

“Respect”

By Chris Ulrich

Sunday, May 1st, 2016

I'd like to ask everybody to stand, please, in a word of prayer: God, we just thank You this morning for the worship time, Lord, to be able to come into Your presence, Lord God and receive the blessings that You have for us, Lord God, and to know You as our personal Savior, Lord. We thank You for the blessings from this past week, Lord God; the blessings of Pastor Paine and Debbie coming up last week, and the marriage conference, and everything else that was there, God. We just look forward to what You have for us, today, Lord God, and we pray that You would bless this time, Lord God, the message, the sermon. We pray that we would be able to receive something, that we would be able to learn from Your Word, God, and to be able to edify one another. We just thank You for Your Word, we thank You for Your Truth, we thank You for Your love. We ask this in Your name. Amen.

Please be seated.

So, our theme for the month is, “Women of Purpose.” And, that’s something we’ve done here, the last couple of years, and, in preparation for that, I wanted to look at last year, at some of the sermons. Pete does a wonderful job of posting the sermon notes on our website. And I wanted to look at some of the messages that we had last year, and, really, in a lot of ways, not to duplicate. Not to get the same exact message, the same exact sermons, the same exact teaching. And, I believe that, when I was really praying about this, earlier in the week, and I just have to say that, a lot of times, when we teach, or, when we give a message from God, we have an idea, going in, of what we want to teach on. Some of the Scriptures that come to mind, and I’ll give you an example: If we were talking about enduring in the faith, we might talk about, “I fought a good fight; I kept the faith,” (2 Timothy 4:7) or, “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) But, I have to say that, coming into this, I really was drawing a blank. But, I also have to say that, a lot of times, that’s the best way to be, because then God can deal with us in such a way that, “I don’t have anything to really give of myself, so, Lord, I want You to bless me in such a way that I’m able to gain something, to be able to teach something, to be able to preach something.

There was a commercial, last fall, that talked about domestic violence. And, you might have heard about that. Anyway, in this commercial, there were several players in the NFL that were doing cameos, and, one after another, they would just get in front of the camera, and they would say, “No more! No more!” with a real emphatic tone behind it. And I got to thinking, “Okay.” You may have seen those. But, like I said a moment ago, the whole campaign was about an anti-domestic violence commercial, that, in and of itself, it’s a good thing. But, I have to say that I really didn’t like that commercial, and I really didn’t like it at all. And I saw it on a number of occasions. So, you might wonder, why on earth would I not like a commercial that is speaking against domestic violence? Well, I kind of thought about that myself, and I thought, “You know what? It’s because something like that should never have happened in the first place.” It should have never been. It should never be. That should be a no-brainer, as they say. And I got to thinking about that more—oh, I get that we live in a world that’s corrupt, and it’s violent, and it’s very much like the same situation that we find in the Book of Genesis, chapter six. It says:

Genesis 6:11 *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*

I want to dwell on that for a moment: The earth was corrupt before God. Much like the same situation we find ourselves in in this day and age. And, it was filled with violence. Much like the same kind of situation we find ourselves in nowadays. I’m not saying we’re supposed to bury our head in the

sand and act like these problems don't exist, but there are certain things that you should never be. Domestic violence is one of them. I'm not trying to get into a legal argument, here, with anybody, or try to say this is just my opinion; I believe that we're all on the same wavelength as that. I believe that we're all in same mind and same accord as that stance. But, I know, in the house that I grew up in, my parents are still together after fifty-two years, thank God. My dad never hit my mom. I mean, they argued, I get it, I get it, but their marriage has been something where there's been good balance.

Point 1: Learning From Women

That's something that—I know we have a lot of different people in this room, from a lot of different backgrounds, and I don't know everybody's situation or background. Now, I'm not trying to say one's better than the other, or one's worse than the other, or whatever the case might be, I'm just trying to tell you my personal testimony, that's my background.

