

# 1 Peter 3:1-5 'Daughters Of Sarah!'

Last week, as we finished off chapter two of 1 Peter, we looked at just one verse: V25, in a sermon I called 'We Have Turned Toward The Shepherd'. "For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd, the Overseer of your souls." And I explained that Peter draws from Isaiah 53:4-6 to make his scriptural point. V6 "we all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way." Yes we are all like sheep heading for eternal destruction before Jesus comes into our life! I used a movie to illustrate the text, we are like sheep stuck in life's storms with the dogs of the world in the devils hands, tearing at our heels, looking to drive us over the edge into the abyss!

But when all seems lost, by God's grace, we hear Jesus say, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Yes like rabid dogs ripping at our life Satan roams around seeking to devour our souls. Job 1:7 and 1 Peter 5:8. When we are in the way of destruction, Satan cares not. But put our shoulder to the plough for Jesus and His gospel, and then the devil unleashes his fury against us!

And I also explained, that we do not "return" as though we were with Jesus before. No, what we do is "turn toward" him. We are "turned" from "going our own way," and "toward" Him and walking in His Way. The way of truth! Yes Jesus is the "Shepherd and Overseer of our souls." And since the passage is all about submitting to those in authority over us, and Jesus is the eternal "Overseer of our souls," if we would see heaven's glories in His presence for eternity, ultimately, we must submit our whole being to him. The Superintendent. The guardian. The "Overseer." And the Saviour of our souls!

And that is where we pick up the text this morning: 1Peter 3:1-5: 'Daughters Of Sarah!'

V1: "Wives in the same way, (or in like manner) be submissive to your husbands." Brothers and sisters, in this modern age in which we live, there is arguably no more contentious teaching or instruction than "wives be submissive to your husbands." Indeed the traditional marriage vows of honour and obey, have all but been cast aside except perhaps by a select few. But the question is; Why does this particular biblical instruction, (perhaps alongside homosexuality but that is for another day), but yes why does this particular command stir up so much contention not only from women, but also from many men in today's church?

Well I'm going to suggest, that it goes to the very heart of the fall of humanity. And God's ensuing curse upon womankind! And there are really two issues which stem from this question. Firstly, it is in the context of explaining our text before us. And secondly, it goes to the heart of the role in general: of women within God's church and society in general! Again the question is: Why is it so contentious, so abhorrent, to so many people in society, let alone within God's church, to place women in subjection to men? Well I'm going to seek to answer this bit later.

But firstly, let's remind ourselves of the flow of peter's instruction and the context of chapter 3:1. But it begins in chapter two verse 13. We are ALL told to submit ourselves to every authority. Whether they be kings or governors. V15: "For it is God's will that by doing good we will silence the foolish talk of the ignorant men." The foolish talk of those who accused believers, of saying that the laws of the land and God, no longer applied to them because they have been set free by Jesus! They accused Paul of teaching. Let's sin all the more so that grace may abound." But he says in Romans 13:1 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except

that which has been established by God.” He even reiterates this. “The authorities that exist have been established by God.” Romans 13:2: “Consequently, he who rebels against the authorities is rebelling against what God has established and those who do so, will bring judgement against themselves.” In regard to the authorities in v17 Peter says “love the brotherhood of believers, show proper respect for everyone. Fear God honour the king.” Even though the king was that murderous Nero at that time! Friends most likely, most of us don't have a problem with THIS teaching.

Next it's v18. “Slaves submit yourselves to your masters with all respect not only to those who are considerate but also to those who are harsh.” And why? Because it is glorifying to God when we endure persecution and hardship for Christ’s Name's sake. Because “to this we are called.” Because “Jesus has set the example” and to do this is to “follow in his steps.” V24: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” So friends again, more than likely, most of us do not have a problem with THIS teaching, (or at least we understand the principle of “enduring’ harsh and unjust treatment) for the sake of God's Name, because that's what Jesus did. And in our heart of hearts, we do want to follow “in His steps” and reflect to the world what He has done for us!

So, All of us must submit to the authorities. Slave must submit to their masters, and now we read ch3:1 “wives in the same way, (or in like manner) submit to your husbands.” But again. This is the instruction, this is the command from God through both Peter and Paul, which brings so much contention, so much objection today. And yet again, the question is: Why? Well Beloved, I'm going to seek to deal with the answer to this question in general. And then explain the passage before us.

