
Title: How the Household Works

Text: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Speaker: Pastor Chad Bresson

Introduction

Today we continue our series on Leadership in the home. Last week we heard Pastor Russ talk about the biblical theology of the home, tracing the development of the home in our Bibles from its very beginnings in the garden in Genesis to the church in the New Covenant era. The seminal thought, especially as I've heard it expressed among us this week is: before she is my wife, she is my sister. The marriage is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and his church. Today we want to peel one more layer off of that thought... or take it one step further. Who or what sets the priority for how the household is supposed to work? And what does a family of families look like in the New Covenant?

Scott Calvin has a family problem. Scott and his son Charlie spend Christmas Eve together alone. As the story unfolds, Scott, a divorcee, hasn't had much time for family. Through a series of events that involve Scott invoking the Santa Claus and assuming the role of St. Nick, Scott begins the process of reconnecting with and rehabilitating a relationship with his son Charlie. Unfortunately for Scott and Charlie, Charlie's mom, also Scott's ex-wife, doesn't quite grasp the Santa part... a custody battle ensues... and Scott Calvin finds himself staring through the window of a home that isn't his, at a family that was once his. The dissolution of Scott Calvin's family is complete. Or is it? Through another series of events, Scott's ex, through the love of father and son realizes that indeed Scott Calvin is Santa Claus. In this climax of the Christmas tale, Father and son Charlie are reunited. Family has been restored... at least as Scott Calvin has come to view it. In that moment of resolving the conflict in the story, Scott informs his son Charlie that he believes Charlie is better off spending this Christmas Eve with his ex and her new husband. Scott's act of fatherly selflessness includes this line: "I can't be selfish. I can't be with you all the time. We're a family. You, me, your mom, and Neal." We watched the Santa Clause again as a family this past December. And in the silence that followed Tim Allen's utterance of that line, I hear my son Luke ask, "Dad, how can they be a family?" Good question, Luke. Scott Calvin's only way to make sense of his broken world is to redefine family, both for himself, and for Charlie. Tim Allen and Disney are offering us an alternative understanding of family that glosses over the dysfunction and the lack of leadership and fatherhood inherent to that dysfunction.

Scott Calvin is not alone. This is reality in American life. The family institution has undergone some dramatic shifts. Over the past few weeks, instead of visiting two sets of grandparents, many kids visit four sets. It didn't used to be that way. Since the mid to late 1970's... in evangelicalism it has been popular to talk about the decline of the family. By the time that Ted and Joanna Kramer wage their silver screen custody battle in "Kramer vs. Kramer", the wheels are clearly off the traditional family wagon, with an escalating divorce rate and a declining marriage rate. Since then, evangelicalism has been quite vocal about the devolution of the traditional American family. By the time Mrs. Doubtfire is waging his own custody battle on the silver screen, the broken family unit has become part of who we are, rather than an anomaly of social conventions.

It's not too hard to put a list together of the ills that we see in our family institution. As we've mentioned a declining marriage rate, an abysmal divorce rate, increasing cohabitation, sky-rocketing single-parent families, absentee fathers, a bloated foster care system, the rise in the numbers joining American gangs, increasing numbers of families led by same-sex couples, invitrofertilization for same-sex families, the feminization of the male, gender identity issues in the home... and the list goes on and on. The popular deconstruction of the family unit has evolved to include "the nonessential fathers." So-called family units are viewed as not needing a leader, not needing a father. Male leaders don't matter. Fathers aren't necessary.

I'm inclined to think that the dysfunctional family institution has always been present in our culture (after all, "dysfunctional" to some extent defines all of us). I'm also inclined to think because of the media and instant communication AND a change in what our society thinks about transparency and privacy and loss of stigma, we know more and hear more and see more of the dysfunction that has always been present. But we are also a bit foolhardy if we ignore the numbers that suggest there has been a shift in the way our society understands the family.

Most of us would agree that these are significant issues. But evangelicalism has been all over the map in terms of a response to the decline of the traditional household and offering a biblical perspective as to how the household is supposed to work. To her credit, the American church has recognized the problem, even as the church itself has not been immune from family issues. But for a church that understands the problem, the answers it has been provided have been anywhere from pretty helpful to somewhat helpful to little help at all. Much of it is passed off as "biblical". We've been encouraged to focus on the family; we've promoted fatherhood. We've created marriage resource centers. There are conferences and seminars for the family life. We encourage wives to lives of faith and men to keep their promises. The church pitches in to provide mentors for struggling couples. On a grander scale the church has pushed through marriage amendments, same sex marriage bans, and fatherhood initiatives.

This week I got an email brochure in my inbox from a Christian family group promoting one of their church-sponsored seminars for couples. And I like these people. These are my friends. Here are some of the topics listed: God's design for the marriage. Men's sacrificial love for their wives. The effect of sin on the marriage. The primary purpose of the marriage to glorify God. Leaving a legacy for your children in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who would argue that all families would benefit from such a seminar. But as I perused the brochure, it became apparent that a missing word that could not be found anywhere in the brochure is precisely what has been missing in the Christian's understanding of marriage, family, relationship, and leadership in the home: Church. Churches are involved. In fact, these seminars are being held in large churches. But church is nowhere to be found in the bullet point highlights of the family seminar. Which brings us to this: Is the church nothing more than a support group for the struggling marriage? Is the church nothing more than a resource center for dysfunction in the family? Is the church nothing more than a counseling center providing helpful advice for families weathering the hard knocks of life? Is the church nothing more than a hub for leadership training in the home? Not that any of these things are bad. And in fact, many of these things should happen. But if this is all there

is for the family, it seems that the church is one big support group.

If I were to ask you, in an effort to be biblical in answering Luke's question: how can that be a family?, where would you turn in your Bibles? You would turn in your Bibles to those passages you believe are an accurate reflection of the traditional family. Don't get me wrong. Those passages are helpful. But I want us to see something in the text that is present everywhere throughout the New Testament and is fundamental to the New Covenant community, if we simply adjust our thinking a bit.

Suffering for Jesus

And the text is probably one that is further down our pecking order. Our text this morning is found in 1 Peter chapter 3. Please turn there. Pastor Tim already has helped us unpack chapter 3 a bit. He dealt with the first seven verses last week. We will begin with verse 8:

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, **for to this you were called**, that you may obtain a blessing.

For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

The churches to whom Peter is writing are undergoing some tremendous suffering simply for being Christians. They are being verbally abused. If they are not being physically harmed or incarcerated, that kind of suffering is apparently right around the corner. From the language being used here, some of them were being unnecessarily dragged into court. Many in these churches have been displaced from their hometowns. They have undergone social rejection. Their suffering is unfair. It is unjust. It is probably illegal.

Peter's reminder

Into this adverse situation Peter reminds them of their new birth and their living hope in Jesus. Peter reminds them about who they are: a people who are Christ's possession. Peter reminds them about where they are going: they are pilgrims and exiles, destined for an eternal glory with Jesus that is out of this world. And Peter reminds them of what Christ has done for them: their sins have been removed in his death, they've been given right standing with God in Christ's righteousness, they've been given new life and a new hope in Christ's resurrection. He also reminds them

that their unfair suffering at the hands of those who pervert justice is not to be unexpected because this is the same kind of unfair suffering endured by Christ in his humiliation and death. For churches whose future does not look all that bright, Peter points their gaze to Jesus who has endured unimaginable suffering for them and to be an example.

And as Peter orients their thoughts toward who they are as Christ's redeemed people living in exile, he spends a good portion of his letter unpacking what life as an exile looks like. Even though they are exiles on a journey to an eternal glory-life with Jesus, they are to be a people marked by submission to the authorities and service to God. Even though the genuineness of their faith is being tested, they are to honor those who dishonor Christ.

The context for suffering

This kind of honor and submission isn't simply seen in their interaction with the authorities, it can be seen in the natural relationships they have with each other. Having addressed slaves and masters and wives and husbands in the last part of chapter 2 and the early part of chapter 3, or those relationships in the personal lives, he turns his attention to life with each other, within the body of Christ, and the disposition of the church in regards to outsiders, especially those who are persecuting the churches. Verse 8 pertains to life within the church body... how the church is with each other within the body. Verses 9 through the rest of the passage we've read, vs. 17, pertains to life outside of the body... how the body functions in society. For our purposes in this series, we will zero in on verse 8, while noting what is happening in the rest of the passage. The joint heirs disposition with each other in verse 8 can be summarized as "love". The church body's disposition with society in verse 9 and following can be summarized as "bless". A church whose members love each other in self-sacrificing ways, is poised to bless a society that is out to destroy it. Lives that orient themselves around bringing blessing to those who are bringing unjust suffering flow out of or spill out of other-oriented lives within the household. That's the rhythm of this passage... that's the relationship between verses 8 and 9 here.

And the interconnectedness of this passage also moves the other direction. When we come to verse 8, Peter has just finished addressing husbands and wives in verse seven, or the family units within the church and he addresses the entire body or the larger family unit. There's a reason I say this, which will be apparent in a minute. But he says "finally, all of you." No longer is this simply husbands and wives who are joint heirs, but all who are joint heirs in the church. Don't miss this thought that the husbands and wives are being addressed in verse 7 are also fellow exiles and pilgrims who are being unfairly persecuted themselves. It's kind of interesting... husbands are not to be the source of unjust suffering for their sisters in Christ, just as they themselves, as brothers and sisters, are suffering unjustly for Christ's sake. There is a seamless flow from verse 7 to verse 8... the smaller household is part of the larger household... the smaller household is *nested* within the larger, whole household. More about this in a minute.

Five directives (3:8)

So what are Peter's directions for the whole church body here in verse 8? What does life look like in the larger household? There are five directives Peter gives here that are to be characteristic of these exiles who constitute a chosen race, a royal priesthood,

a holy nation.. this people who are Christ's possession. These are actually five adjectives that have the force of commands... the way they are being used here. And of these five directives, the third one is the over-riding thrust of all of them. Just as Christ and Paul and John impress on the church in their teaching and writing that "love" is the supreme act, disposition, or motivation for the new creation, now Peter is saying the same thing. Life in Christ's household is to be marked by love.

Very briefly... the first command or directive here is that the entire household is to have a unity of mind. The idea is harmony. Jesus' people living together in community are to be characterized by harmony, not strife. There is to be a harmony, an internal cohesiveness, that bond together these living stones being built up as a spiritual house offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). Joint heirs are to live in harmony in the household of God.

The second adjective here is sympathy. The members of the body are to be compassionate with one another. Joint heirs are to be harmonious in their feelings for one another. This English word "sympathy" tends to mask what Peter is aiming at here, because it runs to the heart of the theme of 1 Peter. It quite literally means "to share and feel with in suffering". It is often used to describe a brotherly sharing or a familial sharing in suffering. The Christ-ordained salve for unjust suffering for Christ's sake coming from the outside is the sympathy and compassion to be found on the inside with other family members in Christ's body. This household is to be an oasis from "out there", a place where suffering saints come to find sympathy from brothers and sisters who themselves have come to the oasis for the same purpose. Compassion for outsiders must begin with compassion for each other on the inside.

The third directive here is brotherly love... think of this as the summary of all five adjectives here in this verse. This is the second time Peter has used the word "brotherly love" to describe the household... he does so in chapter 1... there it is used as a statement of fact about what the churches have become in the new birth. Here, it is used as a command... Peter, here is saying, "be what you are". The word for brotherly love here is the same root word from which we get the word "Philadelphia"... Quite literally a loving of the brothers and sisters. This word here carries with it the idea that there is a familial blood bond between brothers and sisters. This bond conveys emotional attachment and commitment. These living stones being built up into a spiritual house aren't simply to be nice to each other. This isn't simply a friendship where we might feel a common kinship with other members of the household. This is a self-sacrificing love between family members... if ever the popular American proverb, "the blood runs thicker than water" it should apply to members of Christ's household. The oasis for exiles within the larger household is a place where lives are laid down for each other... brothers and sisters who are family. While Christ's name may divide the physical nuclear family, it is here in the family of families that there is familial love and compassion uniting the New Covenant household together. The household is to be characterized by brotherly and sisterly love.

The fourth adjective here is tenderhearted. The word used here has much in common with the word used for sympathy. The idea here is a heart of compassion. Even more than sympathy this word aims at the inner orientation of the heart in compassion... in the sharing of inner emotion with family. Again, family is inherent to what Peter is conveying. The compassion to be found inside the household as a salve for the suffering outside of the household isn't to be contrived. There is genuine care and

concern, a sharing of feelings with those who are suffering. Life in the household will be characterized by a genuine affection for brothers and sisters who share in the inheritance being kept in heaven (1 Peter 1:4). There is an idea here that just as the suffering is collective of the whole household, so too is the compassion and affection inside the household... an affection that comes from within... an affection that is supernatural... a product of the new birth (1 Peter 1:23).

The last adjective used as a directive here in verse 8 is “a humble mind” or “humble-mindedness”. This word is going to appear again in chapter five. The thrust here is a disposition of subordination. The internal harmony of the New Covenant household is fueled by an internal disposition of brothers and sisters to put each other first... to subordinate my wants and my desires to others. There is an idea here in the word humility that doesn’t assert its rights over the rights of others, and in fact, lowers itself under someone else’s’ rights. Thus, just as we see in the sermon on the mount, there’s this thought that brothers and sisters in the household will take the internal posture of placing themselves in positions of disadvantage. Compassion and affection being shown in the midst of suffering is accompanied by an internal, and yes, Spirit-driven disposition of allowing others to have the advantage over us. There can be no self-sacrifice, there can be no compassion, there can be no familial bond of love without a genuine humility that places the best interests of others ahead of our own.

Blessing and Deliverance (3:9-17)

These are the characteristics of the spiritual house, Christ’s people who are his possession... poised, as chapter 2 verse 9 continues to proclaim Christ’s excellencies. What is happening on the inside of the household spills over into the rest of life in proclamation through Word and deed... even in the face of danger. And this is what we have in verse 9 of chapter 3. The household that models brotherly and sisterly love in lives of self-sacrifice are poised to respond to a repressive society in a way that speaks to the hope in Christ. The household is marked by brotherly and sisterly love AND can bless a world that intends evil because deliverance has been promised.

The language of this verse, along with verse 13, calls to mind the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6. In fact, Peter is bringing those Beatitudes and that Sermon to bear on the situation of the household:

Luke 6:22-36 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!...bless those who curse you... “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil...”

As the household loves each other and serves each other as brother and sister, as the household provides an oasis from the unjust suffering inflicted by those who would do the church harm, the church is to do the unexpected, the upside-down way of living. With the specter of unjust suffering simply for bearing the name of Christ, the church is to love and bless the very persecutors that are trying to kill it. Peter himself has witnessed the Suffering Servant, the One who delivered the Sermon on the Plain, resist

the temptation to revile when he was reviled. Christ not only taught the unexpected and lived the unexpected, he *was* the unexpected. The church is to pattern its disposition towards outsiders after Christ.

The church perseveres in this manner because it has the hope of a future deliverance by the very Person who is the immediate cause for their suffering. They suffer simply for being identified with the Son of Man. This same Jesus will be their deliverer. The risen and exalted Christ will come to the rescue of his people.

In orienting the household's gaze to Christ the Deliverer on His throne, Peter quotes Psalm 34. We don't have time to go to Psalm 34. But Psalm 34, a Psalm of deliverance, is quoted here in chapter 3 verses 10-12. The thrust of Peter's use here focuses in on the risen and exalted Christ whose eyes are on the righteous. What gives rise to the commands to exhibit brotherly and sisterly love and to bless those who are unjustly persecuting Christ's people is the exalted Christ who rules on his throne who doesn't miss a thing. He sees the suffering of His people and He will deliver them. The response to verbal abuse from those who hate the church is not a response in kind, but entrusting our lives and our health, our destiny... i.e. our salvation, to the One who judges justly (see the parallel between 1 Peter 2:23 and 1 Peter 3:12). And we do this in community. This is why the church is an oasis. We sympathize with each other in our suffering and love each other as brother and sister... we exist in family because we have entrusted ourselves to the One who has redeemed for himself this family and will, at some point, rescue us from what means to do us harm. The church loves eternal life and loves the hope of being with her Savior forever because she has entrusted herself to the Righteous Judge who will right all of the wrongs and vindicate His people.

The use of this Psalm here is an emphatic statement that there is an end to the suffering in sight. There will be a final realization of the inheritance and hope we have in Christ. Peter's point here is that divine deliverance, in the Person of the One who has redeemed for himself a people, is coming. Christ the Lord knows all and sees all. The righteous do not escape his eye. The perseverance of the household in its empathy for each other in suffering and its blessing of its persecutors is motivated by a hope in One who will fully and finally deliver it from the evil age. And as the church perseveres in its unjust suffering, it perseveres as those who already have been blessed. The church need not fear its persecutors because Christ, who sits on his throne in heaven, sees everything and will bring all things to justice.

Christ, our example (2:21-25)

But one might wonder, how it is that a household living as exiles in a fallen world can live up to the expectations of verses 8 and 9. Verse 9 holds a clue here... notice Peter's statement "to this you have been called". That phrase is a link back to verse 21 of chapter 2... we don't have time to unpack it all this morning, but the similarity in language here and the rest of our passage to this passage in chapter 2 tells us that these are parallel passages. Our passage this morning mirrors chapter 2 verses 21 and following.

And what do those verses tell us?

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile

in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

While our passage in chapter 3 pulls from this the church's response to a persecuting world, the example provided by Christ here also functions as the example for life within the household. Christ suffering for the church, leaving for the household an example to follow. The church is to persevere in its suffering. Christ exhibits self-sacrifice for his church. The church is to self-sacrifice for each other. Christ has born the punishment for our sin so that we might die to all of our selfish behavior and live to the righteousness that is manifest in compassion and tenderheartedness and brotherly and sisterly love. Where do we go to find not only our example and our motivation in humility and service to each other? We take a good long look at the One who laid down his life for his people. We self-sacrifice for each other because he paid the ultimate sacrifice for us. The household is to be marked by a cross-kind of life because of Christ's cross-kind of death on behalf of and for His people. Why is it that I prefer my brothers and sisters over my own agenda? Because that's what Christ did for us. Why is it that I have compassion and share in the sufferings of my brothers and sisters in this house? Because that's what Christ has done for us. Christ's self-sacrificial pattern for the church found in chapter 2 is lived out in the life of the community of believers in chapter 3 verses 8 through 17.

Joint-heirs (3:1-7)

And finally, this household that is following in the cross-kind of steps of her redeemer provides the context for what Peter says about wives and husbands (and servants and masters) in chapter 3:1-7. Much could be said about the link between our passage this morning and the passage that Pastor Tim looked at last week. But just this... wives and husbands are to be living the same kind of cross-kind of lives at home. Verse 8 provides the backdrop for verse 7. The reason husbands are to be living with their wives as joint-heirs in an understanding way is because this is the kind of life that is expected in the larger community. The larger community provides the pattern for the home, not the other way around. That's the upshot of these seven verses being nested between what Peter says about Christ and his death and what Peter says about life in the household. Husbands and wives live as joint-heirs because they are brothers and sisters. Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way because this is brotherly and sisterly and sympathetic and compassionate love in humility being worked out in the home. This is what brotherly love looks like. It's not simply my wife is my sister. My wife is my sister in Christ's household. This household, the church, is the reality; our nuclear families are the copies. Just as Christ and his bride, the church are the reality and our marriages are the copies, so too the church patterns family life as the reality for that which is supposed to be a reflection, the individual family.

See, the church has had it backwards. Implicit in the help the church has attempted to provide the dysfunctional family institution is this idea that the church family is reflective of the nuclear family. This is why the church goes missing from the equation and if it participates in family matters, it does so as support for the family. Instead, Peter is suggesting here that the church, Christ's household, provides the pattern for

family life (and there are more implications in that statement than we have time for). The family doesn't simply look to the church for guidance. The family must see in the church a model of what family life is supposed to look like. If nothing else, the family must understand that the life of the church is fundamental to life in the home.

Conclusion

The implications for those providing leadership in the home are tremendous... which is why the natural progression of Peter's explanation of life in Christ's household leads him to a discussion of the responsibilities of elders in chapter 5. And you look at his comments there, and you will find thoughts that are being spelled out here. Peter doesn't say it as explicitly as Paul but the thought is here: husbands, love your wives in a cross-kind of way as Christ loved his people to the point of dying for her. Husbands, sympathize with your sister in Christ. Be tenderhearted, compassionate, even as Christ has shown you compassion. May humility be a mark of your leadership, giving your wife preferential treatment. Promote harmony in the home in your life of self-sacrifice. She is God's grace to you, bought and purchased by Christ. Together you are brother and sister, joint-heirs, part of the holy nation and royal priesthood that is the community of Christ.

The model for this kind of self-sacrificial leadership in the home is to be provided by Christ's household. We must wrap ourselves around the idea that if the home is to prosper, if the nuclear home is to be all that it is supposed to be, we must model these five characteristics among ourselves here in this household. Husbands will learn how to lead their wives in a sympathetic and tenderhearted way as they see us model self-sacrifice and humility within Christ's household. We must be aware that this household is the pattern for the individual households within the body. It is here that we must model Christ for the benefit and well-being of the whole body. All of us must continually be conscious that our practice of these five things here in this household will have a bearing on how these five things are practiced within the individual family units. The church is fundamental to healthy family life, not simply as a support group, but as the place where the community models for the family the brotherly and sisterly love that is to be found in the home. The answer for the dysfunctional family (and btw, all of our families, because they are fallen, have a certain amount of dysfunction)... the answer for what ails the family unit arises out of the life of the church.

You begin to understand why the elders, in a crisis of family – whatever it is, will stress the importance of being connected to the church body. This isn't simply to promote the church as a support group. This isn't even simply to provide mentors for those who need help. Nor is it simply a mechanism for self-improvement. It may be all of those things. No... we emphasize community in face of severe trouble and turmoil, because it is here that your very life is sustained.. through the teaching and preaching of the word and the fellowship of the saints. This is the place where family is modeled. This community is the context not only where you will experience and enjoy harmony, sympathy, brotherly and sisterly love, tenderheartedness and humility, but you will practice it yourself, even as the community models all of these things.

And as much as the church is faithful to the feeding Christ to its members through the Word, the church invests itself in the families of the church. Thus, more than a support group, the local church is where the family participates in the kingdom. Rather than the family giving meaning to the church (which is implicit in much of the pop evangelicalism literature), it is the church providing a sense of purpose and meaning for the family, as a family of families.

There are some hard questions then in the wake of what Peter says here and how the American church has typically addressed this issue. Could it be we don't know how to biblically lead our families because we don't see it in the church? Could it be that we have chronically dysfunctional family units because we are dysfunctional churches? Could it be that husbands and wives don't get along because church leaders can't get along? Could it be husbands don't self-sacrifice because when they are around the church body they don't see much self-sacrifice? Could it be that families are less inclined to follow the agenda of the church body because they do not experience the preferring of one another in church life? Could it be that fathers are not leading cross-kinds of life because they do not see church leaders acting and behaving in a cross-kind of way? Could it be that wives struggle with submission because they submission to one another is nowhere to be found in community life? Could it be that children are less inclined to obey because they are involved in a church that doesn't obey Jesus?

Oh... may this never be true of us. If we are to be models for the home, if we are to empathize with the suffering, if we are to invite the world to hear our message, we must cast our gaze on Jesus who suffered for us. Christ not only left us an example, he became our example. We model, because he first modeled for us. Christ bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. Because he has done this for us, we are free to live cross-kinds of lives for each other here in Christ's household.