

Men on Father's day

Summary: Exhortation To All Men On This Father's Day.

A few years ago I was asked by a dear sister in the faith if I could prepare a sermon to men as if it were my last sermon or my dream sermon. Hey, when you get a good suggestion my motto is use it. So, put on your seat belts, men, for here we go! Men, I am as you are, so as I challenge you, I challenge myself. Don't fold your arms and glare at me until you hear me out. Men like to give advice, but they do not often take it well. Knowing that, I ask you to bear with me. Contrary to some of the cultural concepts, in order to be a real man, I first encourage you to be the child! You say, "Wait a minute! I thought you were talking to men!" I am. That is why I start with the child and I do not mean the psychobabble about getting in touch with your inner child. I want you to be a child!

Luke 18:17

Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

I think this is absolutely great!! You do not have to receive it as a scholar, or a warrior, or a tycoon, but as a child. We men feel we must always have the answers. We must always be strong! We cannot fail! Unfortunately, we do not have all the answers. We are not always strong. We have our weak moments and we fail and sometimes fail miserably and totally!

"Jesus Loves Me" was originally written for adult worship services, but somewhere that changed and it became relegated to the children's services. God knows the truth about men. He knows that we need to acknowledge our limitations and rely upon Him as a child does his father. Rather than flexing our muscles, we need to stretch out our hands to receive from Him! Rather than bending our backs to handle the load, we need to bend our knees so that He can choose to remove or share the load with us. How does a child receive things? A child receives them in the most incredibly pure faith on the planet. A child asks a thousand questions, but he will accept the answer of his father as the absolute and final authority without question. At least, a small child who has not yet learned distrust will do so. He will jump into his father's arms because he trusts him no matter how high it seems to him or how afraid he might be. If his father tells him to jump, he will do so believing that his father will catch because his father said that he would. This is how we must accept the kingdom of God.

We may have a thousand questions of God. He may answer only half for now until we can handle some of the tough answers. Some questions He may never answer. Some we need not know the answers and others are just reserved until we get on the other side of glory. However, when answered, we must accept as the absolute and final authority without question. When He says jump, we must dive out into the unknown though we quake with fear because a loving Father has said that He would catch us. That is faith and we cannot receive Christ's salvation and ultimately the kingdom without this childlike faith. Until you can be the child, you can never be the man and you must be the man! We grow up chronologically leaving childhood behind as we mature into men in the flesh. In the spirit, we must always be children before God even while we are men in the world!

1 Samuel 4:9

Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.”

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Language changes constantly and not always for the best. Hundreds of years ago, the word silly meant holy according to one article that I read. If you heard someone say, "I saw a group of silly men walking towards the village awhile ago." They would have meant a group of devout men.

My guess is that in an irreverent time like ours someone starting laughing at the silly men walking by and called them fools or idiots and the meaning switched to what we think of as silly today.

I think it is a nifty thing that the words quit in the context of the passages above means exactly opposite of the word in our time. Sadly, it is somewhat accurate to say that the habit or character trait of men today is quitting. When the going gets tough too many men get going and quit their job, their family, their church, and sometimes their life. Men do not have the stamina or stick to it attitude of our forefathers and hence much of the upheaval we see in our society.

In 1 Samuel, the Philistine leader is telling his troops to become men or act like men. Be the man! If they do not act like men they will become the slaves of the Hebrews. It was a good pep talk and they were victorious in battle until they took the ark of God into their temple and then they were in trouble, but that is another sermon. Had they quit like men of today, they would have just surrendered and said, "Better Jew than blue!" their version of "Better Red than dead!"

There are times when discretion is better than valor and a calculated retreat is good strategy. I have had to leave some jobs and churches when I realized that it was indeed a losing battle.

Many times men quit before they even hear the bugle sound the charge. They quit early because they are not prepared for the battle. They are not even sure what the battle is nor do they have the weapons to wage a good fight. They take a bottle to a knife fight, so to speak or show up with a musket when the enemy has machine guns. They need to become the men and develop strategy and endurance.

In the OT, the word was sometimes translated as beacon. We are to be the beacons to our families to light their way. We are to be beacons in our churches and on our jobs. We are to let our light shine. We are to become men while remaining a child. Paul repeats the challenge in 1 Corinthians to Christians. The Philistines were strong in the flesh. They were trained in military tactics and they did well until the fight turned spiritual and then they had no hope and failed miserably. There are far too many Philistines in the land today. Many are in churches. Notice that Paul says that we are to stand fast in the faith. No trust in military prowess or physical strength here. The faith is our faith in Christ and what kind of faith are we to have, that faith of a child, of course.

Therefore, while we are becoming men, we are still a child and that is our only way of being strong. When we trust in anything else and try to become men in our own strength we may win some carnal battles for that is how carnal wars are fought. However, when we move into the spiritual realm, we shall surely fail miserably without hope like those Philistines. The Philistines are often used to represent the World. They did not want to be taken over by God or His people. They resisted unto blood against that. They preferred sin to holiness.

What did the preacher in Ecclesiastes say? There is nothing new under the sun. The World has not changed. Sadly, the Church has changed for the worst. In my opinion: The Church resists holiness as badly as the World and will indeed do so unto blood in some cases. That is a bit backward since we are enjoined in Hebrews 12 to expect to resist sin unto blood though those

Christians had not done so at that time. Yet, they were already quitting and not in the biblical definition, but in ours.

We as God's people resist being taken over by God and holiness. I lay blame on the men. It is our fault. We have failed to be beacons. We have done far too much modern quitting. We need to quit like men biblically, and be the beacons lighting the way to revival by our childlike faith. Then, and only then shall we be strong and bring God's strength back into our homes, churches, and our nation.

Now, I do want to direct the men towards home. When we learn to be children and yet men we can become what our wives want most of all. We can become the lover! Not the kind of lover that we learned from growing up with Playboy magazine, and the James Bond generation, but a lover like God! Love is more than sex, but men have a difficult time separating the two. Men believe that if women love them they will be intimate with them. Women want to know they are loved before they are intimate. Some women cannot separate the two either, but it is predominantly a man's problem.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

How much do you really love your wife? Would you give your life for her? Do you even give your time for her? Does she only do what you want to do? Do you watch a sappy movie with her now and then? If you cannot even give her that much I highly doubt that you would give a kidney or your life for her. What does that say about you? You are a lousy lover because you only love yourself and even that you do poorly.

Ephesians 5:28

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 5:29

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

You are one flesh with her and if you do not nourish her need for intimacy other than sex and cherish her enough to realize the need and sacrifice to fulfill it you do not love yourself properly. I do not care how adroit you think yourself to be in the bedroom, you are a miserable lover if you are not being intimate with her in other ways in the rest of the house and in public. You, frankly, stink as a lover. You are abusing your own body so your pain is self-inflicted.

Some might say, "If she was a littler warmer in the bedroom, I might be more open to her in other ways." They are selfish higs and ignorant of the Lord, who bought them! The Lord desires intimacy with His Bride more than anything else!

Luke 10:40-42

But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Sadly, the Church is often too busy or too cold to desire intimacy with Him. Indeed, instead of the emotional and spiritual intimacy that most women want, the Church is looking for a physical manifestation much like men equating sex with love and intimacy.

Although the Church does not respond to Him, as He would like, does He abandon her? Does He fail to provide for her? Does He not bother to continue trying? Hardly! The Church may be as frigid as the iceberg that sank the Titanic or too busy to hear His plea to return to her first love, but still He woos her and provides for her. All He may get is an acknowledgement of His existence and things done in His name, but if they truly belong to Him, He will not forsake them nor give up trying for intimacy, which leads to great joy and power for the Church.

If you would spend half the effort seeking intimacy with your wife as you do thinking about sex, you would know her more than you ever have and the love that would result from that would be better than sex. If that love grows to the point of the love expressed in the Song of Solomon, it would be reasonable to say that your sex life would be greatly enhanced. Men read that book alone and try to catch the emotional intimacy that is displayed there and then read it with that emotion to your wife. They may have to change the words of the old song to, "Turn out the lights, the party's starting!"

Once you have become the child, the man, and the lover, you are ready to become the head! Now, I know this is a controversial issue, but only to those who refuse to accept as a child the Scripture as God's absolute and final authority. To those who think it "Neanderthal," I thank God that I am a Neanderthal. It is an eternal truth, not a cultural one. Check out 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, ⁵but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

Basically it states: When the relationship of God and angels changes then the relationship of man and woman changes. The angels were created for God and woman for the man. God is the head of Christ and Christ is head of the Church. When did that change? Never has and never shall. In the midst of those unchangeable relationships, what makes you think that God would throw in one, He was fixin' to change or so the ones who use

Galatians 3:28 (out of context)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Bummed about that? Well, Paul says in verse 16 that if you are contentious, too bad, that is the way it is in all the churches.

If you go to 1 Timothy 6:1-5 where he is speaking to the authority issue between servants and masters he says that if anyone teaches otherwise he "is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, become envy, strife, railings, evil surmising's."

1 Timothy 6:1-5

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

Go then to Ephesians 5:21-6:9 where he gives the entire chain of command (submit is a military term speaking to rank) and you see that it is not a passing doctrine.

Indeed, Christ kicked most cultural surmising's of both Jew and Gentile in the teeth during His ministry, so if the male and female relationships were to change He would have clearly said so and would have had to use different imagery for His relationship to the Church. That did not happen. Paul was not one to mince words and if he had received from the Lord anything that comes close to what our culture views as the roles of men and women he would have spelled it out in no uncertain terms. He did not do so. I have been exposed to the mutual submission concept. I submit to you and you submit to me. I am not sure what theologian was smoking or drinking what when he came up with that one, but it is neither biblical nor logical.

I call it the Chip and Dale syndrome. Some listening may be a little too young to remember these two chipmunks. They were extremely polite. They would be fleeing for their life from some predator and upon arriving at their hole they would stop and do the "After you! No, after you! No, no, no, I insist after you!" thing while the predator is gaining on them. Just seconds before they would be snatched one would say, "I know! Let's go together!" They would giggle, hug, and drop in the hole foiling their enemy. For someone to be a head, someone has to be the body. A two headed, no body creature is something out of Sci-fi, but not creation. The Chipmunks were doing the "I submit to you and you submit to me" thing at the hole. If one had not assumed the role of the head and made the decision to go together and the other submit to the idea, the series would have ended right there with a fat cat and two digested chipmunks.

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Ephesians 5:26-27

that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

The verses above clearly state that the husband is the head of the wife no matter what our culture may say. I know that concept has been abused, but it is time to stop the abuse not abandon the concept. The role of head is not to abuse the body. We spoke earlier of the lover and that he is to nourish and cherish the body. The lover is whom the head is to stem from not some despot bent on control and abuse. Christ is the savior of the body. He died to bring spiritual life to the body. He provides for the body. The head of the wife should do the same in the degree that he can. He is there to help his wife grow spiritually. He is there to protect her from false doctrine. The very thing Adam failed to do and hence why we are in the predicament that we are in.

Christ sets apart or sanctifies the Church. The head should do the same for his wife. He should help her to remain pure before the Lord and dedicated to His service. He cleanses her as Christ does the Church by washing her with the Word. He should speak to her about the Lord and share Scripture with her. He should be with her in Church and ready to study with her and clear up things that she may not understand during the sermon or Bible study lesson. (1 Cor 14:35)

Why does Christ do this? Is it to manipulate and turn the Church into a weak little puppet? No, to turn the Church into a glorious and holy Church! Yes, it benefits Him because she is His bride, but the real benefit is to the Church. Yes, the husband will benefit from the spiritual growth of his wife, but she shall gain greatly from it as well. She will become the Proverbs woman whom people respect and her family rises up, and calls her blessed! Talk about your win-win situations!!! Christ does all for the good of the Church. The good husband does all for the good of his wife even if it kills him as Christ died for the Church.

Ladies, would you really have a problem submitting to a man that loves you that much and cares for your welfare that much? I don't think so. Men become that child, man, lover and accept your responsibility to be the head and you will not have to demand the role. She will gladly allow you to fulfil it and she will gladly fulfil hers! Finally, you have one last role to fill and that is to be the warrior! -You cannot receive faith as a warrior, but as you receive that faith as a child, you will become the responsible man that loves his wife and becomes the head of the family. You will find the strength to be a mighty man of God to defeat the devil and do great damage to his domain. You now have some wisdom and focus. You know what the war is about and who the- real enemy is.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Now all you need know is what your weapons are and what your mission is for the conflict. You know that it is a spiritual battle and not a carnal one. Therefore, your weapons must be spiritual. Use them well and the battle is yours for He who won the war will give it to you. The victory is His to give. Victory is not always tearing down the strongholds and gaining ground. Paul, says that having done all, stand! Some days the goal of the battle is not to gain ground, but to just maintain what ground you have.

Today, so many are falling away from the faith and seeking to redefine the truth and even attack the Book they say they believe that standing is rare and greatly needed. We need to quit quitting in the fatalist mentality and start quitting in the biblical sense and stand for what is right. We may lose friends. We may change churches. We may stand alone, but we must stand. It is better to lose all human support than to lose your family. Be strong in the Lord!

Just like Elijah you make think you are the only one left, but stand and God will show you "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed down to unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:18) He will open your eyes like Elisha's servant and show you that you should "fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 Kings 6)

Exodus 14:13

And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

So how is it with you, today my Brothers? I have spoken strongly and plainly and some would ask if I have attained. I said in the beginning that I am as you are. I am a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips. I am still striving to become the child that becomes the man who becomes the loving head that stands as the warrior. Will you strive with me? Will we pray for each other and exhort each other? I trust we will. The sacrifices may be great, but the rewards are far greater. Lord, make us mighty men of valor, but at the least; make us into the men of God you would have us to be!

