

# A Cascade of Glory and Corporate Worship

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[0:00] This morning is 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 2 through 16. At the conclusion of the reading I'll declare this is the word of the Lord and the church in joyful response to his revelation will respond with thanks be to God.

Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I deliver 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, but 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 for woman, but woman for 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.

[1:10] Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman. For as woman was made for 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 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. This is the word of the Lord. Heavenly Father, we ask for your help right now as we seek to submit ourselves under the authority of your word.

Lord, this, as Jordan just prayed, is a confusing text, is a controversial text, and it is your word. You are the living God who speaks. And so we ask, Lord, that we would give ourselves to this word like we do every single week, that we'd give ourselves to this word.

Would you help us to understand what it means and how it applies to our lives today in 21st century America? God, do this for your glory, and that we would be transformed into your image, we pray in Jesus' name.

[2:26] Amen. You may be seated. Good morning, everyone. My name is Mike, one of the pastors here at Shoreline. And if you're visiting here this morning, you're thinking, what in the world did I just get into with this passage here?

Thank you that you're here. We're glad that you're worshiping with us. And yeah, we're excited to continue to see what God has for us this morning. Now I want to ask, have you ever, no, you don't have to show hands or anything, but have you ever been at a wedding where the best man or the maid of honor speech became more about the best man or the maid of honor than the bride and the groom?

I have. It wasn't any of your weddings. None of you were the ones giving the speech. But I've been at such a wedding, and I'm going to tell you, it felt awkward. You know, and I'm sure I wasn't alone and sitting there thinking to myself, like, what are you doing, man?

This whole thing has become about you, but it's not actually about you. Like, it's about the newly married couple, you know? Everyone's gathered in that room on that special day to honor and to

celebrate the bride and the groom.

So it's completely out of place for anyone to attempt to steal the attention and the honor that belongs to them. Well, actually, everyone ought to be there to celebrate what God has done by uniting that couple in marriage.

[3:52] And that gets more to the point of what I think was going on here in the Corinthian church in this controversial passage in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16.

So please turn there in your Bibles if you haven't done so already. And if you don't have a Bible, there's Bibles available on the back table, bookmarked to today's passage. Feel free to keep a copy as a gift to you.

Now, we're walking through today, or we're walking through this year, the book of 1 Corinthians, considering the church's call to display Christ in all things.

And the title of today's sermon on head coverings is A Cascade of Glory and Corporate Worship. That's what I've titled this sermon.

And I actually hope you're even more confused by that title and may be a little intrigued. Now, today, we are advancing forward into the next major unit of Paul's letter to the Corinthian church.

[4:50] So far, from a 30,000-foot view, Paul has covered the topics of unity in the church in the first few chapters. And then he transitioned to holiness in the church. That was chapters 5 and chapter 6.

And then he moved to a chapter on marriage and singleness in chapter 7. And then where we've just been is three chapters on the nature of Christian freedom, specifically as it pertained to the issue of food offered to idols.

And we've seen time and time again in this letter so far that as Paul addresses each issue, he makes a beeline for the gospel, right?

He goes to the message of Christ and him crucified. He shows how gospel doctrine ought to produce the beauty of gospel culture in the life of the church and into each of these problem areas. And wonderfully, we're going to see more of the same as we progress into the next section of the letter. So let's do that. The first point here today is the progression to corporate worship.

[5:55] Now look at verse 2 in your Bibles with me. Paul says, Now I'm first struck by Paul's encouragement here to the Corinthians, even as he's about to go correcting them yet again.

Now if you feel, if you've been part of this series, you feel that. The correction, it just keeps coming. They had a lot of problems in the Corinthian church. But if you recall, this is exactly how Paul started the whole letter.

With a ready word of authentic encouragement. Paul had, if you remember, he had thanked God for pouring out grace upon the Corinthian church, for confirming, as Paul said, the testimony about Christ, the gospel among them.

