

***Passing the Baton 12
Biblical Submission
'Leaning on the Beloved'
February 23rd 2008***

*'Jesus! I am resting, resting
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.
Thou has bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul
For by Thy transforming power
Thou hast made me whole'*

That is the first verse of an old hymn by a lady called Jean Piggott - the second is likewise

*O how great Thy loving kindness
vaster, broader than the sea!
O how marvellous Thy goodness
lavished all on me!
Yes, I rest in Thee beloved,
know what wealth of grace is Thine
know Thy certainty of promise,
and have made it mine'.*

The love of Jesus and for Jesus is my passion and I make no apologies. I will do my best to stay businesslike in this teaching, but as I went on working on it, I became caught up with the Beloved...so I may drift a little from my intention which is to study Biblical Submission!

What you think about God is the single most important thing in your life.

Introduction:

Following the last teaching on the role of women, it seemed logical to me and the Holy Spirit (as Paul would say) to follow on with Biblical Submission and then Authority and Leadership in the Church. They seem to hang together somehow.

If the Lord will, I shall be doing a little more on '***New for Old,***' this afternoon, which I touched on at the last Passing the Baton. So, biblical submission -

Biblical submission:

In this teaching I will cover five areas of submission:

*Submission to God
Submission to Christ
Submission within the family, i.e. husband, wife, children
Submission to authorities, i.e. government*

Submission to leadership in the church

As always, we must start with the God who created us. He must be the starting point and the finishing point for any study - the A - Z, the Alpha and the Omega.

Essentially if we get our relationship with **Him** right, everything else will follow. But if we can't, or won't, submit to Him, we will not submit to anything or anyone else.

Conversely, we may actually be in fear of man, and submit to them rather than God, in that case, we need to get our fear in the right place - fear God and you won't fear anything else. We usually fall into one of these two categories, or pendulum swing somewhere in between.

Before we go any further, this teaching does not set aside the Father-heart of God, His outpoured love for us. If you like, this is the other side of the coin. Proverbs 1:7 says '*The fear of the Lord, this is the beginning of wisdom*'. We must take the whole council of God, not just the strawberries, we need our greens as well. Puts iron in us. I may be going to say some things which you find hard - as Joyce Meyer would say, we're getting backbone not wishbone! And as Graham would say 'God is looking for soldiers, not chocolate ones that melt at the first sign of heat'.

I sense I need to say at the outset that this is a **Bible study**. We are going to look at what various words mean and we are going to study to see how they apply to us. God's word is a mirror which shows us where we are out of alignment, where we need to make mid-course corrections. We do not come to it to criticise it, or twist it to make it mean what we want it to mean, but to be instructed by it.

We need to listen with a view to *obedience*. The Greek word is hupakoe. '*If you love me*' Jesus said '*You will obey Me*'. John 14:23. Loving obedience is what we are after.

If you are not up for this, please don't go any further because what I have to say today is serious, loving, but serious. Paul speaking to the Ephesian church says in chapter 5 verse 14

'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light'.

The inerrancy of the Bible, the Word of God.

There are various things which we must consider before we look at the whole issue of submission. Perhaps the first is the question of the inerrancy of the Bible, the Word of God.

If we belong to the camp which says 'that was just Paul's opinion' or 'I don't believe the creation account' or 'creation is not incompatible with evolution' or whatever, we are already putting ourselves and our understanding *above* the revealed word of God, and incidentally, putting ourselves on the wrong side of God. So we need to settle it at the outset, the Maker's instructions contained in this book are for us - all of them! Genesis to maps! Scripture for that statement -

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *'All scripture is given by inspiration of God [literally God breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.'*

We must believe, therefore, that the Bible is God's Word and that it is without error and is historically and scientifically true. As such, it is the *supreme authority* for both life and conduct. We may not necessarily understand it all, but by faith, we accept its inerrancy. God is more than able to protect His word.

The Bible is called 'the Canon' of scripture. The word 'canon' comes from the Greek word 'kanon', which had a very specific meaning. It was a straight edge used in building in the ancient world, a measuring rod or ruler. It was used by a surveyor to see if a builder's wall was straight, upright and correctly proportioned. It was equivalent to today's plumb line or spirit-level. The word came to mean a standard rule by which things were judged. So the Word is a straight edge against which we should test our lives. As we come to it, we not only read it, it reads us.

Roger Price has some stuff on this, problem passages, how we know the inerrancy of the Bible etc., if you really want to get down to the nuts and bolts. If you are interested let me know and I will tell you how to get hold of the tapes or CD's. It is not my intention to do an apologetic today! Which in this context is a defence of something in speech or writing.

It is through the Word of God that we become mature believers, who are stable and content, who have peace of mind, self-control and poise, no matter what the circumstances. The Word of God is medicine we cannot afford to stop taking on a daily basis, if we do, our lives will reflect it.

The Word of God is the essential ingredient in a Christian's life. It is the key that will unlock everything we need to know as believers, and it will enable us become what the Father intended us to be, fully mature sons.

We may have certain ideas, but what we need to do is take the scripture and lay it alongside. If there is a discrepancy, *we* must change *our* ideas in accordance with God's revealed Word.

Discipleship:

One of the purposes of this course of 'Passing the Baton' is to bring the Word of God alive, to you, so that you may develop a hunger and thirst to understand the Bible for yourself and be *'workmen approved, rightly dividing the word of truth.'* 2 Timothy 2:15.

Another purpose is to raise up not just followers or believers, but disciples. The definition of a disciple is a 'learner'. In Jesus' day His disciples were students and apprentices of the Master.

A disciple's overriding aim and burning desire was to be exactly like his master in thought, word and behaviour. Through memorisation of his master's teaching, and through imitation

of his lifestyle the disciple became qualified to become his teacher's reliable witness. To us, being a disciple of Jesus means learning *and following* His teaching, and seeking to become like Him. Perhaps today you will want to make the transition from a follower or a believer, to being a disciple? So, Biblical Submission -

Though this is ostensibly a teaching about Biblical Submission, it is also a trumpet call. A call to become all that Jesus won for us on the cross, to become a people of power and authority, under the authority of the Lord of Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, the Coming King. So, like John the Baptist, I say -

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight'. Matthew 3:3.

What on earth are we here for?

There is an urgency for us to *understand* God's eternal purposes in creating a people for Himself. Why we are here. We aren't saved just to hang on somehow until we can get into heaven. That is not the purpose of salvation. We are His 'ecclesia' - His called out ones. A congregation or church from the Greek word *ekklēsia* which means an 'assembly': an assembly of the citizens of a state, from *ekkalein* '***to call to come out, summon, from kalein*** ***to call***'. That is the dictionary definition. We are called out for a specific purpose.

We are ones 'called out', we are summoned, to the court of the King, to live with different values in a different Kingdom. Jesus said *'My Kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.'* John 18:36.

We are not called to be like them to win them! We are called to be different, live differently so that we might be a light to the people around us. We are called into something so glorious, so utterly amazing, that everything else pales into insignificance. We are called into a personal relationship with the God who not only created us, and Who holds the very universe together by the power of His word, but Who has had an eternal plan for our destiny from before He created the world. That's exciting as far as I am concerned.

Before the foundation of the earth Father had designs on ***you!*** He planned to produce an eternal companion for His Son - ***you***. All of His planning is coming to culmination in the Bride of Christ, of which you are a part. Shouldn't we be the most surprised and delighted people on the face of the earth?

'Coming ready or not...'

At the beginning of 2007, God spoke a word to me for His bride. It was ***'Coming, ready or not'***. He said that His church had been playing hide and seek with Him, running away from Him, not taking Him seriously, and that He was 'Coming, ready or not'.

Though there was a light hearted tone to His voice, I knew that He really, really, meant it. That it was time for the Bride to begin to stir herself and realise, He really, really, is coming back for a glorious bride *'without spot or wrinkle.'* Ephesians 5:27.

There is an urgency for us to *rise up* and become all that Jesus calls us to be and that He won for us on the cross, to go in and possess, for us to become not just believers or followers, but disciples of Jesus.

It's urgent!

There is an urgency to *see* where we are right now in the purposes of God and to understand the times and the seasons. To be sons of Issachar, who knew the times and the seasons and to be like the Bereans, who searched the scriptures. (I'll leave you to do some digging to find out where those two references come from, your key words are Issachar and Bereans - one Old Testament, one New.)

It is fair to say that in most churches the doctrine of imminency is not taught. By imminency I mean the soon appearing, sudden, Parousia, or coming of the Lord Jesus for His church. If we are not aware that this could happen at any moment, it leads to a casual mindset. 'Tomorrow will do.' 'The return of Jesus is years away.' I came into Christianity with the doctrine of imminency and it has put an edge on me to be aware of the signs of the times and to walk closely with the Lord anticipating His soon arrival and the catching away of the Bride.

A New Era:

We are in a completely new Era in God. There has been a paradigm shift in the heavenlies, it is required that the Bride waken now and make herself ready for the coming of her Bridegroom. (Acetate old woman/young girl)

There was a film years ago entitled '*When the kissing has to stop*' and you could say we are in that now. It is time for the Bride to recognise her Bridegroom and respond to Him. It's time for the Bride to start getting excited about her wedding day - preparing her trousseau, anticipating the rest of her life with her Beloved, dreaming a little about her wedding day and the honeymoon!

Those of you who were here last time will remember we looked at the role of the Bride which is one of responder to the initiative of the Bridegroom. We looked at what it meant, that we are called the Bride because we are meant to be in the female, or responding, part of the relationship as Israel was to God as their Husband.

The essence of femininity is the ***ability or the capacity to respond***. This is why the church is called the bride of Christ. Both male and female in the Church are required to be ***responders to God's initiative***. Therefore, He calls Himself the husband of Israel and the Bridegroom of the Church. It's relational. God, in His relationship to the church, is the initiator, as He was to His chosen people Israel, to whom He was 'husband'. This describes relationship. Our part is only ever, to respond to His initiative. Not to harden our hearts or be rebellious, but to lovingly respond to His initiatives with us.

