

1 Corinthians 11. 2 Samuel 15:25. *And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God unto the city. If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I. Let him do to me as seems good unto him. The king also said unto Zadok the priest, Art thou a seer? Return unto the city in peace, and your two sons with you. Ahimaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there comes word from you to certify me. Zadok, therefore, and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem, and they tarried there.*

Now, keeping a good grip on 1 Corinthians 11 again, there are some passages of Scripture I would like for you to go through with me. They deal primarily with a city. Oh, by the way, going back to 2 Samuel, we shouldn't leave that until we see something else in that same passage. I'm sorry that I forgot to read it. Verse 30. *And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olive, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefooted. And all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up weeping as they went up.*

Now in Luke 10:38-42, there is a passage about the Lord Jesus going to the city of Bethany. *And it came to pass as they went, they entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha called. received him unto her house. And she had a sister named Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. And Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me, and that would better be read, dost persist in keeping on leaving me, bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Now turn with me to Matthew 21:17. *And he left them and went out of the city unto Bethany, and he lodged there. Now in the morning as he returned them to the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it and found nothing there on it, but leaves only. And he said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away? And they commented later, it had so many leaves on it.*

Alright, now then, to Matthew 26:7-13. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simeon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured it on his head as he sat at a meal. But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she has wrought a good work upon me. For you have the poor always with you, but me ye have not all one. For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman has done be told for a memorial of her.*

Alright, now then, John 11 and John 12. We all know that John 11 is talking about the resurrection of Lazarus. A certain man was sick: Lazarus of Bethany. I think I'll tell this story rather than reading all this. The disciples came to Jesus. He was not in Bethany. He was in another place and said, "Lazarus is sick." And some said, " Maybe you should go to him." And others said, " If you go, you'll be killed because the Pharisees were plotting against him." Jesus did nothing. He waited a while. And then finally, he said to them, "Let us go; Lazarus is sleeping." And they said, " If he's sleeping, let's not disturb him." And he said to them plainly, "He is dead." And he said to them, "Let us go to our friend." Let's go to *our* friend...not mine, but *our* friend. Bethany is a place where not only the Lord Jesus, but his disciples found fellowship. And after they got there, there was much weeping. But the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Let's turn now to chapter 12:1. *Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. And there they made him a supper, and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then Mary took a pound of spikenard ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred pieces and given to the poor?" He said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the bag and bore what was put therein. And Jesus said, "Let her alone. Against the day of my burial has she kept this. For the poor always you have with me, but me ye have not always."*

Now then, there are some other passages to read yet. Acts 2:42. Hear this word. It will become clear later. *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in prayers. The disciples in Jerusalem continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and in their fellowship.* Acts 14, there's a passage not too different from that. It's Acts 16:14. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, heard us. Her heart was opened to the Lord that she attained unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, she and her household besought us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful unto the Lord, come into my house and abide there.*

And now, Acts 18:9. Beginning with Acts 18:9, there is a vision from the Lord. And this happens in what city? Does anyone know? Do you recognize where this took place? What city is this in? This is in the city of Corinth. *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by vision: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not your peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city."*

Now, we come back to 1 Corinthians 11, and we're going to read that passage again. Verses 1 and 2. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, for that you remember me in all things and keep the...* and that word is ordinances, which are sometimes translated traditions. The best word is precepts. Will

you put it, if you have, if you were a man to do this kind of thing, change it to precepts. *You have kept the precepts as I have delivered them to you.*

Well, I realized that's an awful lot of passages. Let's see if we can tie them together, very thoughtfully. Paul is about to get into something, and you know what it is, don't you? What is this passage about? It's about head covering...headship. Whenever we come to this passage, all the sisters go, " Oh." And all the brothers scratch their heads. Brothers, more battles have been fought over 1 Corinthians 11 than I believe all the battles of man on battlefields put together. There are at least four interpretations of this passage of Scripture. A minimum of four, and we're not even going to look at them this morning. It was my burden to share this with you, but I could not get past verse 2. So verse 3 and the rest will have to wait until later this morning or this evening. I do not know. I'm not sure.

I sincerely say this. I am not sure that I can deliver this burden this morning, but let me begin by saying that in verse 2, Paul said something that I suddenly realized had everything to do with this passage. He commended them for being receptive. He commended them for having already received the precept that he delivered to them.

This chapter, at least the first half, is not a criticism of the church in Corinth. It is a commendation. It is a praise. Whatever there is in this passage about head covering and headship, it is a praise to the church which is in Corinth. Unfortunately, in the last half of the same chapter, Paul finally takes off his gloves and really begins to swing hard. But at the beginning of the chapter, he tells the church, "You have kept the precepts." Then in the middle of the chapter, he says, "You're fouled up on the details."

