



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Galatians 3:38

"Evangelical Feminism and the Bible – Part II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well, I'm happy that there are more sheep than goats, sheep on the right hand, goats on the left. [Laughter] And that's encouraging. No offense. [Laughter] Well, let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege and opportunity that is ours to study the word of God together. We thank Thee for the light that it sheds on so many issues that affect our daily lives. And we ask Thy blessing upon us this evening as we study the relationship of male and female in the church of Jesus Christ. And help us to understand, and may the Holy Spirit be our teacher. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Last week we started our series of studies on evangelical feminism and the Bible. And I started out by making what I think is an important form in the form of a question. And it was, what is the unique significance of our maleness and our femaleness? And have we really forgotten that? Or are we so exposed to thoughts that are characteristic of our society that we do not realize what the word of God has said from its beginning. I suggested that a question that most of the feminists cannot answer is

a simple question that a child, a girl or a man or boy may ask his parents, "Dad what does it mean to be a man and not a woman?" Or "Dad what does it mean to be a woman and not a man." These are questions that the Scriptures have significant things to say about in the egalitarianism of the society of which we are a part now. That's largely lost. And so often we know that in evangelicalism, the things that the world thinks about and bombards us with are soon the things that we see in the church of Jesus Christ. They slip often unnoticed and it's not until difficulties have arisen in the church of Christ that we realize that we have been subjected to influence from unchristian sources. We don't doubt at all that rationality may exist in differing view points, at least plausibility I should say. It appeared to be rationality exists in many of the things with which our society is occupied.

What we did last week is essentially, for those of you who were not here, was we sought to show one really essential point. And that is that the difference between male and female as set forth in the Bible is found in the creation account itself and that the arrangements that exist according to scriptural teaching between male and female in the church of Christ are not things that arose after the fall, but are things that are set forth in the divine word before the fall of man took place. And therefore it is improper to say that the judgments suggested by Genesis chapter 3 upon man, woman, and the serpent, and particularly in the case of the woman may be redeemed and in a sense not followed any longer because of the redemption of Christ. For example, the judgment God placed upon the female is not something that is removed by the redemption that is in Christ, because the relationships that are suggested between man and woman in the New Testament are relations that go back to original creation in the Garden of Eden. That's a very important point. It's something for us to remember, and it's something that many of the feminists have forgotten and when they've had it pointed out to them have been neglectful of accepting.

Then I said that we would look at some of the key texts that touch on the subject, texts like Galatians chapter 3, and verse 28; 1 Timothy chapter 2, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Those are some of the major texts over which evangelicals on the side of the feminists and evangelicals on the side of the non-feminists have differed and so we want to deal with them and tonight we're looking at the first of them, Galatians chapter 3, and verse 28. And I'd like for you to turn there and I'll read verse 26 through verse 29, in which this verse is found. The apostle writes in Galatians 3, in verse 26,

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Now, you recognize, of course, I'm sure, all of you, that what Paul is talking about is the fact that in Christ male and female are one. And that the relationships that did exist within Judaism particularly are not relationships that are still obtained. "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So to be Abraham's seed is the goal of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. As I've often said, if you're going to get salvation, you must get it through Abraham. That is plainly what Paul states in Galatians chapter 3, and it's also found in other passages. That the promises were made to Abraham, and the reason that the Gentiles are blessed today is not because they have special promises, but they have been adopted into the family of God, to use Paul's figure in Romans chapter 11, they've been grafted in to the olive tree, so that they partake of the promises that were made to Abraham. That's very important. The church does not have special promises that pertain to the church. And Israel's special promises that pertain to Israel, the promises were made to Abraham. And it is the church that

enters into the promises made to Abraham. That's why he says in verse 29, "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Now, Galatians chapter 3, verse 28, and I'll read it again, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." I dare say that Paul, because after all he was a man, he was not a divine being, certainly not a God-man like our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man such as you and I are. Never could Paul have foreseen the place of Galatians 3:28 in contemporary evangelical literature, a crucial text over the debate over the role of the sexes in the church. It has been called the feminist credo of equality. It has been called the Magna Carta of humanity. It has even been called the Declaration of Independence, so one can see from these comments that it is the opinion of many that this text is of tremendous significance on the subject of the relationship of men and women in the church of Jesus Christ. Robert Jewett, and evangelical, has called it, and this is a startling thing for an evangelical to call it, he calls it the sexual liberation of the Apostle Paul.

