

1 Corinthians Chapter 11 v 1 - 16

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[0 : 0 0] Good evening. It's good to see you. Good that we can come together, that you're well enough to be out and about. I know several folk have been struggling with all sorts of flus and colds and coughs and for that reason some of them aren't here even this evening. But we thank God that we can gather as his people in the worship of our Saviour. I wonder if we could turn to Psalm 133.

Psalm 133 in your Bibles. It's a short psalm, just three verses. I'd like us to read it out together as we come to worship this evening. Some of the things that we are going to be celebrating and sharing in really reflect upon this psalm. Psalm 133.

And I wonder if we could perhaps read it together, together out loud as we do from time to time if we've got a similar version, the New International Version. So let's read together this psalm of David we're told. How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity. It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on the bearer's beard, down on the collar of his brook. It is as if the tree of heaven were falling on man's house.

But there the Lord is so addressing, even like that he ever was. So this is a psalm that exalts the importance of unity amongst God's people.

And the unity that we have amongst God's people is just that, that we are God's people, that we belong to him, and that he is our saviour and our king. That's what makes us one. We're not one because we all look alike or dress alike or speak alike or have the same taste in music or the same taste in literature. We are all different. And yet in Christ we are one. Paul says it's neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free. And of course there is one thing that we all do together.

[2 : 1 0] We all worship the Lord. So let's do that as we sing our first hymn. 34, stand up and bless the Lord, you people of his choice. Stand up and bless the Lord, your God, with heart and soul and voice.

Let's stand and sing. 34. Let's come to the Lord our God in prayer together. Let us all pray.

We thank you for the greatness of that truth that we've sung, that you are the Lord our God, that Lord we are your people. You have brought us into this marvellous relationship with yourself, where once we were far from you, once we were ignorant of you, strangers to your love and care and grace, where once, Lord, we were going our own way and following our own paths and doing what we wanted and had no real knowledge or understanding of you and your goodness to us in Jesus. Lord, we thank you that's all changed. We thank you, Lord, we're no longer ignorant of you, though there's so much more of you that we long to know and understand and grasp. We thank you, Lord, that we are not separate from you and pushed away by the barrier of our sin, but we thank you that we are now your children and you are our heavenly Father. We thank you, Lord, that we have been brought into this covenant relationship, this wonderful affirmation, this wonderful agreement which says that nothing can separate us in heaven or hell or earth from the God who loves us. And we thank you too,

Lord, that we are now those who have received into our lives the experience of your forgiveness. We have received the wonderful cleansing of our hearts and our minds. We've received the indwelling and filling of your Holy Spirit so that we are new creations, born again. We are, Lord, those who are made new. So much, O Lord, has changed. So much has been transformed in us. And, O Lord, yet you know our desire is that more change would take place. Lord, we don't believe or think for a moment that we've arrived or that we've reached that place, Lord, where we want to be or should be or need to be. But, Lord, we long, like Paul, to strive forward, to reach the goal, to press on, not looking back over our shoulders with regret, but looking forward with hope. And we praise you and thank you, O Lord, that one of the things that you are doing in us is that you are drawing us closer to yourself and, therefore, closer to one another. We thank you for that wonderful Psalm of David. Yes, how wonderful it is when Christian brothers and sisters live together in unity. Thank you that there you bestow your blessing. There's something wonderful and blessed about being of one heart, one mind, one desire to live for God. We pray, O Lord, that this may be our experience, our growing experience, not only this evening but in the days to come, that we may know a greater love for one another, a greater desire to walk together, to support one another, to serve together, to be of one purpose and goal. We pray, Lord, where there are those obstacles to that, and they're usually because of our own sin or selfishness or pride, we ask that you would deal with us and change us. We praise you and thank you that you have begun that work and we know that you will carry it on to completion. Help us then, even as we come to your word in a little while, and as we gather around the communion table too, that Lord, we may be taking that step further forward in unity in Christ.

