



Home : Sermons : May 30, 2005

Faithful and Fruitful Marriage – The Robe of a Wife (1 Pet 3:1-6)

- A Redeemed Culture #9

Introduction – Just as we considered the office of a husband in terms of a garment, so we can consider the office of a wife, and this time we have even more scriptural precedent to do so. This passage speaks less to us of specific duties as much as it does of a particular demeanor or disposition, which is where we want to begin. In the work of redeeming a culture, we want to understand who the players are and then what they are to do. The players in the home, the husband and wife, are both imitators of Jesus Christ, but in different ways. And as an imitator of Jesus Christ, and one who is filled with the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, the wife lives out her particular role of dominion.

Quick Background (Gen 2) – He created us male and female, in His image (Gen 1:27), and this quite rightly should first be applied to the entire community of humanity which is to reflect the life of the Trinity in equality, mutual deference, particular roles, and love. Genesis 2 teaches us that these specific offices, in a marriage union are to be, as one author put it, the “*lord of the earth*,” and “*the mistress of the domain*.” And so here we see the biblical ideas of masculinity and femininity expressed.

The Adornment of Submission (1 Pet 3:1-6) – The passage begins with a charge to wives to “be submissive,” coupled with an admonishment for their “adornment” to be of a particular kind (v1, 3). Notice, Peter ends this passage with the same words. The holy women of old were adorned with this kind of *submission* to their husbands, Sarah being a faithful example (v5, 6).

“**To your own husband**” (v1, 5) – This demeanor of submission is not to be expressed to every man, or to the world at large, but rather to one particular man. Remember, she is reflecting the purity of the church’s submission to one Christ, one Lord.

Adornment Matters – Her outward adornment matters, but in a particular way. She is to wear clothes (a misreading of v3 might lead one to think otherwise), and we know that she ought to dress well (Prov 31:22). She ought to care about her hair, because it is a glory to her and a sign of her husband’s authority (1 Cor 11:5-9). She is to dress with and from an “*incorruptible beauty*,” something that begins in “*the hidden person of the heart*,” and is manifest with a “*gentle and quiet spirit*.” These are “*precious in the sight of God*.” Please note two things. *First*, this is a beauty which cannot be taken off at night and put on in the morning. *Second*, this is a demeanor directed towards and for her husband as his wife. It does not mean that she is always quiet or is to allow herself to be pushed around by the rest of the rest of the world. In fact, she has particular places of leadership and authority where she must be quite vocal, assertive and wise. Older women are supposed to teach younger women (Tit 2:3-4). They are to require obedience and bring the law to bear to their children (Eph 6:1, Prov 6:20). They are to properly advise their husbands with wisdom (Esther 5:2). They are to be industrious outside the home for the sake of the home (Prov 31:10-31).

The Adornment of Hope (v5) – This kind of submissive demeanor is adorned with hope (the same word translated “*trusted*” here is the word “*hope*” in other passages, like Heb 11:1). That hope/trust in God also casts away all fear in whatever situations she finds herself (v6).

“**Where Do I Get That Outfit?**” – This demeanor of submission is a robe that is put on in the vows of marriage, not to “put a woman in her place,” but rather to lift her up into her throne, her place of dominion. This kind of femininity, biblical submission to her head, is what a helper is going to bring to a particular husband for the purpose of tearing down strongholds, taking dominion of the garden/world, driving out the darkness, and filling the earth with a holy culture. In addition, it declares the gospel to the world in that it shows what the church, as the bride of Christ, is doing corporately by means of and in submission to her Head.

“**Where Did You Say I Get That Outfit?**” – It is given to you by God. Remember, marriage is something He does (Matt 19:5-6). And all obedience to God’s ways come from God – they are His grace to you (Eph 2:10, Phil 2:13). Wearing that robe with understanding, however, requires that you see your marriage, not in terms of fulfilling some self-centered, sentimental, romantic and worldly dream, but in terms of seeing your marriage in terms of fulfilling God’s intentions set out in the garden. And wearing the robe rightly also gives you, the wife, a peculiar authority to “help” your husband in his sanctification (1 Pet 3:1). This is one of the blessings of the marriage covenant: your chaste conduct changes him.

Your Temptations – Godly women want godly homes and godly husbands. And this is why Peter has to give the instruction he does in 1 Pet 3:1. You cannot make a godly leader of your husband by usurping his position of leadership (and he will give you that opportunity as he is tempted to abdicate his responsibility). This is the curse from the fall (Gen 3:16). But this will! But God has sent the Seed of the woman, and He has put down the serpent. This means, in Christ, the curse from the fall is being reversed. Your temptations will be to nag and not respect him. But if you are wearing your robe rightly, and you turn and respect him in his robe, you will build up

and encourage respectability. You think he doesn't deserve it? Well, of course not. Do you deserve to be loved? Did the church deserve to be loved? Eve, come alongside your Adam, and learn from the scriptures how to help him.

Lords and Ladies – The husband is the king who follows the example of his King in laying down his life for his queen. And she is a queen, nobly following alongside her king because he has given himself to her. He has initiated and she is responding. And yet, this queen, like Lady Wisdom in Proverbs, knows how to address this king in such a way as to make him more like the King he seeks to imitate.

He is the “*lord of the earth*,” and she is the “*lady of the domain*.” She must have a sense of joining in the conquest of the world with her husband. And he is responsible to see to it that she sees this from the Word. But her robe causes her to turn towards her husband and their home as his turns him towards the world. And together, they take dominion over the earth.

Dave Hatcher – May 29th, 2005