So here, when Paul refers to the traditions, he's probably talking about the gospel and the teachings of Christ as passed down from the apostles to the early church, and then the ways in which the saints went about attending to the gospel, attending to the teachings of Christ, particularly their conduct in gathered or corporate worship.

And we know that because this becomes the point or the subject all the way until the end of chapter 14. So from right now to the end of chapter 14, Paul is talking about corporate worship.

[7:18] And that's going to bring us as a church through the month of June. And then after that, we're going to break for a summer series in the Psalms, which I'm really excited about. You all get to hear from everyone else. The other men in the church, not me.

Now, Paul's progression from the topic of food offered to idols, which we were just in, to corporate worship, it makes sense considering last week how he concluded.

Do you remember? He said, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. So it's fitting that Paul would shift now to corporate worship in which Christians gather for the primary aim of giving glory and praise to God.

That's what we've been doing this morning. And it's been awesome. I hope you've been able to enter into that with us. So Paul begins his discussion on corporate worship by praising the Corinthians for, by and large, now there's some hyperbole here, but for, by and large, following his

instructions for worship.

Now, the very fact that Paul is giving glory, we might say, to the Corinthians, that he's praising them, he's giving glory to the Corinthians, I think that is a subtle hint of the purpose of his instructions that are going to follow.

[8:29] Okay, so Paul begins with praise, but then he goes on to respond to a problem that had emerged, surprise, surprise, during corporate worship gatherings in Corinth.

And so we turn to the problem of head coverings in Corinth. Now, Paul states the problem in verse 5. So look in your Bibles at verse 5.

He says, And again, the problem is clear from verse 13.

So look at verse 13. He says, So the problem in the church in Corinth was that some women were praying and prophesying in gathered worship without proper adornment on their heads.

Now, this is where you say, What in the world are you talking about? You can say it if you want. I mean, go ahead. And this is where it's helpful to highlight a few key differences between our 21st century American culture and 1st century Greco-Roman culture, right?

[9:37] This is the context in which Paul's writing. In the 1st century, both in Jewish culture and also just throughout the Roman Empire, women, married or unmarried, would wear head coverings.

That was likely a veil or a shawl. And this was culturally appropriate. And in a culture that was far more driven by honor and shame than ours, there are cultures today, cultures that Randy's been in, that are still more honor-shame-based.

Ours is not so much. This was a sign of respect. It was also a sign of respectability. See, the head covering, it signaled to others that that woman belonged either to her father, if unmarried, or to her husband, if married, and therefore it showed her respect for male authority and her respectability in that culture.

And for a woman not to wear such a covering, that would signal a subversion to male authority, or perhaps it perhaps even may have had sexual connotations suggesting that the woman was sexually available.

Okay? Prostitutes were actually known in that day for letting their hair down in public. So why would women in the Corinthian church worship without a head covering?

[10:54] Paul does not explicitly tell us. But it's possible that some women, and this is, you know, we're following a section on freedom, on Christian freedom. It's possible that some women, as one commentator writes, wanted to break free from more conventional roles or constraints on the basis of gospel freedom and gender equality.

Now, these women may have desired to send the message, with good intentions perhaps, that they were free in Christ from the social constraints of their day. But we see here in this text that Paul does not agree with their conclusion.

He doesn't agree with their choice. Now, in order for us to understand, how does this passage written to the first century church, how does it apply to us today, 2,000 years later, in the modern American culture, we need to pay close attention to how Paul addresses the problem.

Okay? Paul's words, you probably know this, but Paul's words in this text have been interpreted many ways. But we seek today, I hope you do, I think I can say this confidently, that we seek today as a church, as always, to rightly interpret this passage in its context.

In other words, we want to uncover the meaning of the text to the original audience, and then we seek to translate that forward rightly, faithfully, to our lives today.

[12:17] You guys want to do that today? That's what I want us to do. That's what we should be doing every day when we study God's word. Now, clearly, if you look around, Shoreline does not enforce the use of head coverings.