Titus 2:1-5 *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

I know I'm including the first two verses in that passage, where it mentions the role of men, but we're going to focus on the role of women today. I know not everyone here knows our founding pastor's wife, Sister Hazel Davis; some of you do. Some of you have known here for many years. But I'd have to say that, from my standpoint, she's been an example of a Christian woman in word, but, especially in deed for many years. And that's just the fact. She was baptized, I'd say, close to seventy years ago; she's now in her early eighties. And that, to me, is inspiring. That sets an example that's a long-term plan. That's not just, "Okay, we're just going to do it for a while, until something better comes along." But the way she conducts herself... I've known her for—from a man, from this standpoint, from this side of the fence, over all the years that I've known her, I've always looked at that like it's good to see; it's refreshing, because we don't always see that in society.

So, the title of the sermon today is, "Respect." And, yes, that's spelled, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. That goes without saying, but it must be said. Some of you know what I was referring to, some of you may not know what I was referring to, but, if you do, great, but if you don't, that's fine, too. It's still the same spelling, and it's still the same title.

But respect is the only way we're going to be effective Christians. And I would say that's true in society in general. I'm not here to try to dictate to society, but I will tell you this much: We're here to set the example, because the Bible says we're the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), and God is looking at us, and protecting us in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, or in the midst of corruption and violence, which is what is pervasive. I mean, you don't even have to look very far; I mean, you can just look on the internet to just find out about this mass killing, or this terrorist attack, or this pestilence, or this disease, or this on-and-on-and-on, but I believe that God does protect us.

And, in this instance, we're talking about the role that women have, and learning from them in various capacities. I have an aunt, my father's sister, that, she's probably close to seventy now, she lives in Connecticut now, and, she became a widow in 1977, so, at the time, she was thirty, she was relatively young. It was a very sudden car accident that my uncle was killed, and they had, at that time, three children. She ages of the children were six to ten, somewhere around there. They were relatively young, but they all knew their father, so it wasn't as though they were newborns, or, it wasn't as though they

were already out of the house. And, again, I want to focus on that, because she was relatively young herself, and, now, probably wondering, a lot, “What do I do now? I don’t know how I’m going to handle this. I’ve got to raise these three children.” As a matter of fact, I was down in North Carolina, with my brother and my cousin, who is the son of this lady that I’m talking about—an I’m not saying that that reminded me of that, but I would say, it probably did, a little bit—but I’ll tell you one thing, that, as far as seeing her raise those kids, alone, and we used to go visit them pretty regularly, or they’d come up and visit us, we spent Christmas times together, a lot of good memories, Thanksgivings together, a lot of good memories, but, I’ll tell you this much—and I can’t say that was necessarily identifying that, as a kid, and just seeing that—but I grew to respect her that much more as the years wore on. And I’m not talking about just because she was a widow, because she had no control over that. That was something that, it was a tragedy; it happened, but, how did she handle herself in the midst of that adversity, going forward? And I’ll tell you this much: She had tough love, sometimes—I mean, my cousins have told me some stories about that—never abusive things, but I’ll tell you this much, looking back on it: She was not going to let them run her household. She was not going to let them take control. She was like, “Okay, you think you want to do that?” I can just picture her, as a little kid, it was like, “Wow, Aunt Peggy, she’s rough!” But, in a good way! In a good way. I’ll tell you this much. At this point in time, all those kids, who are in their late forties—my oldest cousin is going to turn fifty this year—they all have nothing but love, respect, and appreciation for the hard work, and for the love that she showed them at that point in their lives. Now, she eventually remarried, in 1986, unfortunately, that second husband, his name was John—he was a great guy—he passed away in 2008. But, what’s my point in sharing that story today? My point is that she was an example to me of a strong woman that persevered, and I appreciate that. And I learned from her the same as I would from anybody who sets a great example in life, man or woman. I’ve got a lot of great memories of other women that I’ve known along life’s way, relatives, some teachers, friends of the family, nurses and doctors that my mom worked at the hospital with for forty-three years, and many of you ladies here today, that I’ve known for close to thirty years.

