

SHE CALLED HIM LORD

INTRO: This morning we have had read for us 1 Peter 3:1-6. It is quite some time now that I have felt I should speak to the biblical teaching of submission for wives. No, 'Submission' is not a swear word, though, in our culture and generation it has become one. Submission is a principle, which if obeyed, will not destroy women, as they may think, but it will protect them! (Nancy L. Demoss)

Maybe the husband wife relationship, the command for the wife to submit to her husband and the command for the husband to love his wife are somewhat like the relationship of workers with their bosses. If there is no labor Union, the businesses may exploit their workers; and once there is a Union, the workers want to exploit their company. And the task of the Union is to keep this relationship so that neither exploits the other. And since a labor Union is made up of people, they then seek to control the companies. The trouble is finding an objective Union.

And what is it that God has put in place to guard against men trampling their wives when they truly submit? And what is there in place that wives do not exploit their men when they truly love their wives? It is not some external labor board; it is the Word of God! And I cannot say too strongly that the Bible instructs the husband is to love his wife, nor can I say too strongly that the wife is to submit to her husband. And I believe both of these require the cross of Christ. I have to be crucified with Christ and crucifixion is extremely painful.

Though our text this morning is from Peter, let me remind us of what Paul said in Ephesians. First, three times he said husbands are to love their wives (5:25, 28, 33). Then in 5:22 he instructed wives to submit to their husbands as *to the Lord*, and in verse 24, they are instructed to submit to their husbands in *everything*. So I have taken the title of this message from the words of Scripture about Sarah, Abraham's wife when it says, "She called him Lord." You see, Sarah called her husband 'lord'. When you consider your husband 'lord' there are a lot of things you won't do, and some you will do, otherwise you will not call him 'lord'.

Some time ago I read for you seven evidences for the crucified life. For a wife to truly submit to her husband

and the husband to truly love his wife, I believe, nothing but the crucified life will do. And the cross is painful, very painful. Some struggle more in certain areas than others, but submission is an area many struggle, especially in a culture like ours.

I. THE CALL TO SUBMISSION

We are first going to consider the call to submission for women as given by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:1-2: *1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

The verb to be submissive in our passage has imperative force in this passage. Wives are to be submissive. This is the command of Scripture and occurs again in such passages as Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18. Now let me say something about the word 'submission'. In the original it is 'hupotasso'. Hupo, is 'under' and tasso is to arrange one self or place oneself or station oneself. So it is to arrange oneself under some authority. The word, hupotasso, is a military term. When a subordinate is instructed, though he may be seething inside, he briskly salutes and says, "Yes sir!" In English we have it as 'sub' meaning 'under' and 'mission'. And to whom is a wife's submission to? To her husband. I am not recommending that the home run like a military operation, but it gives us a picture of submission.

Now I want us to notice very carefully that the Scriptures do NOT say, "Husbands, keep your wives submissive." That is what happens in the military. But in the home, the husband is not accountable to keep his wife submissive. She is accountable to God to submit. If she does not, she is disobedient to God! So I would give a word to husbands, do not hold this command over your wife's head like a baseball bat. She is accountable directly to God to obey this command. She is commanded, not you. You are commanded to love her. And if she fails to submit to you, she will stand before God to give account.

Now note in this passage the power of submission. It has the potential of winning husbands who are disobedient to the Word! And, ladies, if that is true, what might it do to those who obey the Word? And, maybe now you say, "But you do not understand. I can see through things better than my husband. If I don't take action, we'd go bankrupt! If I did not step in, who knows where we would be?"

Let me ask wives this question: Why do you think God put the command for wives to subject themselves to their husbands in the Bible? When God made the woman he said He would make a 'help' or 'helper fit' or a 'helper comparable' or a 'helper suitable' to him. Now if God had made women 50% as capable as the man, she would not have been a helper comparable. If He had made her 75% as capable in everything, she would not have been a helper comparable. But, I'll tell you what He did when He made the woman. He made her as capable as the man in many ways, and even more capable in other ways. Some ladies could run circles around their men in spiritual matters, or even in financial matters in many cases. Academically, they are often more brilliant than men. That is what happened when God made her a helper suitable to him.

But, this tremendous capacity God endowed the woman with creates a huge problem for her. If she can out-wit him or out-smart him; if she knows better than he does in many things, now you have potential dynamite. And I will tell you how God took the fire power out of that dynamite. He instructed the husband to love her and the wife to submit to her husband. The only reason it was necessary to instruct her to submit is because in some areas she is just as capable as he and in others even more so. That is also one reason why submission is so very difficult.

Now let me give another basic Genesis principle here. God made the man first. He could have made the woman first. But creating the man first gives us a Biblical principle. After he had made man, He said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." You see, the man was not made for the woman, but the woman was made for the man. There is a huge difference whether I am made for my car or my car for me.

I Corinthians 11:2-16 lays out some of these basic principles. Verse 7 says a man is not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God. He was made specifically for the glory of God. And then it says, "But..." We have a contrast coming now, "But the woman is the glory of man." The man is to draw attention to God by his life. The woman is to draw attention to her man. She is not to draw attention to herself, but to her man. She is a helper comparable. She is there for her husband's glory, not hers.

I am sure you ladies have all heard of the Proverbs 31 lady. And maybe you say, "Yes, I know her, and please do not bring her up." Someone has said about this lady that this is what she achieved in a lifetime. It took her a life-time to become like this, so cheer up. But turn to this chapter and let us read a few verses (10-12, 23). A good woman is the glory of her husband, not by how she is viewed in the community primarily, but by how he is viewed because of her!

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF SUBMISSION (Meek and quiet)

So, having briefly looked at the call to submission, let us now consider 1 Peter 3:3-4, which gives us the description of submission: *3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

Now it is not my subject to talk about outward adornment but I want you to notice that the word 'merely' is in italics meaning it is not there in the original. I think the translators tried to help God out, but it had been best they left it as it is, "Do not let your adornment be outward..." But, whatever you may think of outward adornment, I would challenge every woman to stop and think and ask herself why she is adorning herself the way she is and how much time she spends on the external and how much on the internal. Ladies, how much time and effort do you put into being presentable physically? How often do you look after your external appearance? Once or twice

daily? Three times? Well, here is the exhortation: Put more effort into the internal, such as being meek and gentle, or submissive. Spend more time into cultivating a meek or gentle and quiet spirit. God is not impressed with how gorgeous you look on the outside. That is what the text implies. What impresses Him is what you are like on the inside. He is particularly impressed with a woman who has a meek and quiet spirit on the inside. These two are signs of submission. When God sees a meek woman, a quiet woman, He is impressed. He says, "Wow, look at that!" As a matter of fact He treasures this! It is precious in His sight! He looks, and looks, and looks again.

Now, what does it mean to be meek? Does it mean being docile and without any opinions? Very far from it! I heard a speaker say many years ago, "Meekness is not weakness; but controlled power." She may know she knows better than her husband on the matter before them. She can see what will likely happen. It will not be good for her or the family. It is not even hard for her to figure it out. Now, let us say she is right. What will she do if she is meek? If she is not meek, she will figure out how to manipulate her husband into a better course of action. Oh yes, un-meek women who are in control know how to do that, and still look submissive. Some can even make it look like it was his idea.

Or, maybe she says, "Well, I'll be submissive and I'll just let him find out what will happen if he doesn't do what I know full well is best. I'll let him find out. I'll be just as meek as can be." Is that meekness? But let me ask, what would she do if she had her husband's best interest in mind? There is the challenge of a meek woman! What would she do if she wanted him to look good? What would she do if she did not care about getting her way, nor had her best interest in mind, but his?

So, your husband has been wondering how to break to you that he wants to buy something he feels you will not approve of. He doesn't know how to approach it. And then, as tactfully as he can, he brings this out. Maybe he bungles it royally. And you say, "What? We have need of a whole lot of things more than that! What do you want with this?" Or maybe you are very

submissive already, and you say, "Oh, well, do what you think is best." But he knows you disapprove, and he knows it will be best to do what you think is best. Here is how LE Maxwell puts that, "She submits and I obey, and she always lets me have her way."

So you will say to me, "So, I don't have anything to say? I'm just supposed to let myself get trampled on? I'm to be a door mat, is that it?" Did you notice that the text never said you had no say? Did you notice there is nothing about a door mat? But whatever you may feel you need to do, do it with a meek and quiet spirit. The text says: "*...rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*"

Now let me add another point here. Submission does not mean you agree with everything your husband does or believes. Even if your husband is a Christian you are not obligated to agree on the things he buys, or where he works, or maybe even on secondary theological issues, but you are obligated to submit.