And we ask these things now as we bring to our praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, as you can see, the communion table, the Lord's Supper is prepared for us this evening, and a little later on, Frederick's going to lead us in that. There's no other notices because we do, because of it being communion together. So we'll come straight away to God's word. And if you could turn with me please to 1 Corinthians and to chapter 11. 1 Corinthians and chapter 11. Now, as you know, I was away last Sunday, and so we've had a break away from 1 Corinthians. Unfortunately, before that as well, I had a couple of weeks where I wasn't too well, and Frederick and Barry preached in the evening. So we haven't been in 1 Corinthians for a little while. So we're going to be a little bit to pick up from chapter 11. And we're going to read from verse 1. Now, most of you have got the New

[7 : 38] International Version, that's page 1152. And it's almost as if chapter 1 is part of chapter 10. And there's a sense in which it is. It's a linking verse between those chapters. But we'll read there from verse 1.

Follow my example. This is Paul, of course, the apostle writing. Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I pass them on to you. But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. It is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off. But if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off, or her head shaved, then she ought and she should cover her head. 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 did not come from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the

Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as a woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him? But that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory. For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice, nor do the churches of God. Well, we're going to need a lot of help from the Lord, aren't we, to understand and apply his word to us this evening. Have open, if you would, that passage, those first 16 verses of 1 Corinthians 11, and we're going to look through them together.

Do you remember those days when you were at school and you had to run a cross-country race? Waiting at the end, of course, of that cross-country race was warmth, maybe a shower, clean clothes, and of course the promise of going home and having your tea. But before you got to those things, you had to pass through several miles of mud and cold and brambles and aching limbs. And there was no shortcut that you could take to avoid these things, these uncomfortable parts of the course. You had to go through them all. Well, in a similar fashion, there are some seemingly uncomfortable parts of the Bible that we cannot avoid or bypass or get around if we want to reach the finishing line.

And 1 Corinthians and chapter 11, and in fact, really the next few chapters, but particularly those first few verses, will cause us all a little discomfort, and not least the preacher himself as well. As we read through, I'm sure many things were racing through your minds. What does this mean?

[11 : 45] What has it got to say to me? What is the application? What's the relevance of all these things? Well, one of the things, of course, that has become really an unspoken rule in the church in England is about wearing a hat or not, something that through the centuries past, there was a tradition, there was a way of doing things. Even today, of course, amongst non-Christians, people who have very little involvement in the life of a church, if they enter a church, men will take off their hats, instinctively. They may not even have been told that, but it's just something that they do.

And of course, there are still many women who own a hat, which only ever comes out when it's time to go to church on a Sunday. But it's, for many, a very serious matter.

And some churches, you may come across, insist upon every woman wearing a covering or a hat on their heads. Some churches will have hats on standby for visitors to come, so that they will wear them, and not enter bareheaded. Is that what it's all about, though? Is that really all this passage is about, is whether we wear hats or not hats, when and in what position? No. This is something more to be said in this passage, much more than hats. We need to study it as we do all of God's Word, and grasp that Paul is talking about something which is not only just for those Christians of the first century, but is something which is for us today, and something really which, on the surface, may seem to be, may not seem to be there. Something which actually, when we look at it, will have a lot to say into our present generation about male and female relationships. But it's always important, of course, that whenever we study just a portion of God's Word, as we do here, these 16 verses, that we study them in context. That is to say that we look at them, not, as it were, on their own.

We don't take them out of the Bible and just say, well, what does that mean? Because that makes no sense. And we can often fail to grasp and understand, and we can often misunderstand, in fact, more often than not, what God's Word is saying. We need to understand what Paul is saying here, in the context of all of his letter, and particularly in this section. What did it mean to those who first read it? What does it have to say to them, first of all? And when we get to chapter 11, we actually find that we enter a section of his letter which is all about public worship, all about the gathering of God's people together, as we are doing here on a Sunday evening. And that section goes all the way through 11, all the way through 12, all the way through 13, and through 14. It's not till we get to the end of chapter 14 that he has dealt with this important attitude of practical worship, practical church meeting. And the key, in one sense, to the understanding the whole of those four chapters is found in chapter 14 and verse 33. This is the key verse. And often there will be, in a context, in an area, there will be a key verse which particularly has relevance, and in one sense, it gives a general background to everything. It's chapter 14, 33, where we're told, for God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the congregation of the Lord's people.

Not is not a God of disorder. Now, remember, we've been looking at this letter that Paul has written to the church in Corinth. And one of the things that's come out again and again is that they are a church of disorder. They are a church which is not disciplined. They are not a church which is ordered and following through things as they should. They were a church that lacked order and lacked discipline. And so Paul's long letter here, his longest letter, really, in the New Testament, is dealing with very practical, real problems. Nearly every chapter, every section is all about the problems in the church. Very little of it, if we can put it in one sense, is a new teaching or new revelation about the Lord Jesus. It's all about tackling. He's sort of a fireman putting out fires in the church at Corinth. Yet, thankfully, Paul has something praiseworthy to say about the believers here. Verse 2, I praise you. He's not done that yet. So far, 10 chapters. He's just said, you know, what do you think you're playing at? What are you doing? And he's going to speak a bit later on in verse 17. In the following, directors, I have no praise for you.

[16 : 43] But here he does praise him. He praised him for remembering him in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I pass them on to you. He's talking about those vital doctrines, those vital truths which he impressed upon them. We know that he was there for 18 months as one says the church planter and the church foundation layer in Corinth. And in that time, he laid down certain truths, certain realities about Christ, and they had stuck to those things.

They'd wandered off in all sorts of other ways, but there were certain things that they had clearly held to. However, what they didn't hold to, and perhaps what Paul didn't have time to teach them about completely, was how to gather in worship. And this is what he wants them to do. He wants them to gather in such a way that they worship as other Christians do. Look at the very end of the passage in verse 16. We have no other practice, nor do the churches of God. He wants to bring them into line with how all of God's people worship and meet together and operate. But there's clearly disagreement, isn't there? There's clearly a problem. And clearly, once again, there have been those in the church who have sown seeds of discontentedness, sown seeds of division, sown seeds of disorder, which we have seen all the way through. So what I want us to do is to look at three things, three declarations, as it were, by Paul that teach us and help us to understand how we worship, how the church operates, how we are to gather together. And really, they are all to do with how men and women live, work, and operate in the life of the church. And so we're going to deal with them under three simple titles. The first title is this, there is a God-given order in the church.

There is a God-given order in the church. Verses three to seven. God is a God of order. That verse, remember that I said in 1433, that God is not a God of disorder, but it's peace. And in the church of Jesus Christ, God has set out an order about how things are to work and operate. This shouldn't come as a surprise to us. When we deal with any aspect of our lives, whether it be in business, whether it be in sport, whether it be in a hobby or activity or club membership, in everything, there's an order. There's a set of, we might say, rules or regulations as a way of doing things. We can only imagine what chaos it would be like if you went to watch a rugby or a football match, and basically all the players decided what the rules would be for themselves.

So some would kick it, some would head it, some would handball it, some would run this way, someone would run. It would just be a complete mess. So in the church of God, there is an order that he has given. And the order starts with God himself. Then Christ follows. We read there in verse three, the head of Christ is God. And then there are those men, and then there are women. So we have there, in verse three, that order. I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. That is the order in which God has placed things within the life of his church. Now, immediately, of course, we might begin to get upset by that. But let us just stop before we get over the top about it. This is not implying any superiority or inferiority. And that's very important for us to understand. This is not implying or saying there is a superiority or an inferiority, but there is an order. Particularly, of course, we must understand that there cannot be any superiority or inferiority between Christ and God. When he says that the head of Christ is God, we know that God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is not inferior, a lesser God than

God the Father. He is not inferior or subordinate to God in any way, in his nature, in his authority, in his everlasting, infinite power. So, as much as Christ is subordinate to God, that is as much as women are subordinate to men and men to women. So, let's get rid of that, because that unfortunately has been a real stumbling block to many people. Well, what does it mean, though? If it doesn't mean that women are inferior to men or that men are superior to women, what does it mean? Well, it means that for the church to operate, for the church of Jesus Christ to function in the way that God desires, to be, to work its best, it has to work as God has ordered it to work. Just again, as an engineer or anybody who is making a machine has to make the fits work together. You can't have two at one sense of the same thing.