Seems pretty obvious. But there are churches today that still do. However, I just want to say, in our culture today, in our context, I think it's less likely to find a church that enforces head coverings than it is to find a church that views Paul's instructions here as entirely a matter of first century culture, and therefore completely irrelevant to us.

I think that's more likely. It's more likely to find a church like the culture around us that increasingly blurs gender distinction and casts off the God-given authority structure of the church and the home that we see in Scripture.

So if I'm weighting this sermon towards a response to that side, it's because I think that's the ditch that we're more likely as a culture to fall into, and therefore the one that we all need to be better equipped to respond to and avoid.

Okay, so let's turn now to consider the principles with which Paul responds. The principles with which Paul responds. Now as we look at how Paul actually responds, we ought to be immediately struck by the fact that he begins his response by establishing the theological basis for his instructions.

[13:45] His appeal, his appeal here to the Corinthian church, it's not first to cultural norms, it's not first to social norms, it is to biblical theology, a theology of the relationship among and between God and man.

So we call what we see here in the first verse here, I put verses four through six, should say verses three through six, the principle of headship. And so I want you to look in your Bibles at verse three. Verse three. Paul says, 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. Now those who claim that Paul is appealing only to social and cultural factors, they gloss over what appears here to be an obvious theological reality that grounds the entire discussion.

See, Paul shows here how the relationship between man and woman is similar to, not the same, similar to the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son.

[15:00] There is a hierarchy, not of equality, but of authority. God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. And man is the head of woman.

Now, if those words sound off-putting to you, I understand. But I want to ask you, if you're here and that sounds offensive, off-putting, to press in and give serious thought and consideration to Paul's argument.

Not for my sake, but for your sake. This is the word of God. For the sake of the Lord, whose unchanging word this is, I just want to ask all of us to press in here and try to work to understand what Paul's saying.

Now what immediately came to mind for me, and I think probably for a lot of you, in hearing this headship language is Ephesians chapter 5, 22 through 23. That great passage on marriage in which Paul compares the relationship between a husband and a wife to the relationship between Christ and the church.

Right? Just as Paul says in Ephesians 5, just as Christ is the head of the church, so too is the husband the head of the wife. And I think that parallel to Ephesians 5 helps us in our understanding here of 1 Corinthians 11.

[16:13] Although I want to say, while Paul is, in Ephesians 5, Paul is exclusively talking about the marriage relationship, husbands and wives. Here in 1 Corinthians 11, he is not only talking about the marriage relationship.

So all throughout this text here, Paul is using the word man and woman. Okay? Even here in verse 3, it's man and woman. Now the ESV opted for wife and for husband.

We'll see why, I think. But as we progress through the text, we will see Paul's instructions are especially applicable in the marriage relationship to husbands and wives. But they are also more generally applicable to men and to women within the church.

We just need to be careful how we apply the principles. Okay? That's a lot of side comment.

There's a lot going on here. But what is Paul actually saying in verse 3?

Well, he's saying first that God the Father is the head of Jesus Christ, the Son. It is from the Father that the Son derives his authority.

[17:17] It is to the Father that the Son willingly submits himself. Now we know the Son is not inferior to the Father. Indeed, they are one. Right?

Of one essence. They are equal in worth and in dignity. And yet, Jesus Christ willingly, humbly submits himself to the loving authority and will of the Father.

And this, this was most dramatically, most clearly seen in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Jesus Christ in which he surrendered himself to the Father's will for our good, for the redemption of mankind.

Now similar to God being the head of Christ, though not the same, Christ is the head of man. Jesus Christ has authority.

Now seeing here, this was not planned. We were talking all about this this morning in our equipping class about Jesus Christ's authority. He has authority over demons and over sickness and death and over the law and he has authority over man.

[18:21] And man is called to humbly and willingly submit to Christ's loving authority. Now while Christ and man are not equal in essence and glory like the Father and the Son, Christ has bestowed his divine glory upon mankind both in creation and in redemption.

We're going to talk a little bit more about that later. God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man and Paul says man is the head of women. Man is the head of woman.

Now like I said, this is primarily seen in the marriage relationship which is why the ESV translates the words woman and man as wife and husband. Husbands are given authority over their wives and wives are called to submit to that authority but listen, listen, the authority that God calls husbands to exercise over their wives is a humble, gentle, loving, self-giving, sacrificial authority in the pattern of Jesus Christ.

It's an authority not to be wielded in selfishness but for the good and the flourishing of the wife and that is to be the nature of all godly authority.

See, our culture is extremely skeptical of authority, often despising it, seeking to get out from under it and that's in a large part, let's be honest, because authority lamentably has so often been corrupted and used to exploit and oppress others for self-serving means.

[20:01] But authority, whether of the home or of the church or of the state, is given and established by God for the flourishing of humanity. Now I want to read two scripture passages, one from the mouth of Jesus and one from King David that underscore the nature and purpose of godly authority.

Matthew chapter 20 verse 25 through 28 but Jesus called them, he's talking to his disciples and he said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them, it shall not be so among you but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

That's godly authority shown to us by Jesus Christ himself who became a servant to mankind. Now here's another passage, I love this passage, this is David, he says, the God of Israel has spoken, the rock of Israel has said to me, when one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, picture this in your minds, okay, he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

Church, this is the kind of godly authority that I want to be characteristic of me, to exercise servant-hearted authority with the self-giving love of Christ for the flourishing of those under my leadership.

So help me God. Fellow elders, fellow husbands especially, but also anyone in this room that carries authority over others, whether as a parent or a supervisor or an officer, may we exercise this kind of humble, loving authority for the good of those under us.

[22:16] And wives, this passage is calling you to view submission to husbands not as restrictive, but as living out your Christian freedom. Christ, who was perfectly free, willingly submitted himself to the loving authority of the Father, and he calls you to willingly submit yourself to the loving authority of your husband, choosing to constrain your freedom for the sake of love and respect.

Now isn't this just another application of what we talked about last week regarding Christian freedom. We said last week that the highway of Christian freedom, the highway is to please others for the praise of God in the pattern of Christ.

And so both those who exercise authority and those who submit to it live out this same overarching principle just in different and complementary ways. So much more could be said and it's already getting late but that's the headship principle and I hope you see here how beautiful and good it is meant to be by God's design.

Now flowing out of that theological basis, Paul goes on to say in verse 4, every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.

Now for a man to cover his head in first century Greco-Roman culture, that reflected a pagan practice in worship and also signaled social elitism.

[23:48] Only men of status wore a toga which they would then use to cover their heads. Now based on the thrust of Paul's instructions though, this doesn't seem to have been an actual problem in the Corinthian church but he uses it as a foil for what he says next.

But he's saying here in verse 4, for a man to cover his physical head, it dishonors his metaphorical head, that is Christ, it's dishonoring to Christ. But, verse 5, every wife who prays or prophesies with their 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. So you see the honor-shame emphasis here.

For a woman to defy the culturally accepted means of showing respectability, of showing honor to authority, by not covering her physical head, this was dishonoring to her metaphorical head, which is especially her husband, also male leadership in general.

And so Paul here, with a bit of sarcasm, he calls the bluff of these women. He's saying, hey, if you're not going to cover your head, why not just go all the way? Right? Like, why not just cut off your hair and shave your head?

[25:05] Now, in our culture, it is more socially acceptable for men to have long hair, for women to have short hair. In the first century, that was not at all the case. So Paul is suggesting here that just as you would be disgraced by having no hair, you ought to feel disgraced by not covering your head as is proper.

So we see Paul, he lays out the theological basis of the headship principle, then he takes that, he applies it to the first century setting in Corinth, and then, still arguing now from theology, Paul makes another appeal, this time to creation.

look at verse 7, 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 for man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. And again we ask, Paul, what in the world are you talking about?

It's okay to be confused here. Now Paul is pointing us back with his language, all the way back to the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2. We read in Genesis 1, then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[26:31] So God created man in his own image, and the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them. We learn at the beginning that God created male and female in his image, in his likeness, and therefore all people are born with equal worth and value and dignity and honor before God.

Yeah, that is a good spot for an amen. This has so many implications for different things going on in our culture today. All people are born with equal worth and value and dignity, and at the same time, we learn in the very next chapter of Genesis that God first created the man Adam, and it says in Genesis 2.15, he put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

So he gave him authority to rule over creation as God's representative on earth, but God said it is not good that the man should be alone.

Amen? I will make him a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Now this is why Paul says what he says here. Man is the image glory of God, but woman

is the glory of man.

[28:01] He is not at all denying that there is equality of worth and value between the genders, and he's going to make that clear in just a few verses, but rather he is describing, as one source puts it, a beautiful continuity of God's image spilling forward in the creation order.

Consider what's going on here at the creation of the world. The eternally existing God of the universe who dwells, as Paul says, in unapproachable light, is freely bestowing the glory, the honor, the dignity, the beauty of his nature and likeness upon man.

That should just blow our minds right there. And just as that glory cascades down from God to man, so it then cascades down from man to woman.

But neither man nor woman are supposed to hold on to that glory, are they? They must instead give it back, right, from woman to man and man to God to whom all the glory and the praise belongs.

Now this is the beautiful order of creation. It is a never-ending cascade of glory, originating in the Lord of glory and flowing down to man and to woman and then ultimately back up to God.

[29:23] And this principle was evident in King David's prayer that we looked at before from 1 Chronicles 29. He said, yours, O Lord, is the glory and the majesty for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours.

And you are exalted as what? As head over all. Both the riches and honor come from you. In your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And what does David do with that?

He says, now we thank you, our God and praise your glorious name. Here's the king of Israel, pushing praise back up to God. Praise your glorious name. Now, of course, the creation order of Genesis 1 and 2 quickly becomes corrupted by man's fall in Genesis 3.

And so instead of being glory givers, mankind becomes glory grabbers. Right? God's intention was that man would never keep the glory for himself, but would always be giving it to someone else and ultimately back up to him.

So you see, by becoming glory grabbers, we've actually dammed up the flow of glory. And that's led to the eliciting of wrath from God instead of glory.

[30:39] But gloriously, friends, God didn't leave us in that pitiful state, did he? For no other reason, for no other reason, then God's boundless love for mankind, he planned our redemption and then Christ went and carried it out.

And how did he do that? By submitting himself, again, to the Father's will, for the Father's glory, Christ emptied himself, bearing our disgrace, our dishonor upon the cross, so that we could be forgiven eternally and reconciled to God.

And in doing that, that glory dam that we had erected with our sinful desires, that was destroyed. And the cascading flow of glory had burst forth again in the mighty power of the cross.

So now, church, saints, you who have been made holy in Christ, your redeemed hearts are no longer grabbing glory, but giving glory, giving it away to others, and then ultimately back up to God. God. So Paul is calling us here again to be who we already are in Christ. No longer glory grabbers, but glory givers, pushing praise away from self, and ultimately back up to God, not making the best man speech about ourselves.

[31:59] Right? Now, this principle, it shows up especially in the marriage relationship. according to God's created design, now restored in the gospel.

The glory of God is bestowed upon the husband, who through his loving leadership, bestows that glory on his wife, who through her willing submission, gives it right back.

Right? And in this way, God ultimately receives the glory. Now, that same principle, it's also lived out in the relationship between male elders and the congregation.

So, unlike what some of the Corinthian women may have thought, the gospel doesn't do away with the created order. It restores it. It gives it all the more beauty and glory.