We have experienced over the past, maybe 10 years, or more, the 'Toronto' blessing - God coming down and touching the dry spots - radically. Renewal, revival, call it what you will. A revelation of His Father heart. Sometimes, though, we get 'stuck'. We get stuck even in

current blessings, like Toronto. Or maybe it has passed us by completely, and we never knew about it or understood what God's purpose was behind it all. Perish the thought, some didn't even believe it wasn't Him.

The purpose of this visitation was that there should be a restoration *of our burning desire to love Him and do His will*. To share His Father heart with all with whom we come into contact, so that nobody is safe from a blessing with us about. That we may become 'Father pleasers', living in the unconditional love of the Father and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus only did what the Father told Him. Jesus is our Brother, we want to have the family likeness don't we? God wants us to have the family likeness '*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*' Romans 8:29. Our desire should be to be Father pleasers. To take His yoke upon us, because it is light and easy. Not be tossing our heads, chafing at the harness, arguing all the way! What fun is that?

That we may become a place of His habitation, not just visitation. God is all about habitation. He dwelt with the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings. We know from Revelation that this is the consummation of His plan from the foundation of the earth - a people for Himself, a people who will love Him, freely, not under duress, but freely. A love affair. Whole Bible is a love affair.

I heard someone say the other day that the Holy Spirit said 'You are My temple - and I don't want timeshare - weekends for the devil - rest of the week for Me.' Life in the Spirit is about displacement, getting rubbish out so that more of Jesus can come in. Making room for the Holy Spirit.

The Church of the 21st century faces challenges the like of which maybe no church has faced since the time of the Apostles. Satan has done a very good job of immobilising us. We are in a heavenly war, but we are almost incapable of taking up our positions in the army, let alone knowing how to use our weapons! Probably most of us are not even aware that the war is going on, but it is, silently, gradually, invading, capturing us to its culture and like Gulliver, we find ourselves pinned down by hundreds of tiny ropes and - immobilised.

We are caught up in a global conflict with God on the one hand and Satan on the other. Ask Job.

Submission - a definition: (acetate)

Let's start then, with some definitions. Subject, subjection or submission are mutually interchangeable words which come from the same root. In the Greek it is the word **HUPOTASSO** which is primarily a military term meaning to rank under. Hupo, under, tasso to arrange. Therefore to arrange under in rank or order. So when the Bible says submit yourselves, or be in subjection to, it is saying, in effect, get in rank get in order.

Dictionary definition: subject, rule: under the control of somebody or something such as a ruler or a law, and obliged to **obey**. A subject nation.

We have already looked at a related word hupakoe which is to listen with a view to *obedience*. Again the prefix 'hupa' which is 'under'. We are listening with a view to doing what is being said **HUPAKOE**. Submission and obedience go together. Loving submission and willingness to obey.

The word submit itself is **HUPEIKO** which is to retire or withdraw. Again hupo, under eiko, to yield. Therefore to yield under, to submit, this is seen metaphorically in Hebrews 13:17 where it is used of the body submitting to, getting in rank under, spiritual guides in the church.

'Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.'

Notice please, for whom it would be unprofitable. Not for the leaders, but for you.

Dictionary definition: submit: yield to somebody: to give in to somebody's authority, control, or demands, to agree to undergo something, to defer to another's knowledge, judgment, or experience. 14th century. From Latin *submittere*, literally 'to send under', from *mittere* 'to send' (source of English *mission*).

'Submit' is a word which probably causes Christians the most problems. My personal view is that this is because we have received half a gospel, not the full gospel. We have received come to Jesus as Saviour, get your needs met, but not Jesus as Lord. Discipleship has been non-existent and we have muddled along from one move of God to another, making a patchwork quilt of our theology - by that I mean a study of divine things - if we have any theology at all.

I sense that in this new era, heaven is pressing down like never before. That if we really open our hearts to Him, we will experience all He want to be for us, and all He wants *us* to be, in these end times. We are the end time church you know - it is quite likely that we are the generation on whom the end of the age will come.

We have established that submission is a yielding to authority. Simple as that. We recognise the superior authority, and we yield to it. The traffic light is red and we stop. We yield to it.

The first principle is of God's created order:

If we do not understand this at the outset we will not understand what follows regarding the whole issue of authority and submission generally. This is crucial. We absolutely have to see that it is **God's** created order we must follow. Herein may lay the biggest problem as I have already intimated. If Jesus is Saviour, but not Lord, it will be impossible for us to put submission into practice, because we have never surrendered our right to ourselves. We

have never understood the *exchange* which took place at the cross, we have simply availed ourselves of a life insurance policy. By that I mean we have surety that we will go to heaven when we die, but very little else. Our lives, therefore, will demonstrate little of God's authority and power, because we have never 'laid down our arms and surrendered to Him'. An old song! Maybe today you will want to surrender completely to Jesus and take Him as Lord, as well as Saviour, if you have never done so?

The basic order of God's creation which was in operation *before the fall* was: (acetate)

1. God
2. Angels
3. Mankind
4. Animals
5. Plants

Adam had dominion over the animals and plants.

The principle of authority: the higher the rank, the greater the authority:

The principle of authority is related to God's created order. The principle is the higher the order, the greater the authority. We can see this in relation to, for instance, the Prime Minister, he has the authority, *vested in the office*, to make decisions which affect the whole of the country. We cannot pop to Downing Street and say, 'I don't think I agree with you doing that'. His is the authority because of the position he holds, particular to the office. The rank is with the office, not the person. The person has earned the right or is qualified to hold the position which gives him/her the authority. A policeman can step out into the traffic, put his hand up and stop the cars. If we did it we would be mown down. He carries the authority and the cars submit to this.

We see this right through society and it is God given. Romans 13:1,2 *'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority, is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves.'* This is God's principle of authority being worked out in society, even if we personally do not happen to agree.

Our first area, our primary area, must be submission to the God who created us, and gave Himself for us.

When Jesus came on the earth His death on the cross and ascension changed the order of things again. In Ephesians 1:20-23 we see it.

*"He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything **for the church**, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*

These verses show us that Jesus Christ, *the Man*, was raised above the angels and the demons, and because we are *in Jesus*, we too, are positionally seated far above all principalities, rulers and authorities. So the order changed to: (acetate)

1. God
2. Jesus Christ the Man and the Church
3. Angels (including fallen angels)
4. Unbelievers
5. Animals
6. Plants

Submission to God - the greatest authority:

Having now in our possession an idea of what submission is all about and why we need to submit. I ask you:

- How submitted are you to God?
- Can you open your whole life before Him without fear?
- Do you obey what He asks of you?
- If not, why not?
- What is it that prevents you from instant obedience to the greatest authority that exists in the universe?

Submission is an attitude of heart. *'If you love Me, you will keep my commandments.'* Jesus said in John 14:15,21,23,24. *'If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love'* John 15:10. He links love with - *obedience and abiding*.

Why do we find it so difficult to submit and obey? Have you ever asked yourself that question? It is probably only within the church context that the word is really considered, because in society generally everyone does that which he thinks fit. Pretty close to anarchy, just like the Israelites at the end of the book of Judges *'Everyone did as they thought fit'*.

Submission actually is pivotal to our walk with God. It is an attitude of heart before God. Rebellion, also an attitude of heart, is a Satanically inspired strategy to keep us from knowing God and enjoying the fullness of what He wants for us.

God said to Abram in Genesis 17:1 *'Walk before Me and be blameless, or perfect'*. Tall order. But God never asks us to do something He hasn't already given us the ability to do. When He commands us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength - the first commandment - He has already given us all we need to do that. 1 John 4: 10 says *'We love because He first loved us.'* We have the ability given to us to do this thing.

When He asks us to be obedient, He has already placed the Spirit of His Son within us, so to be obedient shouldn't be difficult for us, should it? So why is it that when the word submission is mentioned most people's hackles rise immediately?

God set certain standards for human living in the garden. Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Law and moral standards came into the world by God's command, His is the authority. But mankind breaks the command. They do what they are forbidden to do. They set their own authority against God's and from the very start use their freedom to question and come into conflict with, God's authority. They think that their own is better. They act on the basis of their own judgement and authority rather than accepting God's authority expressed in His commands.

When Adam is called to give an account before God, he refuses to accept responsibility for what has happened. He blames Eve, then God. He blame shifts the authority (responsibility) for his actions. It was not his fault, it was either Eve's or God's. So the responsibility and blame is shifted. In shifting the blame in this way, he gave away his God given responsibility. God warned him about not eating from the tree before He created Eve. Adam's responsibility was to share the command of God with his wife and then to protect her from going against it. The rejection of this authority has serious consequences for humanity and the world. To disobey God's authoritative commands leads to disaster, disunity and disarray. Acceptance or rejection of authority is not a take it or leave it matter, it matters vitally to the wellbeing of all human kind.

In these days God is bringing back His authority into His body, which is the Church. He is bringing back His hierarchy of authority and responsibility. He is giving us the choice. When the Bible asks us to be subject to, to submit to, to surrender to, to obey - Jesus is simply asking us to love Him and demonstrate it by our obedience. '*Faith without works - is dead*' James says. Attitude is all. Hearts that are turned to Him will find the struggle ceases. The more we know Him, the more we will desire what He desires, the more we will turn our hearts towards Him because He is good.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom'

Something which is sadly lacking in the body of Christ in the 21st century is the reverent fear, awe and respect of the Lord. This is **not** setting aside the teaching on the Father-heart of God. I love the Lord with all I have, but I also have a real and healthy fear, a biblical fear, which is total respect for Who He is and His supreme majesty - He defies description, He is so wonderful, so awesome, so amazing, so astonishing, so astounding.

But one of the things which grieves me in the body is the lack of the fear of the Lord. He should be the primary object of our love, affection, loyalty, trust, He is altogether lovely, what we think about Him is the single most important thing in our lives, but sometimes we are so *casual* with Him. So, then fear of the Lord, which the Bible tells us is just the beginning of wisdom.

If you do not know His father-heart, you will probably not have a right 'fear of the Lord'. You may see Him as a schoolmaster, harsh and judgemental, please be assured He is not like that at all. However, the Bible clearly says that -

Psalm 111:10 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom'

The Amplified Bible says it thus *‘The reverent fear and worship of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom and skill (the preceding and the first essential, the prerequisite and the alphabet - the A to Z -) a good understanding, wisdom and meaning have all those who do (the will of the Lord.) Their praise of Him endures for ever.’*

Proverbs 1:7, 8 *‘The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge (its starting point and its essence): but fools despise skilful and godly Wisdom, instruction and discipline. My son, hear the instruction of your father; reject not nor forsake the teaching of your mother’*

Getting your fear in the right place:

The lack of ‘getting our fear in the right place’ leads to a *casual* relationship with God, a frustration of His grace, and lack of understanding of Who He wants to be to us. It is ignorance combined with un-dealt with rebellion of the fallen nature in us, in relation to the Creator. What happens when we do not get our fear in the right place and we are rebellious, is that we will not come into submission - we cannot we are in rebellion! Mutually incompatible. We will not put our neck under the yoke and be yoked with Him. We chafe against His commandments, we are high-handed and let’s face it, ignorant.

So what do I mean by getting your fear in the right place? Fear God - and you will not fear anything else. That is what I mean. A worshipful, reverent fear and awe of the Lord is just the *beginning* of wisdom. And if ever we needed wisdom it is now.

We are very casual as a church about rebellion. I hear Christians all the time almost boasting about their resistance to God. Beloved, these things ought not to be so. I heard someone recently saying when they looked at Psalm 91, ‘but this whole thing is conditional.’ Yes. In fact, most of the promises in the Bible are conditional. ‘If you do this, I will do that.’ We are short sighted and blind, mere children, and with respect, we don’t know which side our bread is buttered as my mother would have said!

God does not want the ‘I may be sitting down but inside I am standing up’ sort of yielding or submission to Him. That is rebellion disguised. Passively aggressive. *Incitement to rebellion as I said before, is a Satanically inspired strategy.*

What the Father is looking for is a *voluntary yielding* of ourselves, our will, to His Divine authority. *‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...’* A recognition that we are His possession. We are dear to Him. And as dearly beloved children, He asks for our obedience, He does not demand it. He will never bring you into subjection or submission, you volunteer it. You put your head in the harness to be trained and led by Him.

2 Peter 1:3 - 9 says

*‘His divine power **has given** to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to*

knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance, godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Father does not get angry with us, but like every good parent - and He is the **BEST** - He is wanting to see His children mature into healthy adults who are useful in society and their sphere of influence. *Into fully mature sons.* Romans 8:19 says *'the creation waits in eager expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God.'* Some translations say the 'creation groans.' It's waiting for something, and that something is the manifestation, the demonstration, of the Divine DNA which is in every one of us!

God has a plan for each of us that will thrill us to the core of our being, don't let's allow the devil to rob us of our inheritance by his lies. He will try every trick in the book to knock you out of the race. Graham Cooke says 'If you think you are too small to make a difference, you have obviously never been in bed with a mosquito!' Beloved, you are far from insignificant and the enemy knows it, even if you don't.

Ever thought there is a carrot out there somewhere just waiting to be manifested! Carrots the size of your arm!! There's a body of water out there just waiting for someone to walk on it. Manifested sons. Creation is waiting - how long are you going to keep it waiting? Puts rebellion in a different light doesn't it? Rebellion, stubbornness, is just silly because it only affects you - and that adversely. You miss out. Simple as that. If you have it, give it up. There's an amnesty today. Give it right up to God, right now. Let it go.

Ever thought that when you are in rebellion you are actually conspiring or covenanting, agreeing, with Satan against God? There is a Satanic strategy to keep you from becoming all God wants you to be. Show forth the character and nature of Christ, *'Yield now and be at peace with Him, thereby good will come to you'*. (Job 22:21 NASV.)

God is life's summum bonum, Latin for everything! He is the fullness of everything. He is the totality. He is enough. He is sufficient, yield, abandon yourself to Him. Search Him out, He will be found of you, know Him. You can have as much of Him as you want.

Break

Submission to Christ:

Seeking after God then, is not an intellectual pursuit or exercise; it is first and foremost a matter of the heart and will - then the mind is informed and transformed by the knowledge of Him. We experience Him.

It is right that I should use my mind, or more correctly I should allow the Holy Spirit to inform it, but my pursuit must be in this order, heart first, otherwise I find that I have an intellectual understanding of the whole process of redemption which is logical, it involves my mind, but without an *experiential* knowledge of God and His grace.

He can only work within me according to the measure of my surrender. My heart must be allowed to engage with Him first.

A Rabbi was once asked ‘What has God been doing for the last 6,000 years?’ The answer he gave was ‘Seeking a bride for His Son’. God has been making matches since the Garden of Eden. He started in Genesis providing a woman for the man He created, He ends in Revelation providing a Bride for His Son. Between Genesis and Revelation we have His plan for mankind revealed. A Bride for His Son, who will reign with Him. She will not reign alone, she will reign in adoring partnership with Him.

Christianity is a love affair, an affair of the heart. Unless yours is a ‘heart-felt’ relationship with the Lord Jesus as your Bridegroom, the Father and the Holy Spirit, you will struggle with submission to Christ all your life.

*Augustine said 400-500 years ago:
‘Sometimes when You are working within me
bringing my scattered self to You, You draw me into a state of feeling
that is unlike anything I am used to, a kind of sweet delight.’*

“The sweet language of experience is ‘Thou God seest me’.” So said a great prophet of the 20th century, A W Tozer.

He refers here to Hagar in Genesis 16:13 ‘Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her ‘You-are-the-God-Who-sees’ for she said ‘I have also seen here, Him who sees me’.

He goes on to say - “Sin has twisted our vision inward and made us self-regarding. Unbelief has put self where God should be and is perilously close to rebellion against the Creator in the same way as Lucifer who expressed his ‘I will’ statements. When we lift our inward eyes to gaze upon God we are sure to meet friendly eyes gazing back at us.”

He also commented “The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be received without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is ‘saved’ but he is not hungry nor thirsty after God. In fact, he is specifically taught to be satisfied and is in fact encouraged to be content with little”. (The Pursuit of God).

I would ask you - is that your experience? Neither hungering nor thirsting for more of God and content with little? Or maybe struggling all the time to know Him.

Another modern day prophet - Graham Cooke says ‘The western church must learn to meditate, setting time aside to think deeply about God’. (Language of Promise, p.28).

I started with the statement ‘What you think about God is the single most important thing in your life.’ You may be asking yourself at this point, ‘What has this got to do with biblical

submission?' The answer to that is, you cannot, and quite rightly so, submit yourself to someone you do not know. You will not be able to trust them. Knowing God is essential to trusting Him, which is essential to submitting to Him, and obedience to Him.

So my question is, do you know Him? Who is He to you today?

Another question, do you think you could do with a complete overhaul in the way you see the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and their perceived 'demands' upon you? Do you need, as Joyce Meyer would say - a check-up from the neck up?

If so, I would urge you to read some of the old saints, A W Tozer, Andrew Murray, St John of the Cross, Madame Guyon, St Theresa of Avila, Nicholas of Cusa - these people *knew* Him. They had an intimate relationship with the Almighty. Study some of the old hymn books - look at the way God is extolled. This comes out of an experiential knowledge of Him, not a head knowledge. When we got saved we didn't invite Jesus into our heads!

What marks these people out, and the old hymns out, is that they are **God**-centred, not man centred. They *knew* Him. We are living in an age when Christianity is very self-absorbed. What's in it for me? What can I get out of God?

Those of you who attend the Wednesday Bible study are beginning to see what self-regarding, self-referential, self-absorbed and self-centred love is like, and how it manifests itself in our every day life. Contrast this with what was said by Frederick Faber -

"Wherever we turn in the church of God, there is Jesus. He is the beginning, the middle and end of everything to us...there is nothing good, nothing holy, nothing beautiful nothing joyous, which He is not to His servants. No-one need be poor, because, if he chooses, he can have Jesus for his own property and possession. No-one need be downcast for Jesus is the joy of heaven, and it is his joy to enter sorrowful hearts. We can exaggerate about many things; but we can never exaggerate our obligation to Jesus, or the compassionate abundance of the love of Jesus to us. All our lives long we might talk of Jesus and yet we should never come to an end of the sweet things that might be said of Him. Eternity will not be long enough to learn all He is or to praise Him for all He has done, but then, that matters not; for we shall always be with Him and we desire nothing more."

And writing a hymn to Him he says:

*'I love Thee so I know not how,
my transports to control
Thy love is like a burning fire
within my very soul.'*

And of the Holy Spirit, he writes thus:

*'O Spirit, beautiful and dread
my heart is fit to break*

*with love of all Thy tenderness
For us poor sinners sake.'*

So when Jesus says in John 14:15,21,23,24. *'If you love Me, you will obey (or keep) My commandments'*. He was seeking the submission which is an attitude of heart. Between verses 15 and 24 He says this three times.

If, (perhaps you will perhaps you won't) you will keep my commandments. Jesus said in John 15:10. 'If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love'. Here He links love with - obedience and abiding.

I have risked the tedium of quotation that you might understand what I have set out to say - that Jesus is so wonderful, so utterly and completely delightful, that He can without help from any other than Himself, satisfy your deepest longings and meet and overflow the deepest demands of our human nature. He is irresistible.

What hinders us?

So the question arises, what hinders us? What hinders us from abandonment to Him? What hinders us from surrender and submission to this great God we say we serve?

There is within us something that will not let go of what it perceives as its own. A fibrous root of fallen life which seeks to possess, acquire and control. It covets with a deep and fierce passion that which it considers 'mine'. Jesus called it the self-life. It's chief characteristic is its possessiveness. To allow this enemy to live, is in the end, to lose everything. We seek to protect that which is 'mine' be it things, people, possessions, whatever. But, the blessedness comes in possessing - nothing.

We really do need to understand God's ways with us. When He asks us for something it is not to deprive, but to set free. Jesus said *'If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it'* Matthew 16:24,25. This doesn't compute with us.

Jesus is saying is *'Take up your cross because I want to set you free from self-preservation.'* The moment you move from self-preservation to self denial you move from Satan's kingdom to God's. From darkness to light. The flesh is all about self-gratification. Easy target for Satan. Jesus wants to bring you to the place where you are no longer 'meat' for him. No longer, lunch is served and Beryl is on the menu. He wants to set us free from ourselves. The enemy cannot predict what you are going to do if you are not controlled by extreme self-interest. If you are controlled by self-interest, you are an easy target.

It is self-interest that hinders us from abandonment to Him. Nothing more, nothing less. The giant. Self. There is no such thing as an unsundered heart, your heart is always surrendered to something.

When Jesus said '*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*' He is speaking of those who have rooted from their hearts, all sense of possessing anything but Him. They are the poor in spirit, so theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus says '*I am your inheritance, and you are Mine.*' Have a think about that for a moment. All I have is yours and you are Mine.

The law of re-relating:

An illustration of this can be found in the famous passage in the Old Testament of Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac. This much longed for child was born when Abraham was very old, old enough in fact, to be Isaac's grandfather. The child was the delight of his old heart. But, for some reason, God asks this peculiar treasure of him. '*Abraham, go up...and sacrifice your son there*'.

God let him go through this thing until the knife was raised over the boy's throat. Abraham was willing. He wasn't playing about. You can't fool God by pretending to put something on the altar. At the 11th hour 59th minute 59th second, God stops him. '*It's all right Abraham. I just wanted to remove him from the temple of your heart so that I might reign supreme there. I wanted to correct the perversion in your love for him. Now you can have him back.*'

We can have the thing back when it no longer holds us. It doesn't possess us. We relate to it differently. After this, Abraham was a man wholly surrendered, utterly obedient. And God makes him a huge promise 'I will bless you and multiply you as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.' the blessedness of possessing - nothing. When you give something to God, He always multiplies it. Isaac was the seed that God had to have back in order that He might plant, him and make a nation. God always multiplies that which is placed into His hands.

In giving up that which he most loved, Abraham gained. He got his son back and a dynasty. You can never out give God.

We are often hindered from giving up our treasures, whatever form they take, out of fear for their safety. In extreme cases, this is self-protection gone mad. We cannot trust our very lives to the One who saved our life for eternity and we live in panic and anxiety, covering every base, in case God isn't going to come through for us in the way we want. Silly children. We need have no such fear. Jesus came to save, not destroy. Everything we commit to Him is safe, and nothing is really safe that isn't committed to Him.

Submission is only a struggle if we are seeking to hold on to something.

So what should we do if we find that we have been holding on to things, people, our very own life? Don't try to defend yourself, or justify your position. Just confess it to the Lord. 'I've been my own saviour Lord, I've operated in self-protection, not trusting You. I haven't let go of anything. Show me the things I have protected in my own way, I give you permission to take them out of my heart, forever.' Just one word of caution, don't give

them up expecting that you will get them back, that is holding your breath to avoid dying and hoping you will hold it long enough...let them go - completely. God will honour this.

Prayer: Father, I want to know You but my cowardly heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inner bleeding and I do not try to hide from You the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that You may enter and dwell there without rival. In Jesus name. Amen.

If you have given yourself to Jesus in this way, you have just submitted to His Lordship in your life. You have just given Him permission to help Himself to you.

Wives submit to your husbands: children be obedient to parents:

By this time you will be understanding that love is a choice. Submission is a choice. Unless we know one to Whom we submit and how safe He is (though He is not predictable), we will get stuck in a place of fear. A paralysis of analysis, if you like, and when the Bible tells us to submit to one another, we have extreme difficulty doing this, because we haven't submitted (got in rank) to the highest authority - God Himself.

So now we move on to the heading 'Wives submit to your husbands' - this is usually the big one for those ladies who are married. I did cover this in the teaching on the role of women in society and home and the church, last month but, for the sake of completeness, I will do a brief resume, but if you really want a full exposition you will need to get the CD's or the notes from January's meeting.

Created equal:

Man and woman were given the same mandate. They were both created with power, authority, and dignity, to reflect God's image. Woman was created as a helper, a help meet, or a help suitable, to assist man in the fulfilling of the mandate. The word 'help' in Hebrew, is the word 'ezer' which equals 'partner'. This is a word which is used 17 times in the Old Testament, 13 times in direct reference to God Himself. Ezer = help, help that comes from someone stronger than yourself, or an ally. God brought a source of strength, and an ally, to Adam to support him and walk alongside him. The Greek word is 'Parakletos' - helper.

God's desire when He prepared woman was to have someone who would come alongside to give strength and wisdom to the man. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit strengthens us and comes alongside us. Reflecting the Trinity, woman was created by God to be a similar help to man. So woman is equal in rank to man and a helper for him.

God planned for a perfect man and perfect woman to found a perfect race and inhabit the earth. In this plan there is no suggestion of one ruling or having dominion over the other. They would both have a perfect relationship with God, and they would perfectly fulfil their complementary roles. They were created as spiritual beings to have a relationship with God, but they were also created to have an earth life. A life on earth and a life in God were at this stage in no way incompatible. In other words, there was no division between the

natural and the spiritual. The division came when sin came into the garden. Prior to the fall they had their own *individual spiritual lives* and their lives in relation to each other.

Genesis 3:16 and the result of the fall. The first commandment by God to be fruitful and multiply was meant to be a delight, but now it is going to be painful. The last verse says Adam shall rule over Eve. What does this mean? Many people have taken this to be a pattern of what the male and female relationship is supposed to be. ***But this is the curse of God on the now corrupted nature. It is not a pattern which God has given for relationships between men and women.***

What started out as an intimate, open relationship has now been twisted, distorted, skewed, bent and corrupted. The meaning of iniquity. Adam sinned. Adam is going to bring forth from the earth by the sweat of his brow - he didn't sweat before, it was easy - Eve is going to have pain and travail in childbirth, she wouldn't have experienced pain before, but now she will. The very thing God has said to them about being fruitful and multiplying will become a source of toil, pain and difficulty.

For the woman, now, her desire will be for her husband but he will have 'rule' over her. What is God saying here? He is saying, what you want from your mate is a close, intimate, relationship, but what you will get is a master. What you desire is a lover, but because of the corrupting influence of the fall on Adam, what you will get is a lord, someone who will not understand you and will tend towards dominion of you.

When we become Christians, everything changes again - or it should do. Jesus is the second Adam and in Him everything is restored to its original order, so now we see the model of what headship really means. '*He took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash the disciples feet*' John 13:4-5. The headship of the man over the woman now, is to be like that of Jesus. The man loving his wife as Christ loves the church. A headship of loving and caring and serving. The order has changed. Woman is no longer to be ruled over or dominated by man. *That is the new order of things in Christ.*

For the man to be the head of the wife means to lift her up, to give her precedence over himself. Expressed by the sage to the man 'Below your means for yourself and above your means for your wife' **that** is headship. Most men like the title 'head' of the family but they do not like the job description '*Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her*'. This is an incredibly tough task, the woman's role is easy compared to this.

Wives, submit to your husbands, lovingly allow him the last word. Voluntarily adapt yourself in love to your husband *out of reverence to Christ*. The whole thing revolves around your relationship first to God, under Him, submit to your husband. Your ultimate loyalty is always to God. He is to be first, we cannot come to Him through someone else. Ephesians 5:22 '*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord*'. Everything now is from our position in Christ.

Marriage is a theocracy man is the head, Jesus is the King. Headship is vested in the man because his is the greater *responsibility* before God, and under Jesus, even as Jesus is under God the Father. 1 Corinthians 11:3 *'But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.'* What we have here is a line of authority, it is not to do with equality, because Christ is co-equal with God, this is expressing Jesus' voluntary submission to the Father in all things. And likewise, the wife's submission to the husband.

'Children, obey your parents, for this is right in the Lord.' Ephesians 6:1. This does not need any further explanation I think! Easier said than done though.

Submission to the governing authorities:

The scripture for this is Romans 13:1-7 *'Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.'*

Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.

Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For He is God's minister to you for good but if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger, to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due; taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.'

Again, this hardly needs any exposition. It is clear that we, as bible believing Christians, should be the first to obey those who have the rule over us. The Government, whether we agree with it, or not. Because it is placed there by God Himself. Again you see the principle, submit to God and submitting to everything and everyone else will fall into line.

Don't fiddle your taxes. Don't knowingly break the speed limit. Don't pass your parking ticket on to someone else because you have an hour left on it. Don't do pirate copies of things that have a copyright on them, on and on, it goes. Just because everyone else does it, is not the criteria.

Beloved, these are basic examples. We should be living examples by being law abiders, not law breakers.

1 Timothy 2:1,2 tells us we should pray for those who have the rule over us. *'Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable*

life in all godliness and dignity, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour'. Can't get around that.

Submission to leadership in the church:

This is in the church context.

I will say little here - it *is* a realm I fear to tread, because I can be so easily misunderstood whatever I say.

I would however, commend to you a book and study guide entitled 'Experiencing God - Knowing and doing the will of God' by Henry Blackaby and published by 'Lifeway' press, which describes a body of people committed to each other, moving in unity and unison, because they are all hearing from God themselves and they do not move until all are in agreement about what God is saying.

So - 'Obey those who have the rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.'

Things just aint what they used to be! Times they are a changing. Heaven is pressing down. God is amongst His people. Thank you for listening - appreciate it.

Next session 29th March 'Leadership and Authority in the local church' - could be interesting!