Point 2 Appreciating the Differences

It’s not hard to see the obvious differences between men and women, but, if we follow society’s standards, we’ll point out the differences, or act like there’s no difference at all. And, I’m going to talk on this, because there was a law—and I’m not going to get into the legal ramifications of it, but I want to just mention this, because these are the things that we face in society, and we’re facing the brunt of it. In North Carolina, they—and I talked to my cousin about this, I wanted to know, “Okay, we’re hearing all this different outrage about this law,” and it has to do with the bathrooms, whether you have men and women’s rooms, and you have people claiming to be transgender, wanting to use whatever room that they choose to. So, I’m just going to go that far, but I’m going to say this much: If we act like there’s no difference at all, then we’re hiding our heads in the sand. We’re just acting like, “Oh, there’s no big difference.” I beg to differ! And I talked to my cousin, I said, “Well, “ he said—there’s a lady that’s a good friend of their family, he said, she was in a restroom, down there in North Carolina, he said, “...and some guy walks in!” And it was like, of course she felt uncomfortable! Of course she felt like, “This is a little bit private in here.” And, you know what? you might disagree. But, I’ll have to say this much: We’re talking about appreciating the differences, not acting like there’s no difference whatsoever! Or not just point it out, and say, “Oh, they’re the bad guys,” or “They’re bad women,” or, “Everybody on that side of the fence is doing wrong.” But, we all have a role to play in this ministry. I’ve told this before, but I want to share it again, and, unfortunately Norma is not here, but this was a Bible study that we had at Mike and Norma’s house, probably seven or eight years ago, and, actually, Jimmy, you brought Tommy Harris who played for the Chicago Bears, at the time. Brought him to the study, it was kind of out of the blue, but,

okay, this is great. So, we had the study, but, afterwards, as people were walking around, and just talking a little bit; one thing that I felt like God was laying on people's hearts was, "Don't gush over him. Don't go over there asking for his autograph." But, I remember Sonia and Norma were over taking with him, and they were talking about, like, cooking, and recipes, and that kind of thing, and I thought, "That's great! That's what this guy needs to hear!" He doesn't need to hear, "Oh, can I have your autograph?" "How many quarterback sacks did you get last year?" And, you know what? he probably would have been sick and tired of hearing that kind of thing. "I hear this all the time. I could go down to the mall and get that kind of treatment." But, to me, just as an observer—and it was not like this was scripted or planned, "After the study, we're going to go talk to him about this..." It was all natural! It was a natural thing. And, Jimmy, correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that ministered to him tremendously. And, again, you know, I do some cooking. I mean, I'm not, like—I mean, I enjoy it, but I don't really get into it prolifically. It's not one of those things where it's like, you know, an incredible passion of mine. I feel like I've gotten better at it. But, I feel like, these two ladies, when they did that, it was a natural thing and I appreciate that. And it added to—the Bible talks about that the ministry be not blamed (2 Corinthians 6:3). What kind of impression would he, again, would Tommy have walked away with? It's like, "Jeez, all they did was, just come over here and want to talk about football, and we just had a Bible Study. I want to hear a little bit more about that, or just hear from the ladies that were there. I just want to talk to some different people." So, it was inspiring. I mean, to me, that was a real milestone and it wasn't anything like, "Oh, somebody as raised from the dead that day!" You know what? things like that are miraculous, and things like that, you know, things that are of Biblical proportion. But, that particular night, with just seeing that, it was a life-changer for me for the better. It was just good to see something that was a natural thing about appreciating our differences, because our goal is not to compete with each other. Although, I've mentioned before, society, media, whoever yells the loudest, they have a way to force-feed an agenda that puts us at each other's throats. There's actually a word to describe people that hate women, and the word is misogynist. And it's an ugly term, but it's something that, there's people out there like that. And I know where I'm at this morning; I know who I'm talking to. But I also know that, in Corinthians, the Bible talks about, "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." (2 Corinthians 2:11) So, it's not a matter of pretending this doesn't happen, "This isn't a real happening; this isn't something where people really feel that way." Well, yes it is. And Satan tries to get us at odds with each other, tries to get us to highlight our differences in negative ways, tries to get us to compete in ways that aren't edifying, and tries to get us heading down the road of ungodliness. And I know this net verse is more about the circumstances we find ourselves in: prosperity or peril, joyful or sadness, but the point is still relevant about being thankful for who and what God made us. Very short verse, very simple verse, it says:

Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Women have a role, it's just as important as men's, but, again, there are differences for the reason that God made it that way. Not because a bunch of guys got together and said, "Oh, this is how it's going to be. We'll make them all subservient, and, you know, we'll boss them around, and won't let them vote." You know what I mean? It's like, okay, that's not the way it is. And, you know what? Society doesn't always get it right. But, we need to get it right as far as God's structure, as far as God's church, as far as God's ministry, to be able to simulate, as much as possible, what God's telling us we need to have. What kind of organization we need to have, what kind of structure. Even like what—Andy, I appreciate what you mentioned at the beginning of service, you know, some people were kind of milling about, and coming in, and this and that, and the verse that popped into my mind, as soon as you said that, "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:40) I mean, if it's mayhem, like the Allstate commercials, then what are we going to have? People bouncing off the walls, windows getting broken, chairs getting

turned over, and then it's going to be like, anybody that's a visitor is going to be like "What? What kind of church is that?" I mean, it isn't supposed to be—and I get that there's times when the Holy Ghost moves, and, you know, there's—but there's still decency and in order. I mean, it's not craziness or zaniness or just everybody bouncing off the wall. So, be content with who God made you, and I'm talking with the women specifically at this point, be content with the strengths that God's given you, and highlights in your life. God made me a man I'm happy to be a man. If God made you a woman, you should be happy to be a woman. And, again, that's not like I'm popping in a little shot against people who claim to be transgender. You know what? I know that God made me a man, and I know women that God made them a woman, whatsoever state I am in, therewith to be content. I'm not going to keep going on that, because our next and our last point is:

Point 3. Unsung Heroes

I know this is going to be a little bit lengthy of a passage, but... This is very lengthy, but this is the gist of our service, as far as the passages go, the Bible-reading goes, today. But hear it. We're going to read through it. It's going to take us a few minutes, but:

Exodus 1:6-22 *And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.*

I want to highlight verse fifteen before I read from chapter two. Remember these names: "And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:"

Exodus 2:1-10 *And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And*

his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

So, who here can honestly say that they knew the names Shiphrah and Puah and their significance before today? Unsung heroes. Because, you think about that—I know I didn't. I'm not saying we didn't know the story, but this section is about unsung heroes. But think about this for just a minute, as you digest this deliberately lengthy passage, and look again at the verse that says, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." It was the midwives that feared God, and decided they weren't going to abort the babies, despite severe consequences. And then we read on, and we find that it was Moses' mother that hid him, and prevented him from death, and Pharaoh's daughter actually had a role in his upbringing as well. History would have been quite different if it wasn't for the role of these women, Shiphrah and Puah. A couple of unsung heroes whose legacy is for all time.

I want to ask for some participation, and I know this might sound a little unusual, especially since the theme of the month is women of purpose, but I want to hear just from men on this last part of our message. I want to ask—I want to hear the men share a personal experience of a woman in your life, could be your wife, could be your aunt, could be your sister, could be a co-worker, could be even somebody that you don't know but you've seen them as an inspiration in your life. Someone that you would describe as an unsung hero. I'm not looking for a lengthy testimony; I'm looking for maybe a minute or so, so that we could give opportunity to each person that would like to share. But it's something that we have to look at it like, "Okay, what have I learned from women?" Appreciate these differences. There are unsung heroes. And, now, I'm going to ask if you could just raise your hands, and I'm going to call out to you. Vince.

Vince: I'd just like to talk about my mom, real quick. When me and my brothers were growing, she used to bring us—we were Catholic. She, faithfully, dragged us to church every Sunday morning, against our desires. If you have a foot, you go to service. But the thing it taught me was, you respect God. It taught me that she feared God, and respected God enough to make us do that, and, as I got older, it made me ask questions. I think anybody that was raised like that, you get to the point in your life where, you know, you start asking your own questions, you start venturing out on your own, where God would want you to go, what God would want you to do. I'm not here to talk about whether the Catholic Church is right, or this and that, but that's what got me to respect God. I learned to pray I learned the Ten Commandments. My mom was very faithful in doing that. Years later, after I got baptized, I ended up going back home and sharing with her, and she got baptized, and eventually my dad and my brothers, but, you know, it came full circle, but it started with my mom.

Amen, amen. Thank you, Vince. Alex.

Alex: This is for my mom. She did a lot of good things in my life. Taught me good values. God put in her heart to come from Russia over here. She stayed with the idea. She always provided for me, you know, I never starved.

Thank you, Alex. Greg.

Greg: A lot of people think about their mom, and that's, you know, they deserve it. My mom, I saw her raise eight of us. Being one of the older ones, I saw her raise the others. I see a lot of moms, how they raise their children, and she didn't take any chances. That's one thing that she showed me. If a pacifier fell on the floor, it couldn't be washed it had to be sterilized. Things like that. This all out—those things that I can remember.

Amen. I'm actually going to share one real quick. I know next week is Mother's Day, and I know that people have shared about their moms, that's fine, but I don't want to take anything way form next week, either. I just want to share one, real quick: This was in high school, and we had a typing teacher. Her name was Hope Jones. Older lady, at the time, and, actually, our senior year, I kept a journal. That was part of our creative writing class. But, I remember I kind of reflected back on this form time to time, so now we're talking thirty years ago. I remember that, as a teacher, she was gentle, but she was firm. I remember, in that journal—I don't remember—I was trying to look for it, and I said something to her, and I don't remember what it was, but what I remember writing in the journal was, "I said something to her, and I feel awful about it, because she didn't deserve that." Now, she didn't come over to me and, like, (making aggressive grabbing motions) "What do you think you're doing?" I mean, back then they could do that in schools. That's obviously changed, but, be that as it may, her response was appropriate, and I felt appropriately awful. But she didn't hold it against me, and, it was like, we continued on, and I thought about that every now and then. Not constantly, but I thought about that, like, she was one of my teachers, she was one of those teachers that was just, you know, she'd teach you little things like, "Don't look at the keypad." This was back before Microsoft Office and all this other stuff. You know, autocorrect, and all that. This was like, actual typewriters. But I feel like she as an inspiration. She was a good teacher. She was easy-going, but she was firm she was strong. Anybody else have anything? Any of the other guys? Mike.

Mike K: Yeah, I'd like to say my mom. I was adopted, and I used to hate being adopted. And she used to say, like, I never came out of her tummy, but I came out of her heart. And I still war with that, spiritually, about being adopted, to this present day.

Is there anybody else? Bob.

Bob: Yeah, my fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Schultz. She knew I was in a lot of trouble at home, but she worked with my mom to make sure, what was going on, to help me set ways. Mrs. Schultz was always there, very encouraging, and she taught me a lot of things as my fifth grade teacher that I still practice today.

Amen, amen. One more? Mark.

Mark: Yeah, my sixth grade math teacher, Mrs. Webster. She saw things weren't going well for me. She took out time for me to encourage me. And she had students that would normally come back and see her after class. She also knew I was good at math, and she nurtured that. She knew that I could work with fractions in my head, and she worked with that, and she gave me the encouragement that I needed, so that I didn't have to walk around feeling useless.

Amen. Thank you, thank you. So, women of purpose. Next week is Mother's Day, and just mention that. But, let these points sink in, today, about appreciating our differences. About the unsung heroes. About learning from women, and not in a competitive way. Not in a way—and I'll tell you, I made a note: Guys, don't ever feel like you're less of a man because you're learning from a woman. And I think all of us know that, but, if you didn't, and you're hearing that for the first time, take it to heart. I don't feel like I'm less of a man because I've had women that were inspirations to me. And I'm not just talking about relatives; I mentioned some others. We had a lady that my mom worked with in the hospital that was an anesthesiologist, her name was Anne Howard, and she just passed a couple of years ago, she was in her early nineties. She was one of the first doctors at the hospital—first woman doctors, I should say. But she was never competitive, like, "Oh, it's all a men's position," I mean, she was never like that. She was like, "I just worked for it and got it." And I think that's something where we can all have that mutual respect to be able to know there are differences, but, it's something that, respect will take us a long way.

Thank you all for your attention this morning, and God bless you.