There has been a lot of criticism of the church in Corinth. Brothers and sisters, the church in Corinth kept the precepts. Now, I have also read to you a passage in 2 Samuel about Brother David leaving the city of Jerusalem. We have also read passages in Luke, Matthew, and John about the city of Bethany. We have also read three passages in Acts. In Acts 2, it says... *They quickly received the apostles' doctrines and their fellowship.* And then in Acts 16, it says. *And they received them into their home.* It was Lydia who said, "Come, stay in my home. We receive you." And then in Acts 18:9, the Lord says, " Stay in Corinth. You're being received here. There are many people in this city." I have a real longing to deal with you about headship, but that's right where it begins. Right there.

Paul said, "Praise the Lord, Corinth. You have already received..." The word precepts means literally 'a hand to you' or 'a hand to me.' The hands of Corinth were already out, and they said, 'We take.' And Paul said, 'Your hands are out; I have given.'

What had Corinth received? And what had Paul given? Well, it's no small thing that he gave, and they received, but it had become a great bother to them. What had they received? More than this even. They had received from Paul the very centrality of Jesus Christ within the assembly. Within the church, they had received a very certain matter. They had received Christ himself. You say, why, brother, of course they had received Christ himself. Don't be so sure that all brothers everywhere, even those who meet together, have utterly received Christ himself. Brethren, I praise you for what you have

done. You have received the very Christ into your midst. Him alone you have received, and Him you have made at home.

We are going to deal with the most imponderable, the most serious thing that a church can deal with. As far as that goes, the whole restoration hangs on this. The first proper thing is the receiving of the Lord totally into their midst, and this they had done.

I commend you, Corinth. You have first of all received the Lord. That next verse, verse 4, says, you've done it. And you sisters have done it. You brothers have done it. As Christ is in His relationship to God, so is your relationship to the Lord Jesus, and so is the sisters' relationship to their husbands. It is a commendation. It isn't until you get to the end of the passage where he says, "I've got something against you. This I cannot praise you for. For this you did not receive, but the precepts that I handed to you, you have received.

I commend you; you have fully received the Lord. It is after you receive Him that you don't fully know what to do with Him. Let Corinth be praised, not condemned. The problems from this verse on that Corinth had was because they had received the Lord. The problems they developed were over Christ Jesus being the very Lord of that church, and out of His Lordship came the problem. Praise God! Praise God the church in Corinth had the privilege of having the problems of Lordship.

Brothers and sisters, there is something in this. There can be no assembly, no church, no fullness in the church, no reality in the church until the church doors have swung open totally and completely and all of Christ Jesus has been received in complete trust. All the churches were first built on the receiving. On the receiving, Jerusalem, the first church, opened its heart, opened its life, opened its very total self to the apostles and their fellowship and what they...and on that, the church was built.

When Paul came into Macedonia, must have been Thessalonica, he came into a city where there was no synagogue. Now, when the Jews didn't have a synagogue, they still met every Saturday. They sort of had an agreement that if there was no synagogue in the city, and there weren't even enough Jews to have a building where they would meet, then they would meet beside the nearest flowing water, so that when they went through their ritual of purification, there would be water there.

So Paul comes into the city. There are no believers. There are only Jews, and just about four or five of them. No synagogue, no rabbi, and nothing but Gentiles who have never heard of Jesus Christ. He comes to the water, the river, out near the city, and there is Lydia, a seller of cloth, and two, three, four, or five women there. They're all just Jews going through their little Jewish ways of purification.

Paul comes to this little group of women, and he preaches the Lord Jesus Christ... and the receiving takes place. The receiving takes place. Without the receiving, there can be no real church built where Jesus Christ himself is received. This is the receiving: the receiving of Christ. I believe this will unfold to you in the next few minutes.

They said to Paul, come, come into our home; you are received. And on that, the church, the first church ever built in Europe, was built. The churches of Europe sprang up from a receiving of the Lord, taking Him totally.

Then in Corinth, chapter 18, Paul is there. He doesn't know what to do. Is he passing through, or has he stopped? He has been beaten and thrown in jail. Is this just a place to spend the night, or shall we go on? And the Lord says to Paul in a vision, "Stay, I have many people here." And on this, "Stay, I have many people here," the Lord built the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth is built by the Lord Jesus Christ, having been totally received.

Brothers and sisters, for the church to begin, blossom, and grow, there must be a receiving of Jesus Christ. Well, you say, we have all received the Lord. We have all been saved, and we have all received the Lord. We have a tendency to receive the Lord plus or a little less than the Lord, or all of the Lord, and limit Him. No, I mean when Jesus Christ is fully received into the assembly. Upon this, the church is baptized.

I can't go on without saying...my heart says, the witness within me says, you have fully received the Lord. You have opened yourselves here to fully have the Lord Jesus Christ; to have His utter fullness. And the problem, our problems, have come out of receiving Him, but it is here that real danger lies. For some cannot go on in the utter receiving of the Lord. They must...they cannot endure just the pillar and the cloud. They must have something else. And Paul says to Corinth, I thank God - you received the precepts, and he tells what they are, and you have stuck with them. Then, in the last part of the chapter, he says, "But this I cannot abide," and then he began to deal with the matter.