[22 : 05] Every part is different, and every part works together to make the engine function as it should. The church to operate, there has to be a God-given order. Now, if we just take the Lord Jesus Christ for a moment, and we need to take that, because I think it's important that we don't miss out that verse one of chapter 11, again, gives us not only the teaching about chapter 10, but how we understand chapter 11, follow the example of Christ. What's the example of Christ? Well, we have it plainly set out for us in Philippians 2. You might just want to turn there for a moment, Philippians 2, where we have this incredible description of how Jesus fulfilled his ministry as our Savior by submitting himself to the authority of his Father. Notice again that in our relationship, verse 5, in our relationships with one another, we're to have the same mindset as Christ, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant. Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross. For the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Savior of his church, and to be the head of his church, it meant that first of all, he had to submit himself, make himself a servant, bring himself down, we might even say, to a certain degree, though always God, always co-equal with the Father, always with the same authority, always having the same characteristics and nature. Now Christ did that willingly. He knew that this was the order that things had to follow for him to be the Savior of sinners. And similarly, God has ordered things in the church whereby, because of his own will, he has placed positions of leadership, whether it be a pastor or a minister or an elder or a teacher, he has put those positions in the order that they belong to men, those positions of leadership. It's going to come up later on in 1 Corinthians as well. It comes up in other parts of the scripture too. Now this is not because, and one of the sad things that has been used and twisted is that somehow this means that women are inferior. There is no sense of that here, there is no sense of that in the New Testament in any sense or way. It's not because women are less able than men, in many ways they are more able. It's not because women are less intelligent than men, in many areas they are more intelligent. It's because men and women are different. Now one of the sad misconceptions that has been put out is, well of course in the first century women were ignorant and they were stupid and they were uneducated and so they couldn't be ministers, but now they're educated, they can be ministers. No, because that's not the argument here. The argument is not about education, the argument is not about ability, the argument is not about inferiority or superiority of the sexes.

I'm sorry I'm sort of getting laboring this point rather a lot, but I think it's important that we do because it's been so mistaken and so misused on both sides and particularly in our day, it's heavily upon the side of feminism that says Christians who hold to what the Bible teaches are misogynists, are men who put women down. That is far from the case and far from the teaching New Testament. So where are we going with this? God has given an order in the church. What's that got to do with these head coverings? Every man who prays or prophesies, verse 4, with his head covered dishonors his head. Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

Paul is writing in the context of the first century. And in the first century, particularly in the Mediterranean world, there was no outward distinction between the way a man dressed and a woman dressed.

They all wore basically sort of an inner robe and an outer robe. The only thing that differentiated a man from a woman was that a woman would wear a veil or a head covering on her head. Not as in the sense of, I'll be careful how I put this, not as in the sense as we often see Muslim women portrayed with a full burqa or full veil with just their eyes showing, but simply a scarf over the head.

Now the only women who didn't wear a scarf over their head were prostitutes and those who had been caught in adultery. And they, the latter of those were women who then had their head shaved as a mark that they were immoral. So every other woman, every married woman, every single woman had, as it were, a scarf over her head. It was a differentiation between men and women.

[27 : 25] That's what it was, simply put. Now it seems that when we come to the church in Corinth, the problem was this, that women who had rightly understood the gospel had understood that God had brought us into a wonderful freedom. That in Christ, as I mentioned this earlier on, in prayer, there is no male, there is no female. And so they were coming into church and they were taking off their veil. They were taking off their headscarf to say, in the church we are just accepted and free.

But actually what they were doing is something more than that. They were showing themselves to be subverting the authority that God had placed in the church. They were causing a distraction in the worship of God by drawing attention to themselves because it was particularly odd for a woman not to have a headscarf on, apart from perhaps in the home. And they were using it, in one sense, as a sign of rebellion against the headship and the leadership of the church. That's the problem that was here.

Remember when we looked in chapter 8 and verse 9, over again and again, we find that we are to be careful not to use our rights to become a stumbling block to the weak.

That was a problem. People were always doing whatever they wanted. I can do whatever I like and it doesn't matter. But Paul was saying, you can do whatever you like, but it's not going to be always for the good. It's not going to be the good for others. It's not going to help them.

And that's exactly what Paul is talking about here. He's arguing that if a man looks like a woman when he wears a veil over his head, he dishonours his head.

[29 : 10] He's dishonouring himself by dressing in one sense as a woman would, with a scarf over his head, is wrong. And so too, for a woman not to wear a scarf over her head when she's in church is also wrong, because she wouldn't go on the streets and do that, because out on the streets, she would be taken to be a prostitute. And she certainly wouldn't want people to think she was a prostitute.

And she certainly wouldn't go out and have her head shaved, as he says there, because that would be a disgrace as well and make her look like she was an adulteress. It's a God-given order in the church.

And God has a reason for the things that he teaches. And what Paul is teaching here, particularly in this matter, is to show that there is an order that we are to observe, that God has given for our good.

And that when we try to throw that up, then actually what we do is we cause problems for others and ourselves. Now the second thing which really follows from that, which is important, is that there is a God-given authority in the church.

And that's from verses 7 to 9. God-given order and a God-given authority. This ordering of men and women in the church, and the need to keep clear distinctions between the sexes, is not something new.

[30 : 30] It wasn't just something cultural from the first century, but rather it stems from God's created order of the universe and of humanity. That's why I say it's not about first century education, or first century culture, or first century intellect, or the treatment of women in the past, why men have been put in that order, or the church operates in that order.

It's because, Paul says, there's an order that God has given in creation. As he points out to what happened in Genesis and chapter 1.

The Genesis record teaches us that man was created first. That's again another reason why we can't, we can't sort of poo-poo and do away with Genesis in the first 11 chapters.

We can't say it's irrelevant, because the New Testament writers keep harking back to it. And pointing out that it has very practical ramifications and implications for how we live today.

And so when God created human beings, we're told he first created Adam, the man. And that from his rib, from his side, he created Eve, the woman, so that she came from him.

[31 : 44] There was an order. Adam first, Eve second. And we know the reason why God created Eve, because God said, it's not good that man is alone, I'll make for him a helper.

So Eve was made for Adam, for him to be helped, to support him, to strengthen him, to help him do the things that he cannot do alone. God has made us, that we might bear his image and glory.

And there's a lovely phrase there, isn't it, in verse 7. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. Not that somehow, a woman is, man's bling, if I can put it that way.

A woman is not to be just there, so she can be sort of his, to show off how well he's done, because he's got such a beautiful wife. Really what Paul is saying is certainly this, is that, as human beings, we, we, we, we reflect the glory of God, to the world around about us.

And we do that, in our own individual roles, as men and women. There's a difference, and it's an important difference, and it's a God-made difference.

[33 : 03] Now I said at the beginning, that what we're looking at here, is not something simply about the past, or irrelevant, but something very much for today. And I think this is the point, which is so important. We're living in a day and age, where we've seen, in our own, in my generation particularly, an increase in same-sex relationship, leading to same-sex marriage.

We've seen this terrible, and awful phenomenon, which is growing all the more, of gender reassignment surgery, even amongst young people, young children, resulting from, I believe, these, both these things, resulting from, our inability to celebrate, the differences between men and women.

Our inability to celebrate, the God-given differences, that are there. Instead of being able to say, it's wonderful, that you are a woman, or it's wonderful, that you're a man.

We have said, oh well, we've got to blur the lines. We've got to, we've got to take away, the difference. There's no difference, between a man and a woman. And there's no difference, between a woman and a man.

And therefore, if they want to, if a man wants to marry a man, that's okay. And if a man wants to become a woman, that's okay. It's because we've lost, the joy, and the thankfulness to God, that we are different. But we are not different, because we are opposed, to one another.

[34 : 20] We are different, because we each demonstrate, the glory of God, in a particular way. So in the first century, which we're dealing with here particularly, when a woman wore her veil in church, she was demonstrating, that she was submitted, to God's order.

She wasn't first of all, demonstrating, she was submitted to her husband. That isn't the first thing. The first thing, is she submitted to God, and his order, in the church. It was a sign, of her heart, being right with him.

Yes, she was free. Yes, she was of equal, standing with her husband, before the Lord. But she recognized, that God had put an order there, and wearing that veil, was a way of saying, yes Lord, I agree with your order, and I want to follow your will.

She wasn't saying, some way, I'm less than my husband, or in some way, I'm less important, in the church, than a man. That is not the case at all. And so, this is where we come, to the third part, which I'm going to spend, a bit more time on, than the others really.

There's a God-given order, in the church, there's a God-given authority, in the church, but there's a God-given, interdependence, in the church. God-given interdependence, in the church.

[35 : 39] Verses 11, to 15. Nevertheless, the law, in the Lord, notice that's, in the Lord. In the world, yes, women have been treated badly.

In the world, men have misused, their strength, or their position, to abuse, and to put down women, and that is, against the will of God, always has been.

But in the church, that is not to be the case, and never should have been the case, and only when sinners entered the church, has it been the case, that women have been put down, and wrongly treated.

No, in the Lord, he says. Verse 11, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. There is an interdependence.

You may have come across this, the Australian writer, called Irana Dunn, she coined this phrase, which has become a phrase, which feminism, has taken hold of worldwide.

[36 : 40] A woman needs a man, like a fish, needs a bicycle. But the reality is, that's not the case. A woman does need a man, and a man does need a woman.

She was sadly, a woman who, had had a very unhappy marriage. Who knows, what was the outcome of that? And however poorly women, have been treated, however poorly women, still are treated, in the world, around about us.

Men need women, just as much as women, need men. We are not independent, of one another. This is the wonder, of the church of Jesus Christ. It's not just, that we need one another, in the church.

That we are dependent, upon every single member, of the church. But we are dependent, upon male and female, in the church. In like measure, and in like way. We may have, yes, by God's created order, and his plan, so that things work together, as they should.

Differences of role, differences of, of, of, of gifting, and ability, within the church. But we absolutely, depend upon one another.

[37 : 54] And Paul says, this is how it was, because of creation. As we've already mentioned. Just as a woman, Eve, and all women, therefore, from Eve, came from Adam.

So every single man, who's been born, apart from Adam, has come from a woman. That's, science. That's, nature. That's, children. That's birth. That's, reproduction.

Every, man, has had, a mother. But, says Paul, rather than looking, to one another, to see, who's better, than the other, or who's, less than the other, he says this, everything comes from God.

Whatever gifts, whatever skills, whatever position, whatever opportunities, we have to serve, whatever abilities, they come from God. There's no place, for a man to boast, and say that, I'm better than my wife, or a woman, or anything else.

And there is no place, either, for a woman to say, I'm better than a man. Because ultimately, whatever we have, we have from God. Whatever gifts, we have, are from Him.

[39 : 03] We're not to be, detrimental to one another. In the church, God has given, order and authority, which means, interdependence, between the sexes. Each gender, has its own, set of weaknesses.

Men have a certain, set of weaknesses, which make them, unable to do, and to function, in the way that, women can. And women have weaknesses, and, and, and, lack of abilities, in certain areas, that men, have the strength.

And so, we compensate, one another. That's the whole thing, of whatever team is. We go back to the whole, sporting thing, in a team. In a team, you will have, people who can run fast, but then you'll also have, people who are able to, be very strong, in defense.

You'll have those, who will be able to, kick a ball, with the left foot, and those who will be able, to kick a ball, with the right foot. You'll have different, skill sets. And a good manager, of a team, will put those, differing skill sets together.

He won't put, all right footed men, who can all run, really fast, in the same team, because they won't, serve the purpose, of the team. He won't put all, goal scorers, in a team.

[40 : 13] But he will look for those, who have differing abilities. We are created, to be complimentary, to one another, not in competition, with one another. And that again, I believe, is one of the, sad things, that we have seen, in our, in the last 30, 40 or 50 years.

How men and women, have somehow been, set up by the world, to be against one another. Men against women, women against men, putting one another down, in some way or another.

Differences, remain. And so we come back, to this whole matter, of heads.

And hats, and hats, and coverings. Where does that leave us today? Should we, what should we do?

How should we respond, to God's word, in this area? Certainly, we thought about, some of the matters, of the order of the church. But what about, these matter of, head coverings? Now in our, Western society, in the world, in which we live now, we don't view, head coverings, in the way that, God's people did, in the first century.

[41 : 24] Now in the East, of course they still do. And of course, when we have, folk who come over, from Eastern cultures, who come to live in the UK, they still often, will wear, a head covering, for the women.

It will very much, be a mark, almost of their culture, rather than of their sex. But certainly, amongst, those of us, in Western civilization, Western culture, Western society, that discrimination, of the mark, being, the hat, if we can do it that way, or the scarf, is completely gone.

Just as much, as it's no longer, seen that a woman, who has her head, sorry, has her hair short, is somehow, a prostitute, or immoral, where we have, different styles of hair.

Not one, set against the other. Likewise, a man may have, may have longer hair. Don't particularly, like men, who have longer hair. I think it looks, a bit hippie-ish, but that's just my preference, on the matter.

But, it's not a sign, that that man is, out of order with God. To wear a hat in church, no longer shows, that a woman, is submitting, to God's authority.

[42 : 31] It's simply a hat. For many women, in many churches, wearing a hat, is simply a matter, maybe even of fashion. In the past, certainly, that's been the case.

Men and women, are simply to dress, so I can put it that way, in accordance, with their gender. I don't think it's good, that a man, should dress as a woman, and I don't think it's right, that a woman, should dress as a man.

But a woman, can wear a pair of trousers, and be just as feminine, as if she's wearing a skirt. That isn't the issue. But there is a line, isn't it, to cross, between dressing, effeminently as a man, and dressing masculinely, as a woman.

We can see some of that, in some of the, the ways in which, maybe women in business, particularly, may dress up, very masculinely, with a tie, and a shirt, and a jacket, somehow to, boost their own authority.

But what we're really back to, ultimately, is the very first principles, of living as a Christian. Those first principles, are what we've seen already, in chapter 10, and verse 31.

[43 : 35] Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory, of God. That's the important principle. That's the, that's the heart of the matter. It's the heart attitude.

When I come to worship, with God's people, what's my heart attitude? Am I coming to express, my authority, by the way I work? Am I, by the way I worship? Am I trying to show myself, to be something more than I am?

Am I concerned, about the way I look, in church, because, I want somehow, for people to think, I'm more holy, more godly, more spiritual, more acceptable, more wise.

Actually, do I simply dress, with the desire that, as I come to worship God, I want to glorify Him. I want my life, for my actions, to bring Him the glory, that rightfully, are His.

So, although we may not be able, to answer all the questions, in this passage, and understand fully, what is going on, we can see that, this is the heart of the matter. Am I submitted to God?

[44 : 38] To His order? His authority? Do I recognize, that I am, dependent upon, all the other people, in my church? And that they, are dependent upon me?

And am I willing, to serve, and play my part, as God intends? Well, let's pray together, in response to His word. Father in heaven, we know that you do, all things well.

We know, Lord, that you have a purpose, in all things. And it's, it's, not confusing, and it's not, disorderly. It's quite the opposite. But we live in a world, of confusion.

We live in an age, in which, we find, all sorts of things, being said and done, which, blur, the lines, that, that make things, confusing for us, to know what's right, and wrong.

And oh Lord, we do need your word, to help us in that. But we often find, that your word, runs contrary, to our culture. It runs, contrary, to our society.

[45 : 47] And so Lord, we do need your help, that we might have the wisdom, that we need, to serve you, and serve one another. We pray, oh Lord, that as we've been thinking, through your word, about our attitude, to one another, and to different genders, in the church, and different positions, and roles.

We ask, oh Lord, that you would help us. Help us to find, that place, that you want us, to be in, to serve. Help us, Lord, not to, as it were, covet, somebody else's place, or wish that we were there, or here, or had those skills, or those abilities.

Help us to be thankful, for the gifts you've given us. And help us, Lord, we pray, by your Holy Spirit, to use those gifts, and use those, uh, abilities, and use, Lord, who we are, who you've made us to be, that we might, build up, encourage, strengthen, and be a blessing, to the whole church.

We ask these things, Lord, because our first desire, is to bring you the glory, that you deserve. Amen. Amen. . . .

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