But for me to do so, we must first turn to the book of Genesis, chapter 3. But the context: Adam has been created first and he has been given authority by God. We see this in God bringing all the animals to the man and Adam giving them their names. Genesis 2:18-19, then v20: “But for Adam no suitable helper was found.” So God takes a rib from the man and makes a woman from that rib. And when the two come together they are one. “At last this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” Adam says. And I'm going to suggest, that when we single unless God gives us the gift of celibacy, which he gives very rarely, yes may I suggest that when we find that person that we want to spend our lives with, we find a part of ourselves that has been missing!

So Adam has the headship and authority given to him by God, but he casts that authority aside. Which many men also do within their marriage today. Eve is then enticed and seduced by Satan into lusting after that which she was not permitted to have. Rebelling against God, she takes the fruit and eats it!

But friends, the part of the account, which is so often omitted, v6: “She also gave some to her husband *who was with her.*” Brothers and sisters can you see? This is why it's called Adam`s sin. And he even blames his wife for it all. V12: “The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.” So she is no longer “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”; she is “the woman you put here with me.”

But now in v16 within the curse upon the woman, we have the answer to the question which I have asked today. Why is “wives be submissive to husbands” such a problem? “To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pains in child bearing, with pain you will give birth to children.” Now I'm sure every woman would testify to the fact that this has come to pass. And now we have the words, “your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.” But perhaps you are wondering, why would a wife “desiring” her husband, be any kind of curse? Wouldn't the opposite be true? Well the answer is found in the meaning of the word “desire.” It occurs only twice in this form throughout

the whole of the Old Testament. The only other place is Genesis 4:6, within the account of Cain and Abel. You know the story: Cain makes his offering to God with "some of the fruits of the soil" and it is rejected. Then Abel brings "fat portions of the first born of his flock." And this is accepted by God. Brethren, there are those who would tell us that Abel's offering was accepted because it was of animals and Cain's was rejected because he offered only grain.

But of course this had nothing to do with it. God is not a carnivore! Abel offered from "the first born." Cain brought "some of the fruits of the soil." Able offered his best to God. Cain brought whatever he could gather together. As it always is with God, it is all about the heart! No God is not a carnivore with a disdain for vegetarians. It's all about the heart! Genesis 5b-6 "So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast." Yes the heart of the man is revealed. A brooding resentful hate filled heart. V6 "then the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door (and here are the words) and it desires to have you, but you must master it." Yes, "sin was crouching at the door" of Cain's heart. It "desired" to have leadership, it "desired" to hold sway over his life "but he must master it." Or the consequences will be catastrophic! Well sadly, we know who had the victory in this situation. In the very next verse, we learn that Cain lure's his brother out into the field to beat him to death!

So Beloved, as foreign, and as unthinkable as this is in our modern, western, enlightened society, the perpetual curse upon womankind from God, (along with severe pain in childbirth), is the "desiring" in the heart to seek to usurp, to dominate, that God given authoritative role of headship over their husband! And friends, if we seek to read, to understand, and seek to abide by the God breathed word of the Bible, we must confess, that these things continue to remain today, And may I suggest, even in increasing measure. As we see the overturning and the confusing of biblical marriage and the God instructed roles of wives and husbands, and men and women!

But beloved, let me make it very clear: we are not talking here about gifts or abilities. Not intelligence, or wisdom, or maturity or understanding, no we're not talking about any such things that refer in any way to inferiority or importance, no. Only God ordain roles in marriage! No this is not an attack upon God's daughters and my sisters in Christ in anyway. This is simply an exposition of what the God breathed scriptures tell us. And I do think that if we are honest, we will have to admit that this truth, is perpetually being played out in our society today. As the roles of men and women become increasingly confused and twisted. And these things have made their way into God's church! So confused and so twisted has our society become, that they are no longer men and women, males or females. Until people decide what they are! It's an abomination.

It is no wonder then, that the sanctity of marriage and the God ordained pattern for marriage, has been attacked and continues to be attacked from all sides. Yes clearly humanity has lost its way. We seek to cast off and reject all forms of authority over us. Even as we have rebelled against and rejected God!