Jesus Christ wishes to be fully received by his people. Why? So that they might constitute on this earth what He constituted when He was on this earth. That they might be...that they might constitute on this earth what He constituted when He was on this earth. That they might show forth and be on this earth what he showed forth and was on this earth. Jesus pictured something on this earth, but more than that, He literally *was* something on this earth. He was something to the Father, and we must be the same to him.

I praise the Lord that in these epistles and in Acts, we have the facts, but I also praise the Lord that in the gospel we have a picture. In the gospels we see Jesus Christ and what He wants in the church, but hallelujah, there is a picture of the church in the gospels. I think that this can best picture for us what we will see in the Corinthians.

The Lord wants something here in this world. What is it? He wants, in every city, a group of people who show forth something. He wants a group of people that represent something and that do something. That have utterly, totally, and completely received Him in every city...a group of people within that city.

Now, when Jesus Christ came to this earth, was He received? Was He received? Okay, that's right, more or less. When He came, He was not received. He wants a place where *He* is received. But brothers and sisters, there is a picture in the gospel of Jesus Christ

being received. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. Even in talking of His own kin, He had to say in Matthew... He told the parables. The father heard about a vineyard, and he sent this son; he sent a servant to the vineyard to talk to them, the prophet. They would not listen, so finally, he sent the master's own son, the one who owned the land. He sent his son over.

Did they receive him? He said, no, they conspired with one another. *Here is the master's own son; let us kill him, and then the land will be ours.* That was a picture of Himself coming to this earth, coming to the cities of this earth, and not being received.

There was one place in the gospel where Jesus Christ could picture, could picture the church. There was a place where He was received. Praise the Lord for that, because it tells us so much. He says here in Luke 10:38, *And it came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain village.* Now, because we know what people lived there, we know what village it is. *And a certain woman named Martha...did what? She received Him into her home. She had a sister, Mary, who also sat at Jesus' seat and heard him.* There was a family in a city, a little village, nonetheless a town. Here is a representation of a town that represents a city that represents the very earth, and in this little village town, Jesus Christ was received.

What purpose is this? It is this. That Christ wants a place in every city on earth where He Himself is utterly, totally received. Now, let me give you a picture of this that is so clear in the Old Testament. I think it will become very clear to you.

Do you remember the stories around David? David's youth; David taking over the kingdom. Are you familiar with the story of when David's kingdom rose up against him while he was king of the city of Jerusalem? There was a man, Absalom, his son, who pushed him out of that city, and he left. Here is the king, the rightful king, who has to leave his city because man has pushed him out. Because he has been pushed out, he covers his head and bears his feet. This is a shame. He has lost a place in that city.

His head is covered, and man has refused to acknowledge his kingship and his lordship. Therefore, he has covered his head, and he goes out of the city. But as he goes, he says to Zadok as Zadok is coming out of the city. What does Zadok have with him? He bears the ark of the testimony, and he left the city with it. Here stands David with his head covered; by the work of man, his head is covered. The rightful king was pushed out of his town. The city...the city of God. The spiritual Jerusalem to us; the physical Jerusalem to him. This is a spiritual Jerusalem to us. It is a city that belongs to God.

David turns around and says, "Zadok, go back to the city, and take the ark of the covenant with you. Why? Why take the ark of the covenant? What is the ark of the covenant? The ark of the covenant is the witness of Jesus Christ as God's everything. It is the witness; it is the testimony that Jesus Christ is everything. He said, take the testimony back into what is now a foreign city, so that there may be in that city a place where if I return, I will be received for what I really am.

The city is in the hands of an enemy. That enemy contends that I am not rightfully the king of that city. You and your two sons and the ark have to be there, and if God, in His mercy, lets me come back, you will already be in that city, contending that I have a right to this city - that I am the total king and lord of this city. That when the gates swing open, and I'm out of the tent, they will say, "We have never given up saying that you were the rightful king and lord of this city."

Go back to the city and take the ark, and you stand there for my kingship and my lordship. That, brethren, is what a church is. He has physically left, but He is here in spirit, and he wants a group of people in this city, not only those who say, "Lord, you're everything," but who literally refuse to live under the rulership of that city. Who contend with that man every inch of the way, "You are not the ruler," who will be a thorn in the side of this foreign intruder, and say, "This is not your city; you are not the Lord, and this is not your place. You do not rightfully belong here. We contend with you. We recognize no human head over us. We recognize our king for our Lord only."

He wants a group of people who contend, but it is more than just contending. He is here among us and with us in spirit, to hold that kingdom proper in spirit while the physical Lord is gone. He has nonetheless left His Spirit, that we shall conduct ourselves here as though he were not gone. We shall meet as He is in our presence. And we will not bow to the headship of man above us. Our King shall have His head uncovered. He shall be among us...never covered.