

## Patriarchy: What and Why?

Rev. Andrew J. Preus

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In 1985 the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Missouri Synod came out with a statement entitled, "Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice." In it the commission makes only three references to motherhood. On page 24, it quotes Stephen Clark who mentions that the woman was given to man to make children and household possible. On page 18, it mentions that Eve was called the "mother of all the living (Gen 3:20)." And near the beginning, on page 6, the commission writes the following:

In sum, although the Old Testament reflects the patriarchal nature of the society in which it was written and with which it is concerned, the relationship of women to their fathers and husbands did not stand in the way of their joyful participation in the worship life of God's people. In the words of Biblical scholar Mary J. Evans, "They had a significant role to play not only in their role as mothers and in the home, but also as individuals, and they were not barred from leadership when the circumstances required it. "

This quote is not false. But it is weak. First, patriarchal nature does not simply describe the society during the times of the Old Testament. It is not the Old Testament that reflects some social context called patriarchy. Rather, patriarchy is God's design in the creation. Second, it is not merely that a woman's relationship to her father and husband does not stand in the way of her joyful participation in the worship life of God's people. These relationships in fact shape her involvement in the church.

When Mary J. Evans says, "not only in their role as mothers in the home, but also as individuals," she is subtly divorcing a woman's identity from the office of mother. A woman's character is not found first in herself, while motherhood and wife are just two incidental options. Rather, a woman's identity is founded in these two great callings, since these were instituted with her at the beginning of creation.

One of the women in the Old Testament who was not barred from leadership when the circumstances required it was the judge, Deborah. She sent Barak to engage in battle against Sisera, the general of the Canaanite army. She chided Barak for wanting her to go with him, acknowledging the shame for a man to have a woman fight his battles for him. She said that the victory would not be to his glory, because God would give Sisera into the hands of a woman (Jud 4:9). But what was the nature of Deborah's leadership? She did not herself fight in battle.

Instead, she encouraged Barak to man up and do his duty. And after God gave them the victow, Deborah sings a song in praise to God in which she reveals the true nature of her calling. She calls herself the mother of Israel (Jud 5•7). Her office is characterized by the office of mother. It

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1 "Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesastical Practice," A Report of the Commission of Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, (St. Louis: LCMS, September, 1985).

is not by her own individuality as a strong, independent woman. Whether she was in fact a mother is not revealed to us. But the fact that she is a woman means that any role she takes as a leader is in the analogy of mother.

My point here is that motherhood and fatherhood are not each simply one possibility in which men and women give valuable service to the church and society. They are rather the defining and characterizing vocations for men and women. Whether or not they are married, whether or not they have children, the office of mother and wife and the office offather and husband define men and women. After all, St. Paul points to the office of husband when he says that only men can carry out the office of teaching in the church (I Tim 3: 12 ff). Those pastors who never took a wife are not disqualified from the role of spiritual father.

Fatherhood is not simply what some guys decide to do. It is the defining office for all other stations in life given to men. This is why Luther, in his Large Catechism, describes rulers as civil fathers and pastors as spiritual fathers. <sup>2</sup> St. Paul, who had no children, refers to Timothy and Titus as his sons (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2, 2: I; Tit 1:4), He also refers to himself as the father (1 Cor 4: 15) who betrothed the Corinthian believers to Christ as pure virgins (2 Cor 11:2). St. Paul can use such analogies because of the order of fatherhood, which derives from God the Father. As he says to the church in Ephesus, God is the Father from who all patriarchies are named. Therefore, Paul tells Timothy to treat older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, younger women as sisters, and older women as mothers. He does not qualify this with whether these older men and women are in fact fathers and mothers, nor does he mention whether such younger men and women all have siblings. Rather, Paul simply takes these foundational vocations and applies them to every Christian relationship among men and women. This is because the apostle recognizes that the offices of husband, wife, father, and mother are the prime vocations given in this life.

Christian men and women are to confess God's Word in everything they do. This includes confessing what God's Word says about fathers, mothers, husbands, and wives. And this includes extoling, esteeming, and imitating these offices in their own respective stations in life, whether they are single, married, fruitful, or barren.

This brings me to the topic of my paper. To assume that patriarchy is merely a socially conditioned arrangement in old societies is to miss the point of patriarchy. It is to miss how central the offices of father, mother, husband, and wife are to creation. And this is why I have

been asked to give this paper. My task today is to define what patriarchy is and why we need it.

Patriarchy is the doctrine of headship. It is how God carries out his authority. It is the teaching that the Father has begotten the Son from eternity, that he has created mankind, and that he continues to preserve his creation. Patriarchy literally means "Fatherly rule." From the very beginning God the Father has given this fatherly rule specifically to earthly fathers. It was not merely a social context that the clans in the tribes of Israel were also known as fathers' houses (Num 1: 18). It is according to the created order that fathers rule their homes. This earthly authority of father corresponds to his authority as husband. Obviously this authority takes a

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<sup>2</sup> LC, I, 158 ff.  
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different form. His wife does not submit to him the same way as his children do. But she nevertheless submits to her husband.

When one has true patriarchy then one has true matriarchy, if I might redefine that term. Instead of matriarchy being a mother's rule and influence over and against the father's, we should see true matriarchy as her rule and influence under her husband. Her rank in the home is damaged if she does not submit to her husband. It is in her submission to her husband that she is given a place in the order of things. It is similar to the ranks in the military. A first lieutenant submits to the authority of the Captain. It is in this order to which he submits that he has rule and influence over those who are put under him. Submission in the Greek can be divided into two words,

εὑπερ," which means under, and "τασσο," which means order. As a lieutenant is under orders he receives his rank. It is the same with wives. It is the same, obviously in a different rank, with children. When a child honors his parents he is blessed. He is given a place in the household. If he rebels, he has nothing. Thus, the fourth commandment is the first one with a promise, that you would live long on the earth.

This is patriarchy. It is the basic order which God has instituted, which is founded in the domestic estate of husband, wife, father, mother, and children. So why do we need it? We need it because the world cannot survive without it. To reject patriarchy is to embrace chaos. Isaiah describes this as a punishment from God when he says (Is 3 •12), "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." A man whose wife bosses him around is by that very fact less of a man than one who does not let his wife boss him around. I shouldn't have to argue for this point. I am simply asserting it and taking it for granted just as the Spirit-inspired Isaiah did. This is something that, as St. Paul reminds us, even nature tells us, namely, that it is shameful for a wife not to submit to her husband (1 Cor 11).

And because nature tells us this, even the unbelievers can recognize that rejecting patriarchy leads to chaos. Even the crassest people can identify as fools those married couples who fornicate, commit adultery, or purposefully deprive themselves of children. So as a way of comparison, I would like to proceed with this paper by describing two ways we might pursue patriarchy. The one is under the law. The other is under the gospel.

To be sure, we understand patriarchy from both the law and the gospel. The law tells us what God demands in the table of duties. Husbands love your wives, wives submit to your husbands, and children obey your parents. Pastors, be faithful to God's Word as you oversee his flock. Hearers, be obedient to your pastors as they preach God's Word. Masters, be kind to your servants, and servants obey your masters. And obey earthly rulers, since they get their authority from God. This is the instruction of the law, derived mainly from the fourth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." But the gospel tells us who our heavenly Father is. Jesus tells Philip (John 14:9), "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." And Jesus continues by saying that he does not do these works on his own authority, but by the authority of the Father who sent him. The gospel reveals that the Father has begotten the Son from eternity and sent him to do his will to save sinners. Reject patriarchy, and you reject the rule of the Father through Jesus. You reject the salvation God accomplishes through the Son. You reject the gospel.

So as we consider how we are to pursue patriarchy, whether under the law or under the gospel, we are not saying that we either learn patriarchy from the law or from the gospel. Of course, we learn it from both. Rather, when we consider whether we pursue patriarchy under the law or under the gospel, we are distinguishing between being slaves to sin and being slaves to righteousness. In short, do we understand patriarchy as slaves or as free children? So first, let us consider patriarchy under the law.

#### Patriarchy Under the Law

To be under the law is to be under the condemnation of the law. It means that one does not have the Holy Spirit who gives the life and salvation, which the law cannot give. It does not mean that one follows the law. If following the law makes us under the law, then every Christian would be under the law, because every true Christian desires to follow what God requires in his law. Those who claim that they are not under the law because they ignore the law are, ironically, precisely the people who are under the law. They serve their own sinful desires, which are what the law condemns.

To be under the law means that one is a slave to the law. St. Paul describes how this plays out in his epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5. He writes: "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.'<sup>5</sup>

Those who walk in the spirit are not under the law, and this is why they do not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But those who do not walk in the Spirit, that is, through faith in Christ who gives us the Spirit, serve to gratify their sinful desires. As St. Paul says in Romans 7.11, sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceives us. In other words, sin deceives us into thinking that we are following the law, but it is really making us slaves to the law. This is why St. Paul contrasts being a slave to our sinful flesh to not being under the law. Therefore, those who gratify their sinful desires prove that they are under the law. And operating under the law, they strive in the deceitfulness of their hearts to accomplish what in the end only condemns them.

St. Paul goes on: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like."

Now, I would like to take each of these works of the flesh mentioned by Paul in order to describe how one might pursue patriarchy while being under the law. First, Paul lists adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lewdness. Those who pursue patriarchy under the law will, to some extent, run away from the good structure of patriarchy. Instead of honoring the estate of marriage in which patriarchy most intimately operates, they will satisfy their carnal desires by sexual immorality. We see this overtaking our own society when so many couples live together before marriage. As pastors we are often overwhelmed by the marital problems in our congregations brought on by unfaithful couples. Of course, we can often connect this to lewd and filthy behavior, such as watching pornography.

But is this really a pursuit of patriarchy? Well, of course it is. You see, patriarchy is the teaching of authority and headship. And every evil is a corruption of what is originally good. So when a man can convince his girlfriend to live with him outside of marriage, he is in effect convincing her to submit to him without giving her the honor that marriage gives to women. The protection that is connected to the estate of marriage is thrown out and the man pursues a chauvinistic version of ruling his wife. He might convince himself that he is allowing his lover to be free and independent, but he is in fact robbing her of the chastity God would have him give her. This gift of chastity by which God honors women is preserved by means of a dedicated husband who loves and defends her, blesses her with the fruit of the womb, and protects his household. It is a great irony that he believes that he is giving his lover pleasure, and that she even believes that he is giving her pleasure. But of course, any heathen worth his salt at all can see that a man who fornicates with a woman who is not his wife is by no means giving her honor. Yet, as we know, sin, seizing the opportunity, is very deceitful.

So St. Paul's list goes on: idolatry and sorcery. A man might live an outwardly chaste life, being faithful to his wife. But he will not teach her that her true honor is in God's grace in Jesus Christ. He might run his household with much masculinity, but he will not pay any attention to the spiritual welfare of his family. He will take his family fishing, camping, and throw the ball around with his children. But will he teach them the Catechism and the Scriptures? No, he will rather worship the creature over the Creator. He will teach his household that mammon is more important than the true riches of God's Word. He might even bring them to church, but he will not pay any attention to the doctrine being taught,

It is possible that sorcery (*pharmakeia*) was understood as a poison used as an abortifacient. In Plutarch's "Life of Romulus," he mentions that Romulus made certain laws about divorce, in which he allowed a man to divorce his wife if she used poison to prevent children. The word for poison is *pharmakeia*, the same word for sorcery in Galatians 5.<sup>1</sup> How many husbands deny their wives the gift of children while presuming to be the heads of their homes? He might

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<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, Romulus 22:3.

maintain his power and authority over his wife, but purposefully allowing her to pollute her womb in order to go childless is something that even the more noble pagans saw as shameful.