So in the light of all of these things that we have looked at, let us now return to the text. 1 Peter 3:1-5. V1: "Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands." But what's interesting is that Peter doesn't just speak in general here, even though the biblical principle remains, he gives the wives their reason for seeking to abide by this instruction. "In the same way" that we are to submit to the governing authorities, "to silence the foolish talk of ignorant men," and slaves are to "submit to their masters, whether they are good or bad" because that's what Jesus did, "leaving us an example so that we would walk in his steps," "enduring" hardships for His Name's sake, yes "in the same way, wives submit to your husbands so that if any of them do not believe (or disobey God's) Word they

may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives." The words for "purity and reverence" are chaste and fear. So that purity of heart, and that reverential respect and demeanour before God within their marriage, is going to continue to be the most powerful testimony that believing wives can have to their unsaved husbands!

Again, we really need to look at this in light of chapter 2:13, to find the root and our reason to abide by all of this submission instruction. "Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake." Those difficulties which we place ourselves in and that we face, with God's help, we seek to "endure" "for the Lord's sake." For the sake of His Name. For the sake of His Kingdom. Yes glory be to God! May the whole world praise your Holy Name!

This must be our desire at every level. The governing authorities. Our work situations. Our married life. Our church membership. Why should those believing wives live in such a manner that testifies to a "chaste" heart and "reverential fear" of God? Because they do it unto the Lord, and their greatest desire is to see their husband saved! Now friends, there are other places in the scriptures that speak of the specific roles of men and women in the church, but for the sake of time, I'm not going to do that today. This morning I've simply sought to address those difficulties that our modern western world has, of women submitting to their husbands. By looking at the root cause in Genesis 3, and then almost separately addressing the text that we have before us. Because it's the next in the series. The context of the passage is all about submitting to those in authority over us at every level. While testifying to those same ones with that authority.

And he addresses wives chiefly I believe, because so often the church is made up of women who are trying to drag their husbands along to hear the Word of God! So Peter points out the biblical way for them to win their husbands over. Not berate them into coming along, but by a godly testimony without words. Simply being a faithful daughter of Sarah, a daughter of God! And he continues. "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes." So what is he saying? Is it that women shouldn't dress nicely and get their hair done and wear nice jewellery? No. These are the sorts of things which distinguish hearts of vain-glory. Of excess. And the desire of wanting more. Of not being content with God's provision. It paints the picture of a woman who wants to be the centre of attention. Which is the opposite of modesty and a chaste heart. And also, temple prostitutes were known to be adorned in such a manner, to ply their trade of debauchery! Again, it's all about a modest testimony. To win their husbands over to Christ. Not that they could win their souls, only Jesus could do that, but certainly, the power of their humble witness could shine Christ's light for their husbands to see! V4. "Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great value in God's sight." Did you notice how Peter contrasts that which is beautiful and valuable in the sight of the world, to that which is valuable and beautiful in the sight of God? One is about the outside. What we wear, what we look like, how beautiful we may be. Well the other is all about the inside! One is about the need to be seen. While the other is all about being seen and known by God.

Friends, can you see? Such beauty is unfading. Yes it is timeless. And actually increases with age. It is even as the fountain of youth in the sight of God! Brethren, think of the explosion of plastic surgery today around the world. And all of those deformed faces of, not only celebrities, which abound, but of ordinary men and women. All trying (unsuccessfully of course) trying to put off the inevitable: The wearing out of the body. The sagging and fading of the features and ultimately, that face to face meeting with God! It is modern day lunacy. Solomon put it this way in Ecclesiastes: "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity and chasing after the wind." Friends the truth is, that we will have a better go at catching the wind than stopping time. But the world tries to convince us that we can. There is every exercise

machine that you can imagine. They will stretch you; they will bend you; they will vibrate you in every way imaginable. But ultimately for what? "Vanity, vanity all is vanity and chasing after the wind." It seems that in his old age Solomon knew something that we don't know today! Yes, "which is of great value in God's sight like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her Master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear." Though certainly she was far from perfect, Peter uses Sarah as the example of the mother of all godly women. Because on the whole, she submitted to Abraham even in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances. And she'd submitted to him, as she feared and trusted God!

Ladies, you are her daughters Peter explains, if you seek to follow her godly example. Paul put it this way in Colossians 3:18: "wives submit to your husbands. As is fitting in the Lord." Yes, this is what is fitting. This is what is of great value, in the sight of God. And surely, this is the point of it all. What do we, as men and women value? Do we measure ourselves and the value of the lives upon the scales of society? Or do we weigh up these things in the shadow and the reality of Christ's cross? "Wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord."