

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! Down are the purple and black altar cloths of Lent and Good Friday. Up are our voices proclaiming: He is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia! Already last month we celebrated Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and this month we get to continue that celebration. It is a celebration which means a lot to us. If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, we would be the most pitiful people on earth. But as it is, He has risen, and we know we will as well! This month we also continue our study of Luther's Table of Duties.



Flipping the page from where we left off last month, we go from the roles of government and its citizens to those of husbands and wives. Luther quotes first Peter "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers" as well as Paul from his letter to the Colossians "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them (maroon Small Catechism, p. 38)."

As a single, currently girlfriend-less man, I do not have much wisdom to add to this from my own experience. So instead, I will add what I've heard others say in our Doxology study in St. Louis last year, as well as words of wisdom from the ESV Lutheran Study Bible. The role of husband incorporates more than just being willing to lay down one's life for one's wife as did our Lord Christ Jesus. It means listening to how your wife's day has gone, and actually listening to her, not just hearing her. It means sacrificing time spent elsewhere to be with her and listen to her. Being in marriage is

having made a commitment. Note some of the things that occur in relationships lived outside of marriage from the ESV Study Bible (p. 2126): “C. Those who lived together have unhappier marriages: cohabitants without plans to marry were more inclined to argue, hit, shout, and have an unfair division of labor in the home...G. Cohabiting men tend to want a woman who will cook and clean for them rather than being a lifelong partner.”

So, as opposed to those who cohabit, you men who are married are called to serve your wives, not through violence, shouting, or domination, but through sharing a lifelong engagement, with a shared division of labor. You’ve probably heard me talk about Dr. Joel Bierman’s (from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) desire to have a portion of lawn to mow in the new heavens and new earth. That might partially be because he shares the mowing duties with his wife. Why? Because she enjoys it, too. He doesn’t deny her that right because he is the head of the household, but holds her in respect and listened to her when she said that she enjoyed doing it.

“To Wives Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Eph. 5:22 They are submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 1 Peter 3:5-6 (Small Catechism, p.38).”

Here again, I will not claim to have any knowledge of my own whatsoever as I am not only single, but also male. Doxology last year reminded us that men are more different from women than white men are from black, so I will again refer to other sources. In the American Edition of Luther’s Works, as found in the commentary notes on Genesis 1:27, we find Luther writing of the role of women: “In the household the wife is a partner in the management and has a common interest in the children and the property, and yet there is a great difference between the sexes.”

This statement from Luther resonates with what we heard at Doxology. In the process of dating, there is usually something to a couple who has many shared interests. Opposites can attract and sometimes that may work, but more often marriages work well when there is a common concern for the

same things. After all, in marriage, wives and husbands become one flesh, and it does no good for them to be at odds over many things as one flesh. In my premarital counseling sessions, we have a questionnaire called Prepare/Enrich which the couples fill out, helping them to see if they are on the same page about financial matters, how to raise their children, so on and so forth. As I tell the fiancés, this test does not mean that they can't marry, it's just a picture of where they are there and then, at that moment in time. From there, we practice active-listening, where one speaks about a particular topic while the other actively listens, so as to repeat back what they hear to be judged by the speaker. Then the roles are reversed. This is a fine First Article gift (a method from secular society which can be used even by those of us in the church) and I have had to do it many times from college to Seminary to even now. Too often we only hear and don't listen (such as that air conditioner humming you didn't notice until I mentioned it, or something of the like).

I hope and pray that this is of benefit to you in your current state, whether single or married, if you are a man or a woman, whether it is the first time you have heard these things, or the hundredth. Hopefully next time will be something with which your pastor can relate a little better! In the meantime, remember that whether male or female, single, dating, fiancés, or married, He is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia! giving all of us the assurance of sins forgiven on the cross and of new life with Christ our Savior as the firstfruits, with us to follow!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh



Remember! If you're having any kind of personal or family situation, whether the joy of having a child or the fright of having surgery, I'm just a call away to bring you God's Word and gifts!