

BE LIKE CHRIST TO YOUR SPOUSE!

(Scripture: 1 Peter 3:1-7)

Introduction: I have preached this passage quite a few times before, but I always focused on this passage alone and never connected this passage with the previous chapter! When I preached the second chapter of first Peter last time, it hit me hard. These passages are so nicely connected.

We have to be careful about Chapter divisions and verse numbers. We must use them as reference points, and not as the dividers of textual context. When I preached just this portion of chapter 3, I came out more like a male chauvinist every time. But when I connected the second chapter the sermon ok a totally different tone. So even though you may have heard this message before, I want you to hear me out in the context of the second chapter.

The second chapter connects certain important points:

1. Submit to the authority of the rulers, submit to your master or boss.

But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.(1 Peter 2:20)

This is the key passage that needs to be remembered when we talk about women in the third chapter.

2. *1 Peter 2:21-23. 21For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

We must keep these two passages in our hearts and then approach the following passage. It is unfortunate that the division of chapter comes here. Actually, these passages should have been a seamless passage! Note the first line in verse 3:1

1 Peter 3:1,2 1In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

In the same way! In the same way of what? In the same way the servants taking the heat from their masters for no fault of their own, likewise Jesus who was sinless, was abused by the rulers, yet reviled not!

In the same manner, wives should not be reviling against their husbands, even if the husbands exploits them contrary to the Word of God! Just as we submit to our masters, just as Jesus submitted Himself to the authority, women must submit themselves to the abusive husbands also.

A word of caution! This does not mean that a woman has to put up with any physical abuse, violence, and verbal threats. Those are criminal cases, and we must follow the criminal case protocol and may have to call the police.

But the verbal abuses, we must be able to endure, and we do not have to speak word for word. Sometimes, not reviling back may be the best answer. Peter is saying, behave like Jesus in those circumstances! Speak to your husband when everything cools down. Angry woman will only drive her husband away. But level headed calm woman may win her husband back!

An unbelieving husband may be won by the wife's loving behavior, and not by constant preaching! When the wives display the chaste, and respectful behavior in spite of husband's verbal abuse, it can speak a volume in the heart of the wicked husband. Peter gives hope for such wives. Even though those husbands are disobedient to the Word, they may be won by cool, calm, sharp women! There is hope! But reviling back constantly will lead to more contention only!

1 Peter 3:3, 4. 3Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Basically Peter says here that your beauty is not just all about external beauty, but let it be the hidden beauty of the heart. Peter used first, chaste, and respectful behavior. Now he uses a gentle and a quiet spirit! Basically, both women and men must be displaying the fruit of the Spirit! How beautiful those Christian marriages would be if they practice such gentle, sweet Spirit without any anger or rage!

Galatians 5:22. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law

1 Peter 3; 5, 6. 5For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

Peter then points out how women conducted themselves during Abrahamic era. They, first of all, trusted and hoped in God, adorned themselves with gentle and humble spirit, voluntarily submitted to their husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord!

Before we interpret the last sentence, we must look at the historical context of women in those days. The women were looked at as property, and also had the power to produce more male children for labor and war! The women were always under the authority of man. Before their marriage, their father had total control, and after marriage, her husband controlled her totally. If she rebelled, he could kick his wife out of his life, just like Hagar was kicked out. But the women were indeed trapped. They could not walk out of their marriage, even if they wanted to. Men were indeed the lords or masters of the women in those days and they were expected to be given that respect as lord! That was the law of their land at that time.

Paul was trying to pass that same Jewish tradition to Corinthian church. But the Greek women were very free spirited. They could leave their hair down. They could speak in public. Paul tried to implement the Jewish tradition into the Christian gentile church. He tried to make them cover their head. Prohibited them from speaking in public. We see that tension even today,

should women cover their head, or speak in public? These are cultural nuances that has been transferred to us as the Word of God.

But see the Biblical historical context. During Abrahamic time, women were looked at as properties, and mere child bearers. That was a warped image of a noble woman. Jesus says that from the beginning of creation, that was not the case. God created both male and female, and He never said one is inferior, and the other is superior. They were created equal. They were created together as two independent units, and they joined together as one flesh! Eve may have come from Adam, but Paul uses that to bring all women under man's subjection. What about Cain, Abel, and Seth then. They all came from Eve, and that means they should be subordinate to women? It seems to be a flawed logic! It seems like it is Paul's personal opinion than the Word of the Lord. The issue of man ruling over woman happened when Adam and Eve fell in sin. The status of woman went down when God cursed Eve that man shall rule over you! (Gen. 3:16). Sin degenerated both Adam and Eve generations, and men stopped treating women as equal, instead, started treating them as their slaves, or property. **This was not the way, our Lord wanted us to have our marriage.???**

But thanks be to Jesus Christ who abolished all the curses on the cross which includes this curse: man shall rule over you! man shall not rule over woman anymore. According to Jesus, the husband may rule over her as lord by stooping, and washing her feet, and serving her with gladness all the days of his life. Love is indeed a form of submission. It may sound demeaning, but that's what we do when we love a person. We submit to each other in love! If we truly love a person, we do not try to control and force that person to be submissive.

1 Peter 3:7 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Women weaker? This is old fashioned thinking. True, they were made to feel weaker in their old age. Nowadays, the women are not weaker! Some can run marathon race, they can do karate kick and they go to war, they can carry a gun like a man and stay as strong and brave as a man. The weakness was in their mind. The society had brain washed them as a weak vessel. True, Eve fell down first. It does not mean her whole female generation should be generalized as weak! As a matter of fact, women were the ones who stood by Jesus near the cross! All men ran away except John. It was the women who went there after the burial! Women are not weak anymore. They are as strong as the men, if they trust in the Lord!

Yet God wants man to be the head of the house to take the final decision. Imagine the story of Adam and Eve falling into sin is reversed. What if Adam was tempted by Satan, and he took the fruit and gave it to Eve, and Eve ate also? Adam would have been totally responsible for that sin. Eve would have gone scotch free in that circumstance. The buck stops with the man. The couple may discuss every aspect of a decision, but finally, the accountability of that decision falls squarely on the man.

Just as God, the Father is the head, and Lord Jesus is His Son, man is the head, and the woman is his wife and companion. Just as Jesus is coequal in everything with the Father, wife is also coequal with her husband. The functional subordination is for the ultimate accountability, and the head must bear that responsibility.

So let us honor one another, as fellow heir of recipients of God's Grace and His Holy Spirit! There is no more discrimination between male or female. Let the Spirit of Christ rule us both

that we may submit to His will together in our marriage. Both man and woman living for Christ's will must be the primary motive of their life!

1 Peter 3:8. 8To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

Sum up!

Here, I can use Peter's summary to summarize my sermon today! Now, the king vs the citizen, the master vs the servant, and the abused wife vs the unbelieving husband were all supposed to be not returning evil for evil, but rather to bless them, because we are inheriting and tasting the Lord's blessing everyday. Pass on your blessing to others rather than cursing them, and reviling them!

But I must summarize the marriage issue little more specifically!

1. Without a word, without any preaching, we can win our loved ones through loving actions!
2. Let us not argue and revile back. Let us love one another and bless them,
3. There is no more male or female hierarchy, we are made equal.
4. Look toward the relationship between God, the Father, and the Son, Lord Jesus Christ and learn.
5. Let us be together as one like them, honoring, loving one another, and cherishing one another.
6. Remember, the one who stoops, and serves is the master and lord in our household, and in our church!

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