Next, Paul mentions hatred, contentions, jealousies, and outbursts of wrath. A man can be the head of his home outwardly, but we hear too often of abusive husbands. For a man to beat up on his wife, to put her down, and degrade her is a sin, which comes from the heart. It is a breaking of the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not murder." And he who hates his brother — including his wife — is liable to the hell of fire (Matt 5:21; I John 3:15).

The Proverbs say that it is better to sleep on the roof than to live with a contentious wife (Prov 21:9). So men find their masculinity in the sanctuaries of their man-caves, wherein they alter their minds, often with cheap booze, in order to avoid their nagging wives. There they can imagine in their drunken stupor that they still rule the roost. The fact that a man would flee such contention of a woman shows that he does not want to put up with it. Here is an inkling of a desire to be the man of the house. But instead of speaking clearly and lovingly guiding his wife, he avoids her. In her religious zeal she might even bring the kids to church. And she often figures that it is not worth trying to drag him along. So she lets him sleep in, watch the pre-game shows, or do whatever he likes for those few hours so that he can keep the manly integrity he thinks he has.

A man who tries to rule his wife also gets jealous. And this breeds jealousy in her as well. They don't trust one another's family or friends, all the while trying to give legitimacy to their own feeble relationship.

A man often thinks he is being the head of his home when he bursts out in anger against his wife.

She might burst back, or she might avoid the confrontation out of fear for her husband's wrath. In either case, true patriarchy is not achieved.

St. Paul's list concludes: selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. Selfish ambitions cut the deepest especially for those who seem to have their house in order. They treat their wives with outward respect, treat their children well, and might even bring them to a good church. But they are in it for themselves. They are proud that they are not like other men, that their wives are not disrespectful, and that their children are not out of control. They give their kids a good education. But they do not do so in the fear, love, and trust of God. They do so in order to bolster their own egos. And this leads them to define themselves by what they are not. Instead of finding their true identity in their heavenly Father who has blessed them with a good marriage and children, they find their identity in how they are not like others who are caught up in the world's lies of feminism, fornication, and other evils. This is a sectarian spirit, which rejoices more in not being part of the heathen than in being part of God's family. They find every reason to show they are better than their neighbor who has some problems in his household.

This leads to envy toward those who manage their households well, as if this is a competition. Even a woman who is wise by nature can figure out that it is much better to submit to a kind husband than to pursue vain independence. But such a woman is not immune to the heresy of

pride. In her enthusiastic zeal to be different from the feminists around her, she is led to rely on her own ability to know the simple fact that  $2 + 2 = 4$  and the obnoxiously obvious fact that the female wolf does not till the alpha male. But relying on such basic principles only gives room for sin to seize the opportunity and deceive them, in vain pride, to think that they have accomplished the godly patriarchy that their Father desires.

I have already covered murder and drunkenness, but we should also give some attention to revelries. These are wild parties. When we do not train our young men to avoid the adulterous woman, as the wise old Solomon tried to warn his son, Rehoboam (Prov 7), and when we do not warn our daughters against dressing like hussies, we do them both a great disservice no matter how much we teach them that the man is stronger than the woman. And those who think that they are balancing things out by teaching their children that men and women are equal are foolish to think that this will prevent the atrocities that happen at any given college party. Allow me to trace out how this often happens.

A young man who imagines that women are just like men, except with different biological parts and functions, will lose sight of his important role as the man who must seek to govern his household with wisdom and gentleness. He then flees to his timidity to beat around the bush as he lacks the courage simply to approach a young woman and talk about things of substance to her, like who God is, or what fatherhood and motherhood are. And he will inevitably abandon the pursuit of a woman with a gentle and quiet spirit who desires to be led by him, and instead search for an independent woman who doesn't really need him outside of the pleasure, which incidentally comes from some mutual relationship, which may or may not lead to marriage. This often leads him to search for the quick-fix of finding a woman at a party or some other shallow social function. And of course the women follow suit. They want to impress the more dominant sex by showing off their more modest parts, which St. Paul says should be covered up in order to receive the greater honor.

These are not just concerns of outward decorum. They are the cosmetics of what attacks the very heart of patriarchy. If you want to see patriarchy abused, then observe a man attempt to seduce a girl whose father is nowhere to be seen, and she is pressured to give in to his manly appeal. This is precisely the abused form of patriarchy, which lends itself to feminism. It is because the man who seduces a woman is dishonoring her father. He is operating under the feminist mindset that she is her own person, independent from the rule of her father. But if he recognized her father's rule over her, then he would not dishonor him. And he would therefore not try to take from her what has not been given to him to take.

To various extents, those who are under the law can recognize the abuses of patriarchy. Many will even blame it on patriarchy. But ultimately, they are all under the same snare. It is that they are trying to achieve what only God can give. The false understanding of patriarchy is an attempt to take such authority and benefits for oneself. But the true patriarchy leaves it to God to give.

Consider Jesus. His eternal equality with God was shown by being in the form of God. We hear an account of this form of God from Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the transfiguration, in which Christ's divinity shown through him with perfect splendor. John, who was one of the witnesses

with Peter and James, alludes to this when he says, "We beheld his glory (John 1 : 14) " And yet, what did Jesus do with such glory? He did not count it something to be grasped. It was not something that he needed to take. Instead, he allowed his Father to give it to him as he took on the form of a servant, being obedient unto death And even in his resurrection, St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15 that Jesus subjected himself to the Father who put all things in subjection under him. It was because of this humble obedience unto death that St. Paul says in Philippians 2 that God has highly exalted Jesus and given him the name above every name.

Jesus teaches us true patriarchy by submitting himself to the Father and receiving what was already his from eternity from the Father. Glorify me, Jesus prays to the Father, with the glory I have shared with you from before the foundations of the world (John 17). He does not deny this equality with God Instead, in perfect trust, lacking no suspicion, no jealousy, and no envy, he commits himself to his Father, just as he said in his dying breath (Luke 23:46), "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!'

Every conflict in the pursuit of patriarchy under the law is in man's and woman's desire to be independent. This is because they do not trust that the other will do his or her duty. Such suspicion is rooted in a suspicion of God. But Jesus does not assert his independence from the Father. He gladly allows himself to be slapped on the cheek and have his cloak taken from him, because he trusts that the Father will not take from him the honor he has promised him.

We therefore find in Jesus not only our salvation from sin, but also our example of what it means to pursue patriarchy under the gospel. Jesus put himself under the law in order to earn for us the righteousness that we, who were under the law, could not attain (Gal 4•4). And in his obedience under the law we find our life under the gospel, shielded by his mercy. We learn that we do not need to worry about being shortchanged or denied anything good from our spouse. Therefore, we move onto the next part of this paper.

### Patriarchy Under the Gospel

To understand patriarchy under the gospel is to understand Christian freedom. Christian freedom is not an autonomous independence from authority. That is to say, we do not understand freedom from our own individual rights, which we possess apart from our progenitors. The way the Scriptures speak of freedom has everything to do with whose children we are. St. Paul uses the analogy of Sarah and Hagar. Ishmael is not free, because he is the son of the slave woman. But Isaac, who is the son of the promise, is free because he is the son of Sarah, Abraham's lawful wife. Therefore, we are free by virtue of our mother being free. Our mother, which is the heavenly Jerusalem, the church, the bride of Christ, is free. Our liberty is not something we find within ourselves. It is rather that which we find in our relationship with our mother.

It is the same with our relationship with our Father. In fact, our mother is only free because she has been betrothