

Sunday August 29th 2010

Petros

Part Eleven

1). 1Pe 3:1 ¶ *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. 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. 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.*

a). We have seen in previous weeks the command given to servants to be submissive to their masters, not only those masters who are ‘good and gentle’, but also those who are ‘harsh’. And we had seen how within this servant/master relationship it was commendable before God for the servant to ‘endure grief, suffering wrongfully’ - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

b). Then last week we saw that enduring grief while suffering wrongfully is something that we are all called to, Christ being our example and our model – 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*
1Pe 3:9 *not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing,*

c). There are of course no chapter breaks in the original letter, so what we see here at the beginning of our Chapter 3 continues on in the same thought from that which has preceded it.

d). ‘Wives, likewise’in the same way that the servant is to be submissive to his master so the wife is to be submissive to her own husband, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh, not only to those who obey the word, but also to those who don’t.

e). We would see that the word translated, ‘submission’ here with regard to wives is the word ‘hupotasso’ once more, which makes it clear to us that the wife is to submit herself and then in that place of submission she is to put herself under her husband’s authority - Eph 5:22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church;*

and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

f). And again we would see that the focus here is on the wife and what she needs to do, regardless of her husband, as it is the wife alone who is responsible for her faithful obedience to the Lord. She is not responsible for her husband's behavior, nor must her actions to be determined by it. It is to be as it says in the scripture - *Php 2:12 ¶ Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

2). Our first verse of Chapter 3 also addresses the situation of the husband who does not obey the word and what the wife of such a husband is to do in this situation - *1Pe 3:1 ¶ Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word,*

a). I am sure that it will be easy for us to understand what would be going on here. The wife is in pursuit of the Kingdom having heard and accepted the word of the Kingdom. Her husband on the other hand, although a Christian, is out to lunch with regards to seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first. He may be not interested in hearing the word in the first place, or having heard it just doesn't put it into practice.

b). Contextually, the latter of these would really be the focus here as the phrase translated, 'do not obey' is the same Greek word translated, 'disobedient' in Chapter 2 - *1Pe 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."*

c). And what is the wife of such a husband to do? *1Pe 3:1 ¶ 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.*

d). Well the first thing is for the wife to submit herself and then place herself under her husband's authority. The husband's level of obedience or disobedience to the word is not to be taken into consideration, this is rather an issue between the wife and God as she chooses to be obedient to the command of scripture - *Eph 5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

e). And it is in the wife's faithful obedience to the scripture that her security and protection are to be found with regards to the salvation of her soul – *1Pe 1:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

f). And also in her faithful obedience to the scripture is the potential for the power of God to work in her disobedient husband's life that he may be won from his disbelief.

g). Scripture really is very clear about this - *they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

h). It is then the life that the wife lives before her husband that may win him to the Kingdom.

g). Her lifestyle is to be 'chaste' and 'accompanied by fear'.

h). Chaste = Greek – 'hagnos' = properly, clean, i.e. (figuratively) innocent, modest, perfect:--chaste, clean, pure. [From 'hagios' = holy = separated]

i). The wife's manner of living then before her husband is to be separated from the world. In the world the wife may well desire to pressure or even manipulate the husband in order to change the husband to conform to what she believes to be necessary. This is not the action of a Kingdom seeking wife. In the world the wife might complain and criticize and belittle, and dare we even say nag - Pr 27:15 ¶ *A continual dripping on a very rainy day And a contentious woman are alike;*

This is not the action of a Kingdom seeking wife. And in the Christian world the wife may continually preach at her husband or point out his shortcomings through the scriptures – But again this will not be the action of a Kingdom seeking wife. The Kingdom seeking wife will have her faith and trust entirely in the Lord.

j). The husband is to be won 'without a word' – and this means exactly what it says.

k). Eph 5:33 *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

l). The word translated 'respects' here and the word translated 'fear' earlier are both the same Greek word and with regards to the husband they speak of an exceeding reverence. The husband then is to be treated with honor and dignity and reverence as is fitting for the office he holds as 'head' - Eph 5:23 *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church;*

m). This is the same idea that we saw a couple of weeks ago with regards to honoring the king. We honor the office, because it is an office instituted by God, and this is to be done irrespective of the person who holds that office. In the same way God has instituted the office of 'head' for the husband and that office is to be honored and revered by the wife, irrespective of whether her husband deserves it or not.

3). Our scripture then continues with instruction for wives, and although contextually the thought is with regards to the wife and the disobedient husband

what is said here would be true for all wives - 1Pe 3:3 *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.*

a). I hope that we would see here that our scripture speaks of an outward appearance and an inward appearance and how these two connect together. Now there is no prohibition to visiting the hairdresser and wearing jewelry and nice clothes, but there is a prohibition to taking this to an extreme and scrupulously following worldly fashion.

b). It would seem that within the first century, women, with the money to do so, would have their hair arranged in the most intricate designs so that Clement of Alexandria commented that they would lay awake all night in fear in case their hair became spoiled. This is really what is behind the thought of, 'arranging the hair'.

b). The same would be true for 'wearing gold'. This is not a prohibition against wearing anything gold, but wearing it in excess.

c). Wearing = Greek – 'perithesis' = a putting all around, i.e. decorating oneself with:--wearing.

d). The definition of the word, 'wearing' is helpful for us in seeing this.

e). And again the same would be true of, 'fine apparel'. There is of course no prohibition to wearing clothes, but what is prohibited is to deliberately dress in such a way so as to draw attention to oneself either by immodesty or extravagance. There is to be nothing here that should appeal to the lust of the eyes.

f). 1Ti 2:9 ¶ *in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*

g). And so the wife's adornment is not to be extravagantly outward, but rather 'with propriety and moderation' and must take into account 'the hidden person of the heart'.

h). Adornment = Greek – 'kosmos' = an orderly arrangement.

i). Now we might remember that this word 'kosmos' describes the perfect state of the creation as it was in Genesis 1:1 before Satan's rebellion; a perfect state where the heavens and the earth were in complete harmony.

j). And this is really how we should understand how the wife is to be adorned. There is to be harmony between 'the hidden person of the heart' and her outward appearance.

k). It is not possible to have the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit on the inside and dress like the world on the outside. Such would be entirely inappropriate. That which is on the inside should determine that which is on the outside. And in this we can see a picture of that coming Day when that which is

within us, a redeemed spirit and a redeemed soul will produce for us an outer covering of glory.

4). *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.*

a). 'The hidden person of the heart' concerns that which is concealed within, that which cannot be seen by the eyes of Man, but is precious in the sight of God.

b). This would of course take us to the transformation, the metamorphosis that is to take place within us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the word Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

c). We have already seen in 1 Peter that - 1Pe 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

d). It is the hidden person of the heart then, that has been purified in obeying the truth that has the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. This is an inner mildness, literally meekness, which is settled and assured. Here is a wife then who fully understands her role and responsibility before God and embraces both being settled with that to which God has appointed her and assured of the salvation of her soul if she continues in faithful obedience to the command of Christ.

e). Such a wife would be neither contentious, cantankerous or domineering but would rather exude that which is precious in the sight of God adorned with a nature and character that we might classify as wholly feminine.

f). Femininity really has nothing to do with outward appearance but with character. A woman such as this will be extremely attractive to her own husband and readily recognizable amongst those of her acquaintance.

g). Pr 31:10 ¶ *Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.....25 Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all." 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.*

5). 1Pe 3:5 *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.

a). Our scripture then goes on to give the example of ‘holy women’, women who, in former times, led separated lives, who looked to God and rested their hope fully upon Him, who in consequence of this adorned themselves with the hidden person of the heart with a gentle and quiet spirit, by submitting themselves to their own husbands just as Sarah had made obedience to Abraham the consistent tenor of her life, calling him ‘lord’, not only as a mark of the respect she had for his headship, but also as an indication of her settled and assured heart attitude in their relationship. And those who ‘do good’ in this present time, those who do that which the holy women in former times and Sarah did, will be children of Abraham providing they ‘are not afraid with any terror’.

b). This final phrase in v6 seems to be difficult to understand, particularly as the word translated ‘terror’ only appears here in the whole of the NT. The word from which it comes is only used twice, and so if we look at these maybe they will provide a key for us.

c). Lu 21:9 *"But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."*

d). Lu 24:37 *But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.*

e). In both occasions here in Luke’s gospel we see the word used in conjunction with a lack of understanding. It could be terrifying to hear of wars and commotions, but with the knowledge that ‘these things must come to pass first’ and that ‘the end will not come immediately’ this takes away the need to be terrified – this is all within God’s plans and purposes. Similarly the disciples were terrified when they saw the Lord after His resurrection as they had not at this point understood that this must happen. If they had known what the scriptures had taught there would not have been a need to be terrified.

f). With these two in mind then, perhaps the wife is to be aware that circumstances will arise in the relationship with her husband, especially those who are disobedient to the word, that could cause her to be ‘terrified’ if she were not settled and assured in her faith. Perhaps 1 Peter Chapter 4 would be applicable here - 1Pe 4:12 ¶ *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

6). 1Pe 3:7 *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

a). Having specifically addressed the servant/master relationship and the wife/husband relationship, the scripture now turns to deal with instructions for the husband who is in pursuit of the Kingdom.

b). ‘Husbands likewise...’ Both the servant and the wife were commanded to obedience through submitting themselves; the servant to his master and the wife to her husband. Clearly though the ‘likewise’ here is not referring to submission as the husband is not in submission to his wife as he is the ‘head’ and she is the ‘helper’ - 1Co 11:3 *But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

Submission could only be in view here with regards to the husband being in submission to Christ as his ‘Head’. And although this would of course be true this is not the focus of our context.

c). And so we would need to understand the use of the word ‘likewise’ as, just as the servant is to be submitted to his master, and the wife is to be submitted to her husband, in the same way that this is a command for them, so the husband is to dwell with his wife with understanding, giving her honor – the former is what the servant and the wife have to do, the latter is what the husband has to do.

d). The only thing we could bring forward from the master/servant, wife/husband examples from earlier would be the idea of the good and gentle and the harsh, as once again here the husband’s responsibility towards his wife is not determined by whether his wife is good and gentle or harsh but by the husband’s faithful obedience to the command of scripture. It is not to matter whether his wife is a Proverbs 31 woman or a continual dripping on a very rainy day, he is to live with her with understanding and give her honor regardless. As with the wife, this is an issue between the husband and God, not the husband and his wife.

e). The husband then is to ‘dwell’ with his wife, to live with her, with ‘understanding’ – literally translated the word ‘understanding’ would be, ‘according to knowing’. The idea here is that the husband would have knowledge of his wife. He is to be a lifelong student of his wife so as to know her strengths and her weaknesses. To know when to be tender and gentle and when to take a strong lead. He will know from how she looks what she is feeling and will know how to respond appropriately - Eph 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

f). He will know to embrace the role as head and be committed to the responsibility to love.

g). *giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel*, The husband is to give his wife honor, and please notice this is a verb of action, to give.

h). Honor = Greek – ‘time’ = a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself:--honour, precious, price, some.

i). The husband then is to esteem his wife in the highest degree as being the most precious person in his life. And he is to do this 'as to the weaker vessel'.

j). There has been so much said about this phrase, 'the weaker vessel' which covers everything from the wife being physically weaker than her husband to being the one more likely to be deceived, because of the experience of Eve. I have never found any of this to be satisfactory though.

k). Perhaps we could see this in the wife having to submit herself under her husband's authority, thereby giving her life into the hands of another human being. The husband is the head and the wife is the helper. The husband is to lead and the wife is to follow and in this sense her 'weakness' comes through dependence on her husband's faithful obedience. Honor is to be given to the wife and may even be owed to the wife because of this in recognition that although there are different roles they are both 'heirs together of the grace of life' - Col 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

l). The more I study this the more I am convinced that it is absolutely imperative for the husband to embrace his role and responsibility if his wife is to become the woman that God has said she can be and their marriage is to be a picture, even if imperfect, of Christ and His bride. A continual refusal on the husband's part to be obedient to the scriptures in this must result in negative consequences for him at the Judgment Seat.

m). Eph 5:28 *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

n). Husbands need to realize that the pain they experience in their marriage may well be self inflicted because they refuse to relate to their wives according to the scriptures.

o). Both the husband and the wife are 'heirs together of the grace of life' – they are both equal when it comes to the grace that will be brought to them at the Judgment Seat in order to become a joint heir with Christ in the coming Kingdom.

p). However, although it remains true that the husband and the wife are responsible for their own faithful obedience before the Lord it would also be true that one could be a hindrance to the other bearing in mind that the scripture says Mt 26:41 *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

q). And according to our Peter scripture there is a consequence for the husband not giving honor to his wife - *that your prayers may not be hindered.*

r). Hindered = Greek – 'ekkopto' = to excise; figuratively, to frustrate:--cut down (off, out), hew down, hinder.

s). What we will realize is that if the husband does not give honor to his wife as to the weaker vessel then his prayers will be cut down. There is a chilling echo

here of what we see in Isaiah with regards to Israel - Isa 1:15 *When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.*

t). This is not a matter to be taken lightly.

7). And so having particularly addressed servants, wives and husbands the Holy Spirit through Peter now sees fit to give an instruction for all - 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*

a). And it is to this more general instruction that we will return next week, if the Lord is willing.