

And He Shall Rule Over You Rule In The Church After The Fall The Calov Conference

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Introduction:

Where there is rule, there is order, there is law. The absence of sin does not necessitate the absence of law. That is a logical fallacy born out of the belief that law is only necessary when there is sin. There are many who believe that there was no rule or hierarchy before the fall into sin...because there was no sin. That belief has had a profoundly negative effect on how rule has been viewed after the fall into sin. Rule after the fall, according to many, is viewed only as a punitive reality.

This paper will examine a few differing viewpoints on rule before and after the fall, along with biblical realities that expose the weaknesses of these viewpoints. I will also show how the rule that the husband is to have over his wife is beautifully revealed in the peace of Christ that is to have dominion in the hearts of Christians. This directly relates to rule in the church after the fall. We will also look at how we move forward in the church to recover male rule and headship in the church where it has been usurped, sidestepped, or ignored, for various reasons.

Viewpoints on rule before and after the fall:

Where there is rule, there must, of necessity, also be law, and therefore order. There are commentators who claim that before the fall into sin, there was an egalitarian system in place, where man and woman are viewed as equals, and there is no hierarchy. It appears that this position arises out of a view of Genesis 3:16 which presupposes that God's word here serves no other purpose than to be punitive. God says to the woman: *I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.* The assumption is made that before the fall

there was no rule or hierarchy, and that the rule and hierarchy spoken by God in Genesis 3:16 is exclusively a punishment for the failure to keep egalitarianism in place. Some strains of egalitarianism would see the man and the woman before the fall as equals in the eyes of God as to their importance to Him as their Creator. Other strains of egalitarianism would see the man and woman as equals to one another, so that there is no rule or hierarchy present among and between them.

This begs the question: If there was no rule or hierarchy present before the fall into sin, would that not in and of itself entail chaos and disorder, something which God replaced simply by creating? The Scripture says that the *earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep (Genesis 1:2)*. When God said, *Let there be light, (v. 3)*, order, shape, and form was brought to that which was without form and void. While it is true that the man and woman were not yet there, this is quite beside the point. Order, shape, and a rule was already being established as God spoke, and it was done.

When God created man, He said: *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (Gen. 1:26)*. Dominion is from the Latin, *dominus*, meaning to dominate. Man was to dominate, that is, rule over the fish, birds, livestock, etc. When man exercises this agency, he is exercising control. God's own image and likeness have a dominion and rule, and so also then must man's image have a dominion and rule. Since it is part of God's nature to have dominion and rule, so also it is part of man's nature to have dominion and rule. That authority came from God, for there is no authority except from God, the apostle Paul tells us in Romans.

The man exercised his dominion and rule not only in naming the animals, but in naming the one God made from his rib, woman (Isha). As such, she was taken out of man, only to be returned to him by God, being put under his rule. What kind of rule? A rule that was to be for

her benefit, not her detriment. Nonetheless, contrary to most contemporary voices, she was put under him. Most contemporary voices, view being under someone else as degrading, demeaning, and lessening their potential as an individual. These are the same kind of voices that accuse the apostle Paul of being a misogynist because he says the woman is the weaker vessel to the man. Was it not true that Eve was already the weaker vessel to Adam before the Fall into sin? After all, since Adam is unambiguously rebuked for heeding the voice of his wife, just who do these contemporary voices suppose the one whose voice was to be heeded, would it have sounded forth in the first place? Was Adam not to protect Eve from eating of the fruit of the tree, and is protection of another not itself an exercise of rule, since rule itself assumes responsibility? Is not protection for the benefit of another.

Because contemporary voices see God's words in Genesis 3:16 as only being punitive (a reaction by an angry God to something done wrong by man), they can only see the relationship of Adam and Eve before the Fall into sin as being one without rule and hierarchy. This narrow view of the law sees man's rule over the woman as something that came about because of man's own wrongdoing in the first place. It thinks little to nothing about God's own image and nature bearing and carrying within Himself the entirety of the eternal law. In other words, the law is in God Himself, and since the law is in God Himself, and is engrained in His own image, the image in which He also created man, then man also has the law in himself, but not as a punitive reality...yet.

Zachary Garris, a Presbyterian pastor in New Mexico, speaks of 3 possible explanations of Genesis 3:16, in each case assuming that there is hierarchy and male headship:

- 1) To reaffirm the creation marital hierarchy as a continued blessing;
- 2) To describe the perversion of marital roles;
- 3) Predict that the wife will desire to escape the husband's authority but prescribe that the husband must exercise godly rule to restrain his wife.

