that way is because in the first chapter of Hebrews, God puts the angels in their places, as compared with Christ.

That's the first thing he does when he writes to the Hebrews, is put the angels in their right place in respect to his dear son. The Israelites had a terrific regard for angels. They figured so heavily, so prominently in their own history.

But I think probably you and I have swung to the other extreme. I think we have too little regard for the angels. I think we have... Have you thought of it all day that you've had an angel watching you? You haven't thought of it all day, have you? Well, of course not.

When I say of course not, I don't need to say it that way. Perhaps you have thought of that. But the angels are looking on us all the time, and they're learning.

They're seeing God's wisdom. And that's really why you sisters wear your head coverings. It's because of the angels.

Because God shows you, or God wants you to show by your subjection to the man, that that man, along with the church, is to show his subjection to Christ. And there's no question about Christ showing his subjection to God. We have really the same order here as we have in the third chapter of 1 Corinthians.

Now, God wants us in subjection to him, and we are privileged to lay our... cover our glory for the sake of the Lord that his glory might be seen. Our time is up. There are so many things that could be said here.

We didn't get to the Lord's table. I think we'll have to go into another night on this subject, in the practice of the church, and seen in the Corinthian epistles. Shall we bow in a word of prayer?

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