I would also add, that if your husband requires of you to consent to major doctrinal matters that are wrong, you must not agree and you have both the right and the obligation to disagree and express that, although in a meek and quiet spirit. If your husband wanted you to join the Jehovah's Witness church, as a Christian, it would be your obligation to obey God before your husband. All of this, however, can be done with a meek and quiet spirit. In all matters, church or home or government, our obedience to God must come first.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSION

So, Peter has given the call to women to submit to their husbands. Then he has described what that is, and it is a meek and quiet spirit. But now he will go to the Scriptures and give an example of submission in 1 Peter 3:5-6: 5 *For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose*

daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Godly women of old time were submissive, and godly women of all time ought to be submissive. Now let me tell you wives, what it is that will help you the most with submission. You see, the women of old who were submissive 'trusted in God', not in their husbands. To submit wholeheartedly, you have to learn to trust God. You have to trust that what He says is right. If you do not trust that His command for you to submit is good and right, you will not be able to submit as you should. You have to put your trust in Him and then obey.

Some men would accomplish what their wives are sure they can't if their wives didn't think they knew better. Someone has said behind every successful man, stands a shocked woman. And yes, some men might fail miserably if you would truly submit, but that may very well be the best thing that could happen! So, maybe you say, "Well, what about me then? Am I supposed to bear his inabilities?" Who married this man? Did he make it before you married him?

So, you say, "If I would put my trust in the Lord and submit to my husband, it could be disastrous. You don't know the foolish ideas he gets sometimes." Let me ask you, who chose that husband of yours? And do you have the right husband? I was told about a marriage counselor. And sometimes the counselee would say, "I'm not sure I married the right man". And he would say, "Did you marry him?" And she would say, "Yes." And then he would say, "Then you got the right one." And maybe now you say to me, "You don't know what this man might do if I didn't stand up for myself." I ask you, did you marry him? Well, yes. Well, then submit to him.

You see, in the example Peter gives, he goes back to Sarah, wife of Abraham. Now, Abraham probably was not exactly the easiest guy to be submissive to. Listen to this: "Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless

those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him..."

What do you think happened when Abraham announced to his wife they were moving? "Well, Abraham, the Lord surely hasn't spoken to me! He knows my feminine need of security and surely He would contact me too before requiring something like this. Unless I have peace about this, we are not going anywhere. I've got to have assurance that this is the right move!" I ask you, would that be a submissive wife? Would that be calling him lord?

But that is not all. I suppose maybe Abraham was wondering how to answer something like this and so Sarah said, "Well, dear Abraham, where is it we are going?" Well, Sarah dear, that is a bit of a hard point. You see, the Lord has told me to leave here, but He has not told me where we are going. He just said, 'Go to a land I will show you.'" Can you hear a woman respond to that? You would certainly have to be meek to be quiet handle an answer like that.

But maybe you are saying to yourself: "You don't know my husband. He is so passive. If I don't step in on some things, my husband will have us broke or keep us broke, or we will lose everything! I have to do something! You don't know my husband. He makes the poorest choices. He'll buy something and we'll be stuck with it, or lose a bunch of money on it."

I think maybe Sarah was like that at times, that is, before she learned to call him Lord. You see, they had no children. And when Sarah could handle that no longer, she became the initiator. Ladies, watch it when you become the initiator. She said, "If I don't step in, we will never have children. My husband is so passive and just waits. He just says, "Sarah, just trust God. But, I can't trust much longer. We are almost past child bearing time. I will have to do something about this." Look at her in Genesis 16:1-2. Except for Eve's usurped leadership in the Garden, hardly has any woman's leadership brought about more destruction than Sarah's here. And then they had a son, exactly what she wanted! And when her concubine

despised Sarah, listen to her in verses 5 (read). And Abraham said to himself, "Oh, this woman! I can't do a thing right. I do what she says and then she is angry with me. I do not want any more trouble in my home. How can I have peace in my home once more?" So look at verse 6 (read). Abraham is 86 years old when this takes place.