Now, most sides in this debate, that is on the evangelical feminist side, the evangelical non-feminist, side have admitted that this text has been abused, and so what I'd like to do is just follow a simple dealing with the text along these lines. I'd like to first of all point out some of the ancient interpretations of Galatians 3:28. I know in the church of Christ today it is very common for people to say, "Why bother about what the church has said in the centuries past? It's what matters to us now that really matters. What does the Bible say?" It's almost as if we're taking the foolish position that we are the only ones who have ever read the Bible. And that they didn't read the Bible in the earlier years of the Christian church. But even to my mind, more significantly, it ignores the ministry of God the Holy Spirit promised by the Lord Jesus. You'll remember in John chapter 16 he promised that he would give the Holy Spirit to the church and that the Holy Spirit would teach the church of Jesus Christ the things concerning himself.

Now, the question that faces the church of Christ is this, along these lines, has the Holy Spirit been teaching the church? Well, I think that anyone who looks at the promise, "I'm going to give you another comforter and he will guide you in all truth," we have to say that our Lord didn't make a mistake. The Holy Spirit has been given, most Christians acknowledge that, and therefore he's been teaching the church of Christ. So I suggest it is very important to study what the church has said that they have been taught concerning the doctrines of the word of God and this is surely one of the doctrines of the word of God. So it's important for us to ask the question, what has the church believed down through the years? This incidentally is an error that evangelicals make so often. They discount every thing that has been said by leading figures in the church of Christ down through the centuries and ask the question, what does the Scripture say today? As if they had never studied themselves. And furthermore, not only do they take the position as if they are the only ones studying the Bible. But they don't have even the equipment that so many of the people in the past have had in the study of the Scriptures. It's astonishing to me. In fact, it's really the ignorance of the modern church. They would be so much better off if they paid attention to what the Holy Spirit has been teaching the church through the years.

The creeds of the church often lambasted because they are creeds, and we ought to follow the Bible. Obviously these individuals have never read the creeds. One of the first things the creeds say is, "The creeds are not inspired, the Bible is inspired." But it's the expression of what they believe the Bible teaches. Believers Chapel has a creed. Oh, you didn't know that did you? Our creed really is the Bible, we like to say. And that's true. But then we have to ask the question, what do we, or what do you, think the Bible says? That is really our creed. It may be a changing creed. There's nothing wrong with making creeds so long as we don't stop making them. That's the point. As we learn more and more from the word of God. I would be willing to guess that the vast majority of the people sitting in this audience have never read the thirty-nine articles of the

Anglican church. I won't call for a show of hands. I would also say that the vast majority have never read the Westminster Confession of Faith. The vast majority would never have read the Council of Chalcedon for announcements, or Nicaea, or the great doctrinal statements made by the Christian church as a whole. They were the products of days, years of careful study of careful, not only study but prayerful study, and then careful formulation after discussion and argumentation over the great doctrines of the faith. Isn't it silly for someone who's been a Christian for maybe six months to say, "I just follow the Bible" and discount the things that the church has come to learn in the light of our Lord's promise that he would give the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would teach the church truth. If we honor the Lord and we honor his words we should also pay due honor to what the church says it has been taught. We're justified, of course, if we can say that Scriptures teach otherwise. We're justified in modifying what we make think to be the teaching of the word of God. But it's utter foolishness to disregard what the church has learned.

So let me just briefly, I'm not going to try to deal with this. We could be here for, literally, we could be here for hours and hours if we dealt with what church figures have said concerning this issue. But I'm just going to mention a few of them. Ignatius, one of the earliest of the bishops of the Christian church said, he was the Bishop of Antioch. He wrote from Troas to Philadelphia to the Philadelphian church, and in a longer recension of his work, which may not be genuine incidentally, but in a longer recension of his work he exhorted wives to be "subject to their husbands in the fear of God." He wrote in the second century. His ministry was from about the year 98 to the year 117 A.D. John Christenson, who lived in the fourth century, the Bishop of Constantinople, these were evangelical men, discussed the text in some detail dealing primarily with our union in Christ and surprisingly makes no reference to male or female evidently thinking, I think, that it was just pertinent. That it was fully understood what those texts say, because they seem so clear.

We come on down to other important men like Martin Luther, who lived in, of course, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The great German reformer wrote a lengthy commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians and he devotes three pages to Galatians 3:28, the very text that we read. He reminds the female to "obey her husband" and warns that "if the woman would be the man" that would be nothing but confusion. All the faithful have "the same Christ" that all the saints have. Clearly Luther sees the text as meaning that all believers have the same status in Christ, but in other spheres such as the family a submission within the equality all have in Christ is for him biblical.

John Calvin, the great Presbyterian reformer, alludes to the text many times. He finds the text teaches the unity of believers in the one Christ. But in his institutes, while acknowledging the liberty of all in Christ he points out that liberty for all in Christ has its limits. He found Galatians 5:1 which says, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free," he found that text harmonizing with 1 Corinthians 7 and verse 21, in which Paul makes reference to slaves and does not exhort them to change their status, only to accept it if it is given to them. In other words, he suggests that spiritual freedom can perfectly well exist along with civil bondage. How different from a recent feminist that I heard cited this afternoon as Glen Steinbach and I were returning from Lufkin to Dallas. One of the recent feminists has made the suggestion that any kind of sexual intercourse is simply rape and has gone so far as to suggest that marriage prostitution and sexual harassment are all the same thing. These, of course, were not evangelical feminists, fortunately.

Now, I'd like to take briefly a look at the Pauline argument in verse 26 through verse 29 and just say a few words about it. This is the second section of the Epistle to the Galatians, the letter that Luther called "my Katie von Bora." That was the name of his wife, and because he loved this epistle so, and because he made so much over it, he called it his Katie von Bora. The general context of Galatians is very important for understanding this text. It's often overlooked. There are too dominant themes in the

Epistle to the Galatians. I would imagine if any of you have read it a couple of times you would know one of them at least. You would know that one of the dominant themes of the Epistle to the Galatians is justification by grace apart from works. A man is not justified by what he does. A man is justified by what Christ did. And Paul makes the point over and over that the way that we receive what Christ has done is through the instrumentality of faith. So faith is not a work, it's the means by which we receive the gift of God. And if the ground of our salvation is the merit of our Lord in dying for sinners, and we have that as a gift through the instrumentality of faith, it's very clear that our salvation is by grace. In other words, it's not something that we earn.

Now, we would all know if we read Galatians that's one of the points that Paul makes. And if we read it carefully, when we came to the fifth and sixth chapters we would ask a question, well Paul, if you're talking to people who at one time were under the Law of Moses, and now you're telling them they're under the principle of grace, apart from works men are saved through faith, then if we don't have the Law, who then is to be our guide in the Christian life? And Paul's in Galatians 5 and 6 is simply this, we have a gift from God together with our salvation, who is our guide, and that who is the person of the Holy Spirit. And so chapters 5 and 6 answer the implicit question, who is the Christian's guide at the present time? The Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit and the word of God, of course; the Spirit to instruct us and teach us in the word of God.

Now, that's almost all that is said in the Epistle to the Galatians. It's only six chapters, as you well know. My old New Testament professor, Everett Harrison used to say, "Romans tells us what the gospel is, Galatians tells us what the gospel is not." I thought that was a great statement. And I used to cite it all the time as coming from Professor Harrison, until some years later I found practically the same thing in Bishop Lightfoot's commentary on Galatians. And now, I think I know where he got it. But anyway, it's a good point. And it is that Galatians tells us what the gospel is not. And so consequently we have the apostle ringing the changes on it's not by works that we are



saved. It's by grace. It's not through the Law that we are justified. It's through Christ's merits in the shedding of his blood and so on.

I think when we read Galatians 3:28 that's the fundamental mistake that we all make. We fail to note what Galatians is about. So what we do is to read this text like this. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female." And we stop there. We don't think about the Epistle to the Galatians in which that clause is found. There is neither male nor female, but we run with it and make it say essentially what we want it to say. We overlook the obvious points that Paul does not say, so far as I can tell, one word about the roles of men and women in the church of Christ in Galatians. It's so easy to overlook the obvious. I read something this past week that was amusing to me and it illustrates the point. Sometimes we get so caught up in proving what we want to believe that we do overlook the obvious. That's so obvious. And the man the man who writing what was so amusing to me was a lawyer and he was engaged in a court case. And he said in connection with this particular text that he was reminded of the overlooking of the obvious in a case where his opponent, the defense attorney, ended up being up being hoisted on his own petard. "He was having a field day cross-examining my witness to a brutal slaying which had resulted in the death of a woman who had been living with her killer for several months. Along with several other farm laborers who lived in the shanties surrounding a common grassy area, Tom Willis had watched the defendant beat his helpless girlfriend with an oak shovel handle splintering it into pieces with each blow. Willis, who was the witness, testified to having seen the defendant hit the woman but said he didn't realize how serious the beating was at the time. In fact no one had gone to the rescue of the woman." And then the man describing the story said, "This is the cross-examination that was aimed by the defendant's attorney at discrediting Willis' testimony." He said, "For a while he thought, because he was representing Willis, the might succumb to the withering barrage of questions carefully crafted to take advantage of his simple mindedness and lack of

education." This is what the counsel said, "Now, Tom you say you saw Robertson hit the victim with a shovel handle, is that right?" "Yes, sir, that's what I saw." Counsel, "Now what time of night did this take place?" "Well, I'd say about ten or eleven?" "Was it dark at that time?" "Yeah, sure was." Counsel, "In fact, it was real dark wasn't it?" "Yes, sir, I guess it was." "Well Tom, were there any lights on in the yard?" "No sir, weren't any lights on in the yard." Counsel, "But you're telling the jury you could see well enough to recognize my client holding an oak shovel handle, is that right?" "Yes sir, I could see it good." "But you admit it was really dark at that time?" "Yes sir. Sure was."

So at that point the defense attorney thought, as you might expect, that he had Willis where he wanted, so he moved in for the kill. "Now Tom, you say it was dark out there that night and there were no lights anywhere around in the yard. Yet, you claim you clearly saw Robertson hitting the victim with a shovel handle. Just how far can you see at night anyway Tom?" "How far can I see at night?" Tom mused momentarily. "Well sir, just how far is the moon?" [Laughter] Well the lawyer said the judge smiled, the jurors laughed, and he said, "I wanted to stand up and cheer." Even the defense counsel seemed amused by his own undoing. By concentrating on the answer he expected to get, he overlooked the possibility that he might get a different answer.

Now, it's my opinion that the feminists in evangelicalism read Galatians 3:28 in a similar way. They are looking for a particular answer and they fail to consider the context in which this passage is found. Just think about this for a moment, why would Paul write the text intending to overturn the centuries old principle of male spiritual leadership and then write later letters imposing restrictions on female women in church life perpetuating the headship of men? Why would he write 1 Corinthians 11? Why would he write 1 Corinthians 14? Why would he write 1 Timothy 2: 11? And remember, it's highly likely that those passages were all written after Galatians, which was probably Paul's first letter. So neither male nor female must be understood in the context of Galatians, a book that says nothing about role relationships. So I think the feminists, in building a case on

Galatians 3:28 have overlooked the obvious. The book doesn't have a thing to do with roles in the church. It has to do with justification by faith and it has to do with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life.

One of the outstanding commentators on Galatians, a modern commentator, has written an excellent commentary incidentally, says "There can be no doubt that Paul's statements have social and political implications of even a revolutionary dimension. I learned a long time as a New Testament professor that when a New Testament exegete uses the expression "There can be no doubt" there's often a flag to the exegetical community that there is a very good reason to doubt the statement. That's why he said "There is no doubt." Why does he say that? To shut down discussion of the question Inato Bets says there.

Now, Paul uses the three antitheses and he uses them because they were fundamental distinctions in ancient society. In fact, some have noted that maybe the apostle used it because of the famous morning prayer of Jewish men, which can be traced back as far as 150 A.D. in which men thanked God that they were not born a Gentile, not born a slave, not born a woman. Now, it sounds like it's a very belittling statement. Actually in the context, those who cite that statement make the point that it was a belittling of Gentile slaves and women, and even those such as F.F. Bruce and others who take differing view points admit that. Bruce argues that if leadership may be given to Gentiles and slaves in the church fellowship, then why not to women? It seems like a plausible argument doesn't it?

If we can, for example, take a slave and a slave who has been converted, and have that slave become an elder in the church, why not a women in the light of this text? If, for example, a Gentile may be made a deacon or an elder, then why not a woman, in the light of Paul's statements? One fundamental reason, again we so often overlook the obvious, the relationship of Gentiles and slaves within the church of Jesus Christ is something that is in existence after the creation in Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2, so

that the relationship of husband and wife is the one of the three that goes back to times before the fall. In fact, even Bruce who makes that statement goes to admit a few lines later that "Other Pauline passages may provide restrictions on female activities, but such he contends are to be understood in relation to Galatians 3:28 and not vice versa." That's a very interesting statement. Professor Bruce, an outstanding commentator, I've read most of his commentaries and many of his other books as well and he's written many of them. But it's very interesting that he would say that it was possible for later literature by the apostle to interpret what is said there. But he rather thought that other things should be understood in the light of Galatians 3:28. What's interesting about that is that Galatians 3:28 was written first according to Professor Bruce's reckoning. So you would think that restrictions which follow later are Paul's own restrictions on the more general statement here in Galatians 3:28. And naturally enough some have suggested that those later statements were written by the apostle in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy because people did come to misunderstand Galatians 3:28 and the apostle found it necessary to be sure to make the point that he thought would have been made anyway from his literature.

Now, looking at the immediate context I think you can see that what Paul is talking about is the purpose of the Law. He has just told us in verse 24, "Therefore the Law is our tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." And then he goes on right after the section we read to talk about maturity and the unrestricted enjoyment of sonship and the presence of the Holy Spirit within the heart of believers. So there is nothing in the context that has to do with the role relationship of men and women. Just a few comments, in verse 26 the apostle states, "For you are all sons of God through faith and in Christ Jesus." He started out by saying, "For," that is, in the light of what I've just said that we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. He's just talked about the Law coming and that things being changed with reference to the Son coming. Things have been changed. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

And now, he goes on in chapter 4 to point out that we are no longer slaves but

we are sons. It's very much as if the apostle is emphasizing the thing that Israel still emphasizes today, the bar mitzvah, that is what has happened in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and those in the Old Testament who are under Law and in bondage to Law are now freed from that, and they are full fledged sons in our Lord Jesus Christ. You notice in Galatians chapter 4, and verse 1, "Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we," we Jewish men, believers, "when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Marvelous unfolding of what we could call a significant change in the way in which God dealt with believers.

In the Old Testament times under Law, in the present time no longer under Law. We're not talking about salvation, because in the Old Testament men were saved by grace, too, as well as in the New Testament. So any change that he's talking about, and he's talking about it has to do, not with salvation, it has to do with Christian life truth. So as Old Testament believers were under Law, in the age of our Lord, the Christian age today they are not under Law. That doesn't mean, of course, that you may go out and live contrary to the moral nature of the Law of God. As a matter of fact, he says the true believer will be led by the Spirit and the righteousness of the Law should be the reasonable expectation as a product of the life of the believer in Christ.

Why do we have to say we are under Law though we're not under Law? And if we're not under Law, then we may live as we please. Paul talks against that in the fifth chapter of this epistle. We're not saying that a person who says, "I am not under Law as a code," is free to live as he pleases. He is not free to live as he pleases. He has a higher

standard. And the higher standard is the personal indwelling Holy Spirit to whom he is responsible.

Now, he said, "For we are all the sons of God." Neither male nor female, the fundamental distinctions in ancient society were here, distinction in sex has no relevance to status in Christ. One person in Christ Jesus, equality of inheritance is the point that Paul is talking about, heirship. He's not talking about roles within the church. He's talking about heirship. So that's what we look for. And he winds up verse 29 by underlining heirship. I'd like to say just a few words before we close about modern interpretations of Galatians 3:28. I'll just concentrate on a couple of the feminist arguments, probably the most important of the arguments as over against historic orthodoxy. Because I think we see, if we look at the men who have lived down through the years in the Christian church, there has been a testimony, a vast harmonious testimony to the fact that the male has been given spiritual headship in the family and in the church. That is the teaching, I think, without question of the word of God. And that's why some call such teaching patriarchy. They know that it goes all the way back to the time of the fathers.

Two men have spoken specifically about this. I'd like to mention them. And one is Paul King Jewett. Professor Jewett died not too long ago. I'll make no jokes about what he believes now. But Jewett sees the Bible as basically contradictory on the relationship of men and women in Christ and the church. Professor Jewett was an evangelical man, a fine Christian man, a Calvinist incidentally, and thus I have a great deal of sympathy with his views. What he says, however, is that the Bible is basically contradictory on the point. He said the reason for it is that Paul follows rabbinic exegesis, which taught subordination. "But Paul," he said, "redeemed himself for following rabbinic exegesis rather than New Testament revelation by this magnificent," what he calls "this brilliant piece of biblical insight." "There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." And here

Professor Jewett says, "Paul rises above the rabbinic teaching and rises above his own background and sets forth something that we are to follow by," I say, what he calls "a piece of brilliant insight." Of course, I think you can see that in Galatians, I hope you can see there is no denial by Paul of distinction of roles. There is no denial by Paul of distinction in offices. There is no denial of Paul between distinctive relationships in the family of God. He hasn't said anything like that. He's been talking simply about the relationship in Christ that has to do with justification by faith. So Professor Jewett, it seems to me, has in effect said that the Bible as we have it is not inspired inherently. But Paul is guilty of error in understanding the truth of God by following rabbinic exegesis and talking about man and woman and their relationship in the church as being one of the submission of women to the husband's leadership and the submission of women to the leadership of elders within the church.

I would imagine that most of you in this audience would find it very difficult to believe that in the Bible we have contradictory pieces of doctrinal information and contradictory pieces even in the Apostle Paul himself. This is an evangelical man, but obviously does not hold the strongest opinion of the inspiration of the word of God.

Another man is Professor Cline Snodgrass, and Professor Snodgrass has a simple approach, which I think we've also already said some things about. He traces hierarchy, that is the relationship of man as head to Genesis chapter 3 and the fact that there Eve was placed under a particular judgment and therefore the relationship is a relationship of hierarchy that can be traced back to the fall. But, as Professor Snodgrass and others have said, "Redemption has changed that." And therefore that kind of hierarchy no longer exists. Incidentally, Professor Snodgrass also talks about what he calls the iron handed of those who insist on taking the Bible as it is written. In other words, if you believe that the Scriptures are inherent in the originals then you are an iron-handed handler of the word of God.

Think for a moment, if we talk about the Christian church and we say that the female rests under male headship, then we cannot talk about the family except in the same kind of language. In other words, the headship of male in the church goes along with headship in the family. They go together. The word of God makes that very plain. We cannot distinguish those points. So the distinctions in home and church belong together. Ronald Fung, who has written a rather recent book on Galatians, has something to say, and I'd like to turn to it. It's in the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, a book that was issued by the council on biblical manhood and womanhood. Some of you know that I'm a member of that committee and serve on the executive committee, actually, of it. This book, incidentally, was issued last year, and I noticed that *Christianity Today* has called it the leading biblical book of 1991. The council was very pleased over it. It's a collection of articles on the subject of evangelical feminism. And of course, I think it's something each one of you should get and should read. Some of the articles within it, there are many of them, some of them you wouldn't be interested in, but I think that some of them you would be very interested in.

Ronald Fung, and evangelical who has written a commentary on Galatians in recent months said this, "It seems precarious to appeal to this verse, Galatians 3:28, in support of any view of the role of women in the church for two reasons. Paul's statement is not concerned with role relationships of men and women within the body of Christ, but rather with their common initiation into it through faith and baptism." What I've been saying, justification by faith. Second, the male/female distinction unlike the other two, Gentiles, slaves, has its roots in creation so that the parallelism between the male/female pair and the other pair may not be unduly trussed." I find that very biblical, imminently biblical and reasonable to look at it that way.

I'd like to conclude with the historic orthodoxy argument. With the Spirit's presence in the heart, all our hearts, if you're here tonight and you have believed in Jesus Christ Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit resides permanently in your heart, in your life.



That's what the believer has been given as a result of what Christ has done through the instrumentality of the faith that he has granted to believing individuals. So with the Spirit's presence in the heart, as he has promised us, and the Son's and the apostle's interpretation of the Scriptures in hand, for remember what we have in the New Testament, particularly in the epistles is the interpretation of the biblical revelation by the apostles, and in the case of the gospels the same thing. We have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Paul, and the others who are interpreting the biblical revelation as they understand it. And so we have the Holy Spirit within our hearts. We have their interpretation of Scripture, as well as our Lord's interpretation of the Old Testament. And with those things in our hands, the church, for we are part of the church, has affirmed that egalitarianism in status is biblical. That is, that females have the same status in the body of Christ that every believing male has. But males do not have any spiritual blessings in status that every female believing person does not have. Egalitarianism in status is, it seems, from the teaching of the word of God, the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, the apostles' interpretation, our Lord's interpretation, that stands I think without question.

But nevertheless, the church has also affirmed distinction in role through the centuries. In Old Testament there was distinction in role in Israel, in the present down through the centuries of the Christian era distinction in role has been affirmed by the church. The creeds are more important than individuals always and so consequently when we read the history of the Christian church and the history of its interpretation of the Bible we begin, I'm speaking of myself, I begin; we I think should begin by assuming that the church is probably right in its interpretation of the word of God. That's why, incidentally, if you're here in this audience and you have not studied the history of Christian doctrine at all, you should rush out of here, and if at all possible get your hands on a book that has to do with the history of Christian doctrine if only to broaden your understanding of the Christian church, its history through the centuries, and where we

who are here in this auditorium, representing generally Believers Chapel, where we stand within the flow of Christian thought, how important that is. You need to understand the Christian and church identity.

So we affirm that we assume the church is probably right. Does this have any practical significance? Tremendous practical significance? What does it say with reference to charismatic teaching? Well it tells us that Tilton has come along in nineteen hundred and whatever, and therefore teaching something contrary to the word of God that Christians should begin by saying its probably wrong. We study the word of God. We do not find the Christian church has believed these things down through the years that are proclaimed today by the charismatics. And so from that standpoint, that doesn't settle the question, but from that standpoint we begin that the church has probably been right, and the kind of teaching that we associate with charismatic teaching is probably not biblical. Exegesis, I think, makes it very plain that that is true.

Universalism, universalism is common doctrine in the churches today. Presbyterian, some Baptists, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Christians, that is the Christian denomination, these groups are filled with those who believe in universalism. That doctrine, there have been times in the Christian church when it has kind of reared its head. But the vast majority of Christians have ruled it to be heresy, and you and I, when we face things that are ruled to be heresy by the teaching of the Christian church down through the centuries, we should begin with probably the church has been right. Investigate the word of God and see the reasons why the church has ruled such teaching heretical.

Conditional immortality, even when such a person, as fine a person as John Stott, who has affirmed conditional immortality. The Christian church has not believed conditional immortality. So far as I know never has that doctrine been universally believed by the Christian church, or generally believed by the Christian church. It has been recognized in the beginning as heretical. And while it persisted here and there, and

one can find something similar to that in origin, one of the church fathers, nevertheless the church as a whole has not believed it. The creeds of the Christian church nowhere set forth conditional immortality as a doctrine that a body of believers have believed.

As a matter of fact, charismatic teaching is not in any of the creeds of the church, historical creeds; so universalism is not in any of the historical creeds of the Christian church. There is not a single historical creed that affirms universalism. Should that make you suspicious when you hear an evangelical, so-called professing evangelicals talk about Universalism? Clark Pennick, his view is probably more carefully related to conditional immortality, but nevertheless recently he has endorsed a book that has to do with the denial of eternal punishment. So time is up and I just want to say this, that when we talk about these things that are found in the word of God, and when we talk about the creeds of the churches, let us not think that we are above studying what the Holy Spirit has taught the church down through the years. Let us take a more humble attitude and realize that it's probably unlikely that you and I, not spending the time that some of the great men of history have spent in the study of the word of God itself, that we should seek to put ourselves above them and affirm "But what does the Bible say?" And come to something contrary to what the church has generally believed.

Abraham Kuyper was right. There's nothing wrong in making creeds. It's only when we stop making creeds that we error, because the Scriptures were always our final authority. All the creeds should be judged by them. But we should be careful that we have properly studied holy Scripture when we differ from those great creeds. So the patriarchal principle dating from Genesis 1 and 2, not Genesis 3, affirms that men and women are one in Christ, but they have different roles. Put in popular language, we are all on God's team. We're approaching football season, the Cowboy team is coming. So far as I know all the men on the team, the forty-five or forty-seven or whatever it is who finally make the team, they have equal membership in the team, but they don't all play the same position. They're not all quarterback. There are defensive ends. There are

defensive tackles. There are centers. There are defensive guards. There are offensive tackles. There are offensive men who play various positions. There are cornerbacks and halfbacks, and safeties, and even strong safeties, and weak safeties, and they're all part of the team. They have different roles but they're equal. They're part of the team. In fact, you don't really have a good team, if you don't have that kind of team.

We in America say we are one nation under God, don't we? How many of us have the right to ride in Air Force One? Come on. Come on Christians. We are equal, equal in citizenship, but try to get on Air Force One. There is a different role that the man in Washington has than our role in society. It's all in the word of God if we study it sufficiently. Let me just stop by citing two texts and I think you will see the point. John 10:30 says this; our Lord is speaking, he says, "I and my Father are one." "I and my Father are one." Could say even one thing, one. So the Father and the Son are one. Chapter 14 and verse 30 says this, verse 28, "You have heard me say I am going away and coming back to you. If you love me you would rejoice because I said I'm going to the Father for my Father is greater than I." "I and the Father are one." But "The Father is greater than I." One in substance, one in the possession of infinite deity, but different roles for a time, as a matter of fact, for a long time the Son subject to the Father carrying out his mediatorial task, but at the same time equal in the possession of full deity. So when Scripture tells us we are all one in Christ, whether male or female we are, all of us. We have the same blessings, but different roles does not in any way destroy the fact that we're equal in Christ.

I'm sorry to go two minutes over time. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God. We are thankful for the things that the apostles have written. Help us to understand truly what Scriptures say. Give us submissiveness to Thy word. And help us Lord also to, by Thy grace, put ourselves as we think of ourselves as believers in the church of Jesus Christ, in the great...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**