

Of Long Hair, Bonnets, Buns - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Our culture is one that is struggling to define masculinity and femininity. On one hand there are those who declare that gender and anything associated with it are nothing more than social constructs. This position argues that our biological sex has no bearing on our gender identity, rather, ideas like masculinity and femininity are cultural icons of power that need to be rejected. That's fun, right? Yet, on the other hand, our sinfulness has expressed itself in horrible ways as it relates to gender, with men using power to oppress, dominate, and even abuse women. There is no doubt that these problems have also caused great problems in the church.

But the Gospel helps us. We are reminded in Scripture that God created every human being in the image of God. Our identity and worth are wrapped up in that one fact alone, and in our being and personhood, as the Declaration of Independence so clearly states, we are all created equal. Yet, God made us male and female, and the differences in the two genders are real and important. In these roles God has given roles in the context of relationships within the home and church. The differences should be celebrated and honored, rather than used as a way to battle. In our sinfulness gender is a mess, in the Gospel though, it can return to the glorious state designed by God.

This passage is so bizarre, as Paul addresses men with long hair telling them to get a haircut, and challenges women to keep their hair long. For married women he tells them they are to come to church, or at least pray and prophesy with a head covering. At first glance, we actually have a problem. I can't remember the last time a lady wore a veil or hat at Genesis, and we do have a few guys with longer hair. So are we ignoring God's clear command? Not so fast. The Bible is a timeless book, but it was written in time. This means that there are things in Scripture that are addressing the specific people in the context in which they leave. As we study we need to realize that there are principles and there are practices. Practices are the ways a specific community of faith can apply the principles in their culture. But the core principles are timeless and serious for us. So how do we know? The principles found in Scripture are going to be consistent and repeated often. The practices are often found as the expression of these principles in a context, but are not universally applied in Scripture. This text is a great example of this premise.

The principle in this text that echoes a myriad of texts in Scripture is the truth we already expressed, an idea that is theologically called Complementarianism. Men and women are created equal in their personhood and being, yet different, and these differences are complementary (not complimentary, we are not just telling each other you look nice). To complement is to complete, to fill it what is lacking, to fulfill. So men and women are different, and in marriage the two become one flesh. In the church the beauty is that all have gifts, but there are expressions of those gifts that celebrate the goodness of God's plan in creation. One thing often missed in this text is the beauty that Paul is affirming the goodness of women praying and prophesying in the corporate gathering. Yet, the text also reminds us that there is a creation order and purpose, and when married men and women come to church there is a way to honor that order as an act of worship.

So, what's the deal about hair then? In Corinthian culture, the way men and women wore their hair said something about them. For men, long hair was a sign of being effeminate and often an indication that they were homosexual. The same for women who shaved their hair. For women, long hair was desirable, and wearing the hair down in public was a way for a woman to show she was available, a virtual Match.com ad. Long hair left down was viewed as sexy and sensual. When a woman was married, in public

she would roll her hair up on the top of her head. There is actually some disagreement in the understanding of this text whether Paul is telling women to do this plus add a veil or shawl, or whether it is just a command for married women to wear their hair up as a sign of authority, that they have a husband and submit to his leadership as a wife. Either way, nobody in our current culture follows these practices. There are many ways to have long hair, and feminine ways to let hair down or even cut it short. But there are applications, ways that we as the people of God need to be reminded that men and women are equal in creation, but different. Those differences matter, and there is an order and roles in the home. Furthermore, the church is always to be a counter-culture, reminding the larger world of the Gospel and the beauty of God's plan and design.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 7	Ezekiel 8	Ezekiel 9	Ezekiel 10	Ezekiel 11	Ezekiel 12	Ezekiel 13

Reading from this past week: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Family Worship

Song - *God the Uncreated One*

<https://youtu.be/rswH9CSyWHk>

Gospel Project

Story: The Sermon on the Mount

Story Point: Jesus taught people to live in God's Kingdom

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?

Answer: Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

Scripture: Matthew 5-7

New City Catechism

Question #27: Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ?

Answer: No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith.

Verse: Romans 5:17

Scripture

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

- What are some of the differences between men and women that are part of creation.
- Do you believe long hair on men and short hair on women mean the same thing in our culture that it did back then?
- Why is it important for us to remember that men and women are equal, yet different?

Prayer

*Pray for our transition back to Blevins Elementary next week.

*Pray for the women in our church, that God would give them joy and use their gifts and talents for His Kingdom.