Now, the way that glory is given away from man to woman, from woman to man, that takes on different culturally relevant forms, but the principle is still the same.

[33:00] Now, for the Corinthians, in their place, in their time, Paul concludes based on this principle, in verse 10, that is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head.

Now, the text literally says to have authority over her head. Now, those that hold to an egalitarian perspective, have you heard the word egalitarian before?

That is, those that don't believe there to be a distinction between the roles that men and women ought to hold, especially as it relates to leadership in the church, that's what egalitarian is, they believe that the authority Paul speaks of here is the woman's authority to pray or prophesy in gathered worship, or the woman's authority to adorn herself in what is proper.

Now, that view didn't exist until the mid-20th century. Now, that in and of itself does not discredit any view, but we should always be cautious when arriving at conclusions that contradict historic Christian orthodox beliefs.

But more importantly, church, the Bible is the inspired, infallible word of God. And so therefore, as I said earlier, we should always seek as much as we possibly can to let the text inform its own meaning and not let culture and the opinion of culture decide what the text of the word of God actually means.

[34:25] At this church, we believe that a faithful reading of scripture points us to a complementarian perspective. Complementarian. That is, that male and female are equal in worth and value but differ by God's good design in roles and responsibilities.

Now, in the case of this verse, what Paul seems to be saying here, his clear conclusion for the Corinthians is that the women ought to wear head coverings, which in their culture was a symbol of the God-given authority placed over them and their willing submission to it.

And then Paul goes in and throws in yet another confusing statement. Look at the end of verse 10. So Paul says, that is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels.

Oh, yeah, of course, Paul, because of the angels. I mean, here's the third principle here. Angels. Angels.

Because of the angels. Now listen, like every aspect of the text we've already walked through, there has been no shortage of commentary written about this confusing little phrase. I did a lot more reading this week than in most weeks.

[35:40] Now we know, though, from several, we just look at scripture, okay? Forget what man has to say for a second. When we look at scripture, we see several other passages in both New Testament and the Old Testament in which angels are observing the worship of the saints.

Okay, scripture actually uses the witness of the angelic host as motivation for us towards holiness. Now it's possible, I can't say conclusively, it's possible that Paul wants the Corinthians to recall that great vision of Isaiah in the throne room of God.

Isaiah was transported in this vision before God's throne, God who is high and lifted up and there in Isaiah's vision he sees the angels, the seraphim worshiping in God's presence and what were they doing?

They were covering their faces, they were covering their feet and they were declaring, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

Perhaps Paul wants the Corinthians to have that vision before them of the breathtaking glory of God Almighty and of the worship of the angels who cover their faces and feet as a reverent symbol of God's supreme authority.

[36:58] Those same angels, Paul may be suggesting, they are witnessing our worship here on earth. And he's asking, do they observe a worship service on earth that reflects the one that is always going on in heaven?

It's all about the glory of God. And in particular, saints, when we gather together right here in this space, our foremost aim ought to be giving glory and honor and praise to the one for whom it is ultimately due.

We do that here through our reverent and honoring worship to the Lord. And so with this little phrase because of the angels, I think Paul is just reinforcing his point. Don't be glory grabbers, be glory givers.

That's what he's saying. may we not be attention seeking when we gather here together. Right? In the way that we dress, in the way that we speak, in the way that we act, in the way that we give attention to what's going on here, we ought to be expressing our burning desire to give God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ all of the glory and the praise that he is due.

So Paul has appealed here to three theological principles in his response, headship, creation, and angels, and he concludes with two more principles, and I promise it will be much faster than all the ones that came before.

[38:25] He appeals to common sense, good old common sense. Look at verse 13. Paul says, 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?

Now these three verses they show us that what Paul is instructing to the first century church should come as no surprise to them. He makes a common sense appeal assuming that they're going to conclude the same thing based on what is plainly evident from nature he says now when Paul uses the word nature I think you know I think of like oh yeah the animal kingdom and like the plants and stuff that's not what he's talking about he's talking about the ordering of how things are okay the ordering of how things are that's as one commentator put it now another wrote this I think this is really helpful it seems that creation and culture coalesce here nature functions as an instructor that teaches human beings about distinctions between men and women the distinctions are echoed in culture so based on what is plainly the ordering of how things are as revealed in nature echoed in culture common sense then Paul is saying that would lead the Corinthians to conclude again in their place in their time that women ought to wear head coverings in corporate worship and finally Paul makes an appeal to church practice and unity he concludes in verse 16 if anyone is inclined to be contentious we have no such practice nor do the churches of God like Paul's saying don't just consider the way things are in nature and culture consider the way things are in every other church maintain he's saying maintain the gospel traditions passed down to you in unity with the other churches now earlier I said that we should be cautious when we arrive at conclusions that differ from historic orthodox Christian beliefs and I think this verse right here provides a basis for that now of course there are many churches lamentably that lose their way that deviate from the gospel of Jesus Christ whether in doctrine or in practice but if listen if we ever see ourselves behaving in ways that are inconsistent with other faithful gospel preaching gospel practicing churches then we should probably check ourselves okay so that's how Paul responds the principles of headship creation angels common sense and church practice and unity and what I've gone to lengths I think to show you that his argument is primarily theological but it is also cultural to be sure so do women need to wear head coverings today we have concluded no right in light of the very different cultural context in which we find ourselves for a woman to wear a head covering does not at all mean the same thing that it did in first century Corinth but that doesn't mean that doesn't mean we throw out the theological principles of Paul's argument and I've been trying to underscore that throughout the sermon we need to uphold the theological principles and seek to apply them in faithful ways to scripture and in ways that are relevant to our social and cultural setting now I skipped over two very important verses that we're going to conclude here with see Paul smells out a possible misunderstanding of his argument he sees that somebody could take what he's saying and unfortunately misuse it and that would lead to abuse and so in verses 11 and 12 we see his preclusion of misunderstanding nevertheless

[42:35] Paul says 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 you see Paul's instructions might lead some to believe that men are superior that men are imbued with greater dignity than women and Paul says by no means by no means those that believe those that believe Paul was misogynistic they gloss over again details of the text I think they allow culture to interpret scripture and not the other way around but this verse here it highlights what we saw in chapter 7 in Paul's discussion on marriage and sickle he has a radical mutuality in his instructions for men and women especially as it pertains to marriage

Paul would have been labeled as a progressive in his day but Paul was simply driving the church back to God's word as made all the more clear in the gospel of Jesus Christ so Paul is saying here do not misunderstand me do not misuse my teaching to assert male dominance or male superiority look Eve might have been made from Adam but ever since then man comes from woman right male and female alike are made in the image and the likeness of God male and female are interdependent they need each other we need each other we complement each other and ultimately the beautiful ways in which men and women complement each other it all redounds to the praise and the glory of God from whom are all things complementarianism okay the belief that men and women are made with equal worth but differ in roles and responsibilities complementarianism sorry complementarianism itself is never the cause for suppression or abuse of women okay evil desires in the hearts of men are sinful cravings for power or for dominance or control that result in a twisting of the biblical principles that are meant for the flourishing of humanity that is the cause of those things okay so may we as a church may we not deviate from God's good design like we should be giving ourselves more fully to it and when we do that church when we operate according to God's good order he receives the glory and that's the central emphasis of this passage okay it's not really about head coverings it's not really about headship it's not really about the equality yet distinctiveness of the genders

I mean it is but it's about something more fundamental and something greater the glory of God and of Christ Paul's solution this is the last thing I'm going to say Paul's solution writes one author assumes that no human being ever keeps glory for oneself glory is always on its way to someone else and ultimately on its way back to God no human being is truly worthy of glory except one Jesus Christ is the embodiment of both the glory of God and the glory of man That is why he alone can his son and daughters to glory please go with me in prayer