Garris completed his article by saying this regarding Genesis 3:16: “Regardless of how we understand Genesis 3:16, the point still stands that the fall introduced frustration into the marriage relationship. (This is true even if view 1 is adopted.) It was not that a husband’s authority and a wife’s submission were introduced as a result of the fall (as some egalitarians claim happened in Genesis 3:16), but rather that this hierarchical relationship was part of the created order and was now frustrated by the fall. Like all things, a husband’s authority and a wife’s submission are subject to corruption because of sin. Yet hierarchy between the sexes comes from the creation order, not the fall. It is not something to be overcome but something to be embraced as God’s good design.”ⁱ

My position on Gen. 3:16 lines up with Garris’ 3rd explanation, again, under the assertion that there was indeed rule and hierarchy before the fall. The man had dominion over the animals, as well as over the woman. Because God indicts Adam for heeding the voice of his wife, Adam’s voice should have had the rule here, if only he would have spoken. Protection is a responsibility that is baked into ruling and hierarchy. Garris’ 3rd explanation is that the wife will desire to escape the husband’s authority but prescribe that the husband must exercise godly rule to restrain his wife. I think the clearest argument in favor of this position comes from Genesis 4:7, where God preemptively warns Cain after both he and his offering are rejected by God. This verse has the same construction as Gen. 3:16. In the case of the woman God is telling her that she will desire to take her husband’s place as the head and ruler, but that he shall rule over her. In the case of Cain God tells him that sin’s desire is for him, but that he must rule over his sin. Adam will have dominion over Eve, Cain was to have dominion over sin.

If we were to speak of these instances in terms of the three uses of the law, I assert that God’s words to the man and the woman would be both 2nd and 3rd use. His words expose the sin, while at the same time giving instruction as to how things need to go in the future. God’s words to Cain would be 1st use. God is being preemptive, so that Cain would not commit the sin, which is already in his heart to commit, namely, to kill his brother Abel.

What about the early church fathers:

In a homily on 1 Timothy 2:13-14, John Chrysostom said this regarding Genesis 3:16: “*Your submission shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.* For the woman taught the man once, and made him guilty of disobedience, and wrought our ruin. Therefore, because she made a bad use of her power over the man, or rather her equality with him, God made her subject to her husband. “Your desire shall be to your husband?” This had not been said to her before. But how was Adam not deceived? If he was not deceived, he did not then transgress? Attend carefully. The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me.” But the man did not say, The woman deceived me, but, “she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Now it is not the same thing to be deceived by a fellow-creature, one of the same kind, as by an inferior and subordinate animal. This is truly to be deceived. Compared therefore with the woman, he is spoken of as “not deceived.” For she was beguiled by an inferior and subject, he by an equal. Again, it is not said of the man, that he “saw the tree was good for food,” but of the woman, and that she “did eat, and gave it to her husband”: so that he transgressed, not captivated by appetite, but merely from the persuasion of his wife.”ⁱⁱ

Chrysostom seems to have the kind of egalitarian view that believes that God equally regarded the man and the woman, whom He created in His own image, rather than the man and woman being equal with no established hierarchy or rule in place.

Ambrose of Milan, in his work “On Paradise” takes the position that Eve was to serve under her husband’s power, not only so that she would not be inclined to do wrong, but that she would be governed by his counsel. He writes: “She was to serve under her husband’s power, first, that she might not be inclined to do wrong, and, secondly, that, being in a position subject to a stronger vessel, she might not dishonor her husband, but on the contrary, might be governed by his counsel. (1 Pet. 3:7) I see clearly here the mystery of Christ and His Church. The Church’s turning toward Christ in times to come and a religious servitude submissive to the Word of God, these are conditions far better than the liberty of

this world. Hence it is written: 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and shall serve him only.' (Deut. 6:13; Lk. 4:8) Servitude, therefore, of this sort is a gift of God. Wherefore, compliance with this servitude is to be reckoned among blessings." ⁱⁱⁱ

Luther on Genesis 3:16

I think Luther takes a beautiful approach to Gen. 3:16, seeing the punishment meted out by God in view of the promise already having been made: *This punishment is inflicted on the woman, but it is a happy and joyful punishment, because it is not out of harmony with the earlier verdict which was pronounced upon Satan. If this stands, that the head of the serpent must be crushed, the hope for resurrection from the dead is sure. Then whatever is inflicted on the human race is bearable, provided this hope remains unshaken.* ^{iv} We all, as well as the contemporary exegetes, would do well to consider this reality. The law as punishment which is given here is not void of hope and the promise. What should be seen is that this punishment is not given for its own sake, as if now the woman be oppressed under the hand of man, as if before she were completely free from any order, law, or hierarchy, but rather that she too will be delivered by the Man who will crush the serpent's head.

The apostle Paul in Galatians 3 writes: *Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.* In the curse, the birth pangs of the woman are complemented by the pain imposed on man in eating the food of the ground, along with the sweat of his face. None of these impositions are punitive in and of themselves but are to serve to point us to the hope in the promise. Luther says regarding Galatians 3:21: *This is then the most excellent use of the law, namely, when a man can so use it, that it may humble him and make him to thirst after Christ. And indeed Christ requireth thirsty souls, whom he most lovingly and graciously allureth and calleth unto him when he saith: 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you' (Matthew 11:26). He delighteth therefore to water these dry grounds. He poureth not his waters upon fat and rank ground,*

or such as is not dry, and covereth no water. His benefits are inestimable, and therefore he giveth them to none but unto such as have need of them and earnestly desire them. He preacheth glad tidings to the poor: he giveth drink to the thirsty. 'If any thirst,' saith he, 'let him come unto me,' (John 7:37); 'He healeth the broken hearted,' (Psalm 147:3) That is, he comforteth and saveth those that are bruised and afflicted by the law. Therefore the law is not against the promises of God. v

Luther's view tempers our temptation to believe that there was no rule and hierarchy before the fall, so that we do not see the punishment after the fall only as a punitive reality under which woman is oppressed with tyranny by a poisoned and toxic patriarchy. Contemporary commentators seem to view rule after the fall much in the way that one would see how the kings of the earth rule. Kings after God's own heart rule much differently than wicked kings who do not walk in God's ways. Wicked kings rule for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of those whom they are ruling over. Kings after God's own heart seek to rule for the benefit of those under their authority, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven under whose authority they are called to serve.

While it should go without saying that if one has been given authority by God one must exercise that authority, it needs to be said. A husband who has been given authority by God but does not exercise that authority is being negligent in His God-given duties to his wife, most notably His duty to love his wife as Christ loved the church in giving Himself for her benefit. A father who has been given authority and rule over his children who does not exercise that authority is angering God, most notably if he is not raising his children in the training and admonition of the Lord. Mothers, as matriarchs, have also been given authority by God over their children, which is to be exercised, and honored by the children.

The rules, hierarchy, and law, in place both before and after the fall, are not oppressive or tyrannical. They can, of course, be abused by sinners, both because of the fall, and therefore, the sins of those who have been given authority by God. Gen. 3:15 shows that

God's punishment in Gen. 3:16 is not for its own sake, nor is it for God's own sake, but for the sake of both the man and the woman. The promise tempers the punishment, as Luther has said, in a similar way that God's punishment of David after his litany of sins was tempered by the absolution he received before the death of his illegitimate child. Adam and Eve could bear their punishment, and so could David. That means we can as well.

The punishment serves to restore order, after the promise has been given. To say it another way, the gospel in the narrow sense frees us from our sin, and the law gives shape, form, and order to the life that is now to be lived. The faith that is lived out because of the gospel is beautifully taught in Colossians 3, where the apostle Paul, in speaking about the putting on of the new self, writes: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:12-17).*

When the peace of Christ has the rule, the dominion, in the heart, what flows out is true, beautiful, and lovely, including the rule and authority that God has given mankind in the various earthly vocations. This peace of Christ that rules in the hearts of Christians comes through nothing less than the saving gospel, the fact that Christ atoned for the sin of the world on the cross and creates faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. In the church then, we are rightly focused on the vocations of pastor and hearer, as Luther teaches. The home is closely aligned with the church, as there is much overlap in these 2 estates. If we have godly husbands and wives, godly fathers and mothers, and godly sons and daughters,

generally things will go better in the church. The rule and authority established in the church by God is exercised by the pastor over the hearers, a rule and authority that is to be for the benefit of the hearers, and therefore, the whole body of Christ gathered there. The pastor not only knows best his God-given duties and responsibilities by Scripture such as Titus 1:9, but the hearers benefit from the pastor knowing this, as well as the hearers expecting this from their pastors. Paul writes: *He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.*

Encouraging sound doctrine includes the words laid out by God that teach that man has authority over woman in the church. When the Scripture teaches that a woman is to learn quietly with all submissiveness, and that she is not permitted to teach or exercise authority over a man, and is to remain quiet, the voice of God who said, *and he shall rule over you* should be ringing in our ears. Hebrews 13:17 gives clarity as to what kind of rule the pastor exercises over the hearers: *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.* The pastor rules the souls of his hearers, with the same word of God that He has been charged by God to read, preach, and teach. In the church, authority is exercised when the word of God is read, preached, and taught. This rule that the pastor has is for the benefit of the hearers, as is emphasized also in the warning to submit to him, lest his work be a burden and not a joy, which then has no benefit to the hearer. The pastor's rule over the hearers is supposed to reflect Christ's peace dwelling in the hearts of both pastor and hearer. The virtues of compassion, humility, meekness, and patience are all corollaries to this peace.

So, what happened?

How did we get where we are today in the LCMS, with women's suffrage, women lay readers, and women communion assistants? Women's suffrage, women lay readers, and women communion assistants were some of the same things that led other Lutheran

bodies in America to start ordaining women. The ordination of women, not surprisingly, has led also to the ordaining of homosexuals and transgender persons. The ALC approved the ordaining of women in 1970 providing an easy avenue for what became the ELCA in 1988 to continue doing the same, after the LCA and AELC also joined to become the ELCA. In less than 25 years congregations broke from the ELCA to form other Lutheran bodies, primarily because of the ordination of homosexuals and transgenders. The slippery slope got more slippery.

The LCMS claims to have a high view of the office of the ministry, and in many ways does. Yet, when women lay readers, for example, are allowed in the church service, what does this say about authority in the ministry? Some argue that authority is not being exercised when the Bible is being read. This argument flies in the face of the reality that the word of God has supreme authority over everything in the life of the church. There is no other authority than that which is given by God. In the public life of the church, the word of God is to be read by the man who exercises authority over the hearers when he also preaches and teaches, that being the pastor.

Much could be said about the problems that have crept into the LCMS regarding authority in the church. This conference is good evidence that we are not ignoring the elephant in the room. Some of our problems in the LCMS come from a bad hermeneutic. Show me where it says that a “woman can’t do the readings in the church service,” that a “woman can’t assist in communion distribution,” or that a “woman can’t be a pastor,” in the Bible. Many times, what people mean by this is that they want the book, chapter, and verse, that says exactly those words. If you try to back God into a theological corner, it will always end badly for you. When you search the Scriptures like you’re looking for a verbatim verse, you will almost inevitably end up ignoring all the verses in the Bible that speak to the issue. Years ago, I encountered a woman on Facebook whose argument for abortion was based on Jesus never saying anything explicitly against abortion. Apparently, *You shall not murder*, and *You shall have no other gods* got ignored.

The spirit of the age has undoubtedly had its adverse effects on the LCMS too. The increasing propensity to say “whatever,” and do the same in the prevailing culture, has filtered its way into the LCMS. Feminism has also played a leading role. In his book, *Why Is Feminism So Hard To Resist*, Pastor Paul Harris cites three general ways in which it is so hard to resist: 1) Feminism appeals to the spirit of the age; 2) Feminism appeals to the weaknesses of men; 3) Feminism appeals to the feminine mistake.^{vi} Not only does feminism seek to convince women that fulfillment in this life is not to be found in marriage, and if God wills, the blessing of fruitful multiplication in the marriage, but feminism seeks to replace these good things with careers, military combat, and professional athletics.

Where do we go from here?

With the spirit of the age, feminism, and bad hermeneutics as enemies of the church, where do we go from here in restoring the headship, rule, and hierarchy intended by Christ for His bride, the church? It begins with God and continues with us. By beginning with God, I don't mean that God needs to change, but that God needs to be heard. The clear voice of His word, which gives shape, form, and order to our lives as those who have received the peace of Christ in our hearts, needs to restore what is out of place. Pastors need to know their God-given duties and responsibilities, as do the hearers. The hearers need to know their God-given duties and responsibilities, as do the pastors. I believe that if pastors and hearers both knew the Table of Duties better under those headings in the catechism, that harmony, peace, and unity would follow with increasing regularity.

Titus 1:9 should point pastors to the Scriptures as a whole, since the pastor himself must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught. Yes, the pastor needs to believe the Bible for himself, so that he can encourage others by the sound doctrine in those sacred pages, while at the same time being equipped to refute those who oppose Biblical doctrine. The hearers also need to hear that the pastor has this duty, so that, when necessary, they can remind him of his duty, first to the Lord, and then, to them.

The hearers need to know that they are to obey their leaders and submit to their authority, an authority given to them by God Himself. Your pastor keeps watch over your souls, and he must give an account to the Lord for those souls over whom he rules with the word of God. Obedience to your pastor is for the purpose that his work will be a joy, and not a burden. A pastor whose work is burdensome because of hearers who constantly question the pastor's authority, will be of no advantage to the subordinates, the hearers. If your churches have a clear understanding of these Table of Duties and are constantly striving to keep them, God bless you...keep doing that.

If not, we need to inculcate these passages of Scripture, which will ultimately lead us into other places in the Scripture. These passages complement each other, while at the same time clearly laying out the authority that God has given. If the pastor is not practicing temperance and hospitality in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:2, he not only is answerable to God, but also to the hearers, who do have the authority as the subordinates, to remind him of his God-given duty.

If a church is not providing the pastor his living from the gospel according to the command of the Lord in 1 Corinthians 9:14, not only are the hearers answerable to God for this failure, but the pastor has the authority to remind them of their God-given duty. District Presidents of course should also be made aware of this, so that they too can remind the church of her duty to her pastors. I believe that in many cases if these passages were truly put into practice, many of the abhorrent practices that have crept into congregations of the LCMS over the decades regarding putting women into positions of authority not given to them by God, would be corrected. What we cannot do is simply rely on the gospel in the narrow sense to correct errors in practice in LCMS congregations. Freedom of the gospel does not entail freedom from the law in the proper sense. By no means.

Putting the law into practice in the Christian life is not necessarily a return to the works of the law for justification, and we need to stop making that claim. A potential abuse of the law does not negate the rightful use of the law. Simply remembering Luther's negative prohibitions and positive commands that he teaches in the Ten Commandments would also serve as a great complement to the Table of Duties for pastors and hearers. If this sounds simple, that is because it is simple. Sinners make things complicated, for sure, but simplicity and clarity come from the word of God, along with wisdom, peace, and unity.

Since a man is called into the office that preaches the Scriptures, then a man should also be the one reading the Scriptures. A woman's silence regarding teaching and exercising authority over a man clearly does not apply to a woman confessing the creed, praying the Lord's Prayer, or singing the hymns, with the congregation. It does apply if she is singled out for reading the Scriptures or assisting with communion.

The best way forward is for all of us as pastors and hearers, to take heed to the word of God. None of this work regarding these specific passages should happen in isolation from the work necessary for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. As I said earlier, if there is harmony in the home, harmony in the church will come more readily. With the reality that there is disharmony in many homes because of sin, we still need to take heed in the church to these God-given duties to pastors and hearers.

Conclusion:

If the peace of Christ rules in our heart because of that ever-so precious gospel that has rescued us from sin and death by the forgiveness of our sins, how can we not also strive to live holy lives according to that same word, conforming ourselves to our Father's gracious will? God has given us everything we need to live under His gracious rule and hierarchy, in harmony and unity with one another, each member providing his and her own contributions according to the outpouring of the Spirit of grace. Whether male or female, Jew or Gentile, slave or free, we are all one in Christ in the order of redemption. Yet, in the order of creation, God has blessed us with different duties and responsibilities as males and

females, not because He is oppressive and tyrannical, but because He is not a God of confusion and chaos, but a God of order.

The Scripture teaches us to do all things to the glory of God, with thanksgiving to Him. All things include living in His church according to His gracious rule and living under the authorities ordained by Him for the edifying of the body of Christ, as we all strive to enter that blessed and everlasting rest promised through the blood of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

To Him be the glory. Thank you.

ⁱ *The Woman's "Desire" And The Man's "Rule" (Genesis 3:16), Jan. 5, 2021, knowingscripture.com. Garris notes that Gen. 3:16 is not a prediction that husbands will abuse their authority over their wives, nor a prescription that a husband must overcome the negative usurpation of the wife.*

ⁱⁱ *John Chrysostom, Hom. 9 on 1 Timothy NPNF s.1 v.13, litteraldotorg.wordpress.com. Patristic Bible Commentaries: The Early Church Fathers Commentary on the Bible.*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ambrose of Milan, on Paradise 14:72, litteraldotorg.wordpress.com. Patristic Bible Commentaries: The Early Church Fathers Commentary on the Bible.*

^{iv} *Luther's Works; Vol. 1; p. 198; J. Pelikan. Luther also says: "But it assigns death, which she had deserved through her sin, to the other and less noble part of the human being, namely, to the flesh, so that because of faith the spirit may live in righteousness."*

^v *Luther's Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians; p. 318; Fleming H. Revell; 1531. Luther's insistence on Paul's position that the works of the law do not and cannot bring life, are not played against the fact that the law is not against the promises of God but helps confirm those promises.*

^{vi} *Why Is Feminism So Hard To Resist? Pastor Paul Harris; Repristination Press; 1997; Second Edition 2011. Pastor Harris notes that the "feminine mistake" is "simply that women are inherently dissatisfied, and they allow their dissatisfaction to rule them to the point where they will tear down their own houses with their very own hands."*