A year went by, then two, then five, then ten. Still no children of their own. And now both Abraham and Sarah are too old to have children. Then when Abraham is 99 years old, and Ishmael is 13 years old, the Lord appears to Abraham (read 17:1-5). Now the name Abram means 'Exalted Father'. But he had no children. But here in verse 5, God said he was to become Abraham. That means 'father of a multitude'. Then God said He would make His covenant with Abraham and that Sarai, who would now be called Sarah would have a son and Abraham laughed and God said you shall call his name 'Isaac' which means laughter.

Now what do you think Sarai said when Abraham told Sarah he should no longer be called Abram, but Abraham? "So, you are no longer the exalted father, but the father of a multitude? You foolish man. Now you want me to call you Abraham?" Do you think she did that or do you think she called him Abraham? Let us learn something from this woman once called Sarai but who is now Sarah. Abraham is out by the terebinth trees at Mamre when three men appear. They are angels. And Abraham and Sarah quickly prepare a meal for them (18:6-8). Then these men told Abraham that they he and Sarah would have a son. Well, Sarah heard this, and this wrinkled old lady laughed like Abraham had.

But something significant is recorded there in verse 12. Sarah calls Abraham her 'lord'. It is the word 'Adonai'. It is a word sometimes used for God and in English when it is used for God it is spelled with a capital 'L'. It has been translated 'master' 197 times; 'Lord', 31 times, 'owner' 1 time and 'sir' one time. From the fact that Sarah called Abraham 'lord', we can safely conclude that she was at this point fully submissive to her husband. To call him lord, she had to learn to trust God.

Now when you follow this story, you will realize that God revealed to Abraham what He wanted, not to Sarah. When God communicated to Abraham, He expected Abraham to obey Him because He was Lord of Abraham. When Abraham shared with Sarah what the Lord had instructed him to do, he expected her to obey, because she called him lord. 1 Corinthians 11:3 reveals this same order when it says, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head (lord) of every woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." So what is the chain of command? God, Jesus Christ, man, woman.

Now I want to make one last point. Peter says that women are the daughters of Sarah if they do good, and are not afraid with any terror. Commentators differ on the meaning of these last two clauses. Personally, I see the 'doing good' as referring to submission. And I personally think the clause, "...and are not afraid with any terror" refers to the wife's complete trust in God that if she submits fully to her husband, God will look after her. What fear must it bring to an un-submissive woman to submit to her husband without seeking to control situations? It must be something like jumping out of an airplane at 3000 feet for the first time, and having to trust the parachute to open and slow me down before I die. Now she is to submit and not be afraid of any terror. If you have trouble submitting, this message may well strike terror.

So let me say this to any woman who may wrestle with that this morning: If your husband should abuse your submission, God will hold him personally accountable for that. God's requirement of the man is that he love his wife. It is no more your job to keep him loving than it is his to keep you submissive. This is his God given responsibility.

CONCL: So, we conclude this sermon by remembering the biblical call from wives to submit. The wife, says Paul, is to submit to her husband as to the Lord! She is to submit in everything. Everything! And then Peter says, "Don't let that strike terror in your heart!" It is a sin to be in-submissive.

And Peter describes submission. How does a woman know when she has arrived? When she has a meek and quiet spirit. Not a broken spirit! A meek and quiet spirit. A spirit controlled by trust in God! Meekness, is not weakness. It is power under control!

And then Peter gives us an example of submission in Abraham's wife Sarah, who called Abraham 'lord'. She was not a door mat! She was a woman, precious in the sight of God! Oh, she had a hand or two in in-submission. I do not know when she truly became submissive, but when she was old and wrinkled, she called her husband 'lord'.

Ladies, I believe one of the signs of a woman truly crucified with Christ, is one who submits to her husband. A man who has been truly crucified with Christ in his home-life will love his wife. I think these two things are accomplished by the cross. Will we be true to the old rugged cross? Well, let us check that in our homes. You see, Sarah called her husband lord.

Let me give this as evidence of the crucified life for ladies with husbands: When I can surrender the caring for the needs of the family to my husband and not fret and worry about them; when I can encourage him in a meek and quiet spirit with my opinions with things I think will be the best for him and not be hurt if he does not follow them; when I can welcome him home regardless of whether I feel he is doing things right or not, and make home a welcome place for him after a days work and happily see to my part in caring for his needs and those in the home, this is an evidence of the crucified life. Sarah called her husband lord!