A Christ-Exalting Marriage (Pt. 1) The Christ-Exalting Wife Christ Community Church / Ryan Patty / 8.09.20 1 Peter 3:1-6

Good morning Christ Community Church! We are continuing our series in 1 Peter and find ourselves at the beginning of chapter three today. A well-known text in some regards, but not always for the right reasons. This is a passage that is vital for marriages, vital for helping us to understand our roles as husbands and wives. And I am convinced that what we need today for our marriages, for men, and for women, is more of what God says and a lot less of what the world throws at us. On a personal level, I desire God's truth for my wife, I desire God's truth for my sisters in Christ, and I desire it for my daughters who are growing up in my house. I don't want them believing the lies of the world. So we are going to take this Sunday, and Lord willing, next Sunday to look at these verses that speak to husbands and wives. The overarching title for these two weeks is "A Christ-Exalting Marriage," and specifically today we will see "The Christ-Exalting Wife."

You see, Our culture tells us, and particularly you women and even more focused, wives, that what I am going to read to you is bigoted, or hateful, or sexist, or misogynist, or that was then and this is now, and the list goes on.

But let's think about the argument from the culture for a moment. Rather than these verses being <u>hurtful words</u>, I think they are actually <u>healing words because they set us free to live out God's good intentions for us</u>. As people of the book, those who believe that God has *revealed* himself through the pages of Scripture and specifically through his Son Jesus Christ, and that what he has revealed himself to be is the rightful <u>creator and sustainer of all things</u>, and that means the creator and sustainer of us, the very God who from the beginning of creation instituted the marriage covenant between a man and woman, he designed it, orchestrated it, and ordained it, then I would *expect* that that very God would have something to say about how marriage is to be lived out between a man and a woman in a fallen world. And not only lived out but to **flourish**, and be a **testimony** to a this world of His glory! And praise him he does. So when our culture and society tells you, women, that something your creator has said concerning

how you are to live as a God-fearing wife in this world is wrong-headed, or archaic, or holds you back in life. I pray that you wouldn't buy that lie. I pray that you would say with Paul from <u>Romans 3</u>, "let God be true and every man a <u>liar.</u>" Let God's purpose for me be true, his love for me be true, his design for me be true, his commands for me be true, and everything else that the culture or society is telling me about who I am or ought to be, a lie.

Now to my friends who are here and are not married, whether your single and desiring to one day be married, your single and gifted by God to be single, or your single because your widowed or divorced even, the temptation might be to check out of this message. "He's only speaking about husbands and wives, not me!" Well if you want to be a husband or wife one day, then you better have a good understanding of what God has to say concerning that particular role for you. But also, there are three corporate reasons that you should not check out and that you should listen attentively:

Three reasons this passage is important for all us:

- 1) Even if you are not married in this life, the Bible tells us that marriage is a *greater* picture of Christ and the Church. You should desire as a Christ-follower to better understand this picture and your place in it!
- 2) What is said of wives and husbands in the marriage passages often informs us, at-least in part, of how to better live as Christian men and women in the world.
- 3) We are all called to love, support, and disciple one another. And this means all types of people. So you might be single, and you still might be discipling a husband or wife in a marriage. I, personally, have been most helped in my marriage and my role as a husband through the teaching of a pastor who has never even been married! Godly truth is still truth regardless of who is speaking it.

So far what we have seen from Peter in this section is that he has something to say to us concerning our relationship, really our witness, to an unbelieving world. And the two verses that are really the heading of this long section are found in 2:11-12 - "Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits."

So Peter tells us, What does it look like for a Christian to submit to governing authorities, we've looked at that. What does it look like for a Christian servant to submit to a master, we have looked at that. And now we turn to what it looks like for submission and authority within the home. Let me read from 3:1-6 - "In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live **2** when they observe your pure, reverent lives. **3** Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, **4** but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. **5** For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, **6** just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.

PRAY

My friends, with our time, this morning, I want to draw out four characteristics *from this passage* of a Christ-Exalting Wife. Four characteristics of a Christ-Exalting Wife. The first one will be the longest.

1. Submission - to the Glory of God

Now, when Peter informs wives that they are to submit, there are some important things we need to look at. The greek word here is "hupotasso" and means to submit or subject oneself to someone or something else. Notice for instance that the text says "submit to your own husbands." It does not say women are to submit to men in general, or wives are to submit to all husbands, but submit to your *own* husband. I want to first lay out what submission is and is not. But let me first tell you what submission is not. These are a few of the many things it is not. Biblical Submission is not: (Piper)

- Idolizing your husband - the entirety of this section assumes that allegiance to Christ is prioritized over and against any other human allegiance. This means that you will not agree with everything your husband says. As Christians, we seek to align our lives with everything Christ says, but in Peter's example here the wife is a believer and the husband is not. She has one view of who the ultimate authority is and who gives us ultimate reality, and he has another. Peter calls the wife here to be submissive without undermining her primary

allegiance to Christ. To be submissive, without following a husband into sin. So women you are not called to idolize your husband. <u>And a word real quick to those who have grown up in ultra-conservative homes where passages like these were used as grounding for emotional or physical abuse. That is completely and utterly horrible and wrong, and it is sin. If you are experiencing abuse in the marriage, if there is domestic violence happening in your home, call the police immediately. Call us immediately, we will do all that we can to help you. But submission and headship are to **never** be understood as turning a blind eye to abuse and violence.</u>

- Blindly following your husband Upon marriage the wife does not leave her brain or her will at the wedding. She has independent thoughts. Notice the wife to which Peter is writing here! She has heard the Gospel, thought through the implications, embraced Christ as Lord, and now seeks to faithfully live out her life as His disciple. She thought for herself and acted and will continue to do so. As someone who is married to a strong-willed woman, I whole-heartedly affirm this very truth. Laura is strong. My wife's nickname amongst her family is the general. I remember her grandfather pulling me aside while we were dating and jokingly asking "if i knew what I was getting into?" Her mind and her will are strong, and that's a beautiful thing because she will speak her mind to me. I don't want somebody mindless, someone who blindly follows me! We can dialogue deeply about things, even disagree over the right course of action, but she has always respected and submitted to my leadership in the home. It is not a blind following. She is aware, she had excellent input and advice and concerns and that's a good thing! Men, we have to understand this well. When a wife gives you push-back don't you dare throw it in her face that she is not submitting. She will have opinions and push-back, but notice what the posture of her heart is at the end of the discussion. It takes immense maturity for her to say, "I disagree, but am willing to follow your lead in this." So wives who submit in no way give up their intelligence nor their wills.
- Avoiding opportunities or efforts to influence your husband A Christian wife should try to influence her unbelieving husband to become a Christian. Likewise, the Christian wife will want to lovingly encourage her husband to become more Christ-like in both the way he leads the family and how he acts as a man. When my wife points out an area or instance of sin in my life, I find that to be a catalyst for growth for me. I desire to

mature and lead her better than I have been before. It is good for her to desire and try to aid in my sanctification and wives you have to be willing to embrace that.

- Contrary to our equality in Christ - In fact, as we study the Scriptures we see that submission in regard to authority is often consistent with equality in importance, worth, dignity, and honor. Think of our Lord Jesus, who was subject to both his parents and to God the Father. Of greater worth and honor than his parents, and of equal with His Father. Submission in no way implies inferiority either spiritually or in worth. Think on, again, who Peter is encouraging here to submit. The very woman who is married to an unbeliever. The woman who is infinitely more spiritually mature because she knows Christ! And the beautiful thing about this passage is that it was just as counter-cultural then as it is today. Today, We don't like the submission and authority language in the passage, but do like the coheir language in v 7. But back then, they didn't have a problem with submission and authority, but the coheir language would have been a stopping point for sure. Men and women equal, coheirs you say? God's word transcends all cultures and challenges us in varying ways exactly where we are.

Now, let's think for a moment on the reverse side of the coin. What is a proper view of Biblical submission? Here is a definition for you.

Biblical submission is the divine calling of a wife to value and affirm her husband's leadership and to uphold it through her God-given gifts. (Piper)

As one pastor puts it, ""[Submission] is an attitude that says, 'I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love. I don't flourish when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works.' But the attitude of Christian submission also says, 'It grieves me when you venture into sinful acts and want to take me with you. You know I can't do that. I have no desire to resist you. On the contrary, I flourish most when I can respond creatively and joyfully to your lead; but I can't follow you into sin, as much as I love to honor your leadership in our marriage. Christ is my King.'" (Piper)

But the fall of humanity in Genesis 3, and the disposition of sin in our own lives will cause us to rebel on both sides, husband and wife, what it looks like to live out our God-given callings. So today we have men who try to lead passively, which is an oxymoron (we will see this next week). And likewise we have women who fail to submit through valuing and affirming their husband's leadership and therefore are in the same vein of sin as a passive husband. So because of sin we rebel. We as men often fail to lead, and the sinful tendency of women is to often not want to submit. It won't be your natural instinct in how you want to relate to your husband but will take a deliberate decision. Determination. I love what one Christian woman writes:

"Submission is not something that just happens. As a wife you have to decide to be submissive. You have to be willing to be submissive. Every day I am challenged as to whether I am willing to submit to my husband or actively rebel against him. It is up to me to decide whether I am going to nag, complain, or criticize, or whether I am going to whole-heartedly support him and have the wisdom to bite my tongue."

And the reason that this first characteristic is entitled "Submission *to the glory of God*" not only has to do with the role of a wife, but the glory that God receives when we live out our intended roles. Look at how Peter structures his command. He gives us the biblical principles (wives submit to your husbands) and then gives us an immediate example, so that they may be won without a word by the way their wives live. This isn't an argument for not sharing the Gospel. It's not an argument for not talking about Jesus Christ as the only way to be reconciled to God and instead just trying to do good deeds. Even Peter will say later in ch. 3 always be ready to give a "reason for the hope that is within you." No these women had come to Christ and their husbands had not. Their husbands had possibly heard the Gospel and did not believe, or the wife was evangelized by another wife. But to be sure, these wive's were telling their unbelieving husbands the Gospel. They had proclaimed it to them, now they were to live it out so that their husbands would see the beauty of it right before their eyes. Once the husband knows the Gospel, has heard it from you, then it is now the conduct of your life that makes the difference (as Peter argues). And what is that conduct? A pure and reverent life Peter says. A life lived in Gospel truth and sincerity. A life that is markedly different than what a worldly wife would live like towards her husband. That word reverent is "phobw" in the

greek, it typically means fear. In other words, your fear, not of your husband, but your reverent fear of the Lord (as Jeff talked about a few weeks back), is what is continuing to proclaim the Gospel in your conduct to your husband.

That is the first characteristic of a Christ-Exalting Wife. We have three more, and they all overlap and inter-relate, and trust me, they will go quicker :)

2. An Adornment - which never fades

"3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, **4** but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

Peter first instructed the Christian women to submit out of a reverence to God, and now he tells them how to live out their reverence in a fallen world. This command comes in the negative form. Do **not** let your beauty, your adornment, what makes you beautiful in God's sight and in your husband's sight, that is, the essence of who you are consist simply of outward things. I say essence, because the word for adornment or beauty here in this verse is actually "kosmos." One of the only times it is not translated as world. It's the encompassment of who you are. There is so much more to beauty then looks and appearance and vanity! And for this particular culture, the emphasis was on this type of beauty. An elaborate braiding of the hair that was deemed as fanciful. Well-off women strove to keep up with the latest fashions and often wore gaudy adornments of varying jewelry in order to draw attention to themselves..

So what is Peter getting at here for a Christian woman? Are you not to fix your hair? Wear any jewelry? I don't think that is what he is saying, because then one could argue that it even extends to clothing! No, what Peter is saying is that what is beautiful about a woman of God, about a Godly wife, is not what is seen on the outside but on the inside! What is your character like towards your husband, towards others? That's the heart of the question. So why does Peter mention the external appearance before the internal beauty?

Well some wives, both then in 1 Peter and now today, might be influenced by the culture to think that they need to work on being pretty enough. **"Maybe if I'm pretty enough, then he will listen to me and believe the Gospel. Maybe if I dress a certain way he will be proud of me, or love me more."** And Peter says, no, don't do that. He's saying don't let your focus be on perfection in those things, always being perfectly put together and consumed with how you look. Peter's saying no, that's what the world wants you to do, that's what a worldly woman does. Instead, let your beauty be revealed through a gentle and quiet spirit.

<u>Now, it's important to note what he means by a gentle and quiet spirit.</u> I don't take this to be a personality trait. Let me say that again, gentle and quiet is not a personality trait, but a condition of the soul. As the church then did, and

so our church does today, we have women all across the spectrum concerning personality. Some will naturally be more fiery, some will naturally just go with the flow (and that's as far as Im going). But think with me as to the context of who Peter is writing to. Sojourners, exiles, those who are living under the probability and expectation of persecution. These women have to be bold and strong in their faith to be married to unbelieving husbands. So the gentle and quiet spirit that defines a beautiful woman of God, that is a woman who is precious in God's sight, what defines her is a gentle and quiet spirit that reveals itself, shows itself, manifests itself through a **supreme** hope in God above all else. So what the text is calling you women to, those who are fiery and those who are more go with the flow is for your hope to be so steadfastly rooted in God that it produces you a tranquil soul, a peaceful soul, a soul that is at rest in her saviour and those qualities are what makes you beautiful! That's what Peter means by a gentle and quiet spirit, a woman whose heart is at peace and has an inner tranquility that reveals her to be beautiful. You will still have strong opinions and a strong personality, but don't let those traits cause you to miss what Peter is commending for your soul. The type of beauty that is of great worth in God's sight. Peter calls it imperishable. This means it doesn't fade. It doesn't go away with age. No, it is the adornment of a woman of God which will never fade away. Her Hope is in her Saviour, this takes us to point #3.

3. Hope - as the means of holiness

5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, **6** just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

As I said previously what makes a woman's adornment beautiful is her confidence and hope in God. Come what may, she is resolved in her hope. And now Peter illustrates that by appealing to the the Holy women in the OT, particularly Sarah, who adorned themselves in this way. And Peter quotes this story of Sarah calling Abraham lord. This was a cultural term for respect in the ANE that Sarah used to embody a position of submission. Akin to a "sir" today. But do you remember when in the OT Sarah called Abraham lord? It's found in Gen. 18 after the 3 visitors appeared to Abraham, let me read it.

Genesis 18:10-12 - **10** The Lord said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. **11** Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. **12** So she laughed to herself: "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?"

This is fascinating to me. Peter doesn't use many of the examples of Sarah's submission to Abraham; when he had her go along with being his sister to fool Abimelech (and that weird situation), or when she up and followed him to a new land. No, Peter pulls an example out of a story where her calling Abraham lord isn't even the main point. It's more of a throw-away comment. But what Peter is showing is that even in this throw-away comment, in the middle of every-day life, her attitude and posture was one of respect and admiration towards her husband.

Christian women, is that true of you? Is that true in everyday life, in the everyday conversations you have with others in how you talk about your husband? Is it a tone of respect, and admiration, and of building-up? Simply put, do you talk about him with others in the same way you would hope he would talk about you with others?

And what Peter tells us characterized these women was their hope. Their hope in God above all.

A Christian woman doesn't put her hope in her husband or the prospect of getting a husband, she does not put her hope in being a mother or the prospect of one day being a mother, she does not put her hope in appearance, her personality, her job, her friends, her family, her health or anything else under the sun. A Christian woman, a woman of God, puts her hope in God alone and because of that she is able to live a holy life. I love what Proverbs 31 has to say about this woman:

Proverbs 31:25 - "Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the time to come."

She can laugh at what is to come because her hope is in God. Mountain top or valley, her hope is in God. Her hope is in her good and sovereign Lord. Is this true of you wives? Is this true of all of us as Christians? Does anxiousness and fear describe you? Is our hope in God or does our hope in God wax and wane depending upon our circumstances.

What's uniquely tied in with this posture of hope is that of fearlessness. This is our last point.

4. Fearlessness - no matter the circumstances

Allow me to read these last two verses because really we need to see how the hope that defines the women of God is fueled by a resolve to not fear.

5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, **6** just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation.

Hope in God above all else will produce in you a fearlessness that adds to your beauty. Peter says you have become children of Sarah when you do what is right and not fear. This is another way of saying children of Abraham, or children of the covenant. Meaning you are a part of God's family when you do these things: do what is right, and not fear any intimidation (turn from faith).

It is as we read from Proverbs 31, this woman does not fear the future but laughs at it. She is reverent, truly fearful, of the only One that matters, God himself. She is not marked by anxiety, by a fear of events and circumstances that are either in her control or outside of it. She trusts God. Her supreme hope in God above all has produced a beautiful fearlessness that leads to confidence, assurance, inner peace, love, joy, and so much more. She is a gift not only to her husband but to her church family.

She is fearless and bold, she is gentle and quiet in spirit, she is confident in God and is not swayed by the culture to believe a lie. Her adornment is recognized not by just physical beauty, but in her spiritual beauty.

As we close, allow me to ask an application question from each point. Husbands, your turn is next week... Four of them.

- 1. Wives, Do you seek to actively affirm and encourage your husband in his role as the spiritual leader of your home? Or have you subtly undermined it.
- 2. Women, Do you seek to cultivate an adornment of spiritual beauty, a gentle and quiet spirit that is precious in God's sight? or is your focus solely caught up in the external?
- 3. Women, (and really all of us) Is your hope in God above all else? or are you easily swayed to place it in something else?

4. Lastly, Does fearlessness describe you? Do you laugh at what might come because your confidence and assurance are found in the sovereign Lord of the universe. The One who knows the beginning from the end and has called you into fellowship with him.

The good news in all of this is that we are not called to live out the Christian life alone. For the wife who feels like she is floundering, to the husband who feels as if he is failing, and to all of us as in here who recognize that we fall short. The good news is the same this week as it will be next week. Our gracious God, through His Son Jesus Christ, has made a way for us to be reconciled to him through faith in the sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This faith unites us to Christ and allows us to live out our God-given callings and roles as the ambassadors of his kingdom. We won't do it perfectly. Men, women, wives, husbands, we all fail. But praise God for repentance that leads to life, and the forgiveness that is found only in Jesus. Would we as his sons and daughters draw near to him for our strength, encouragement, and comfort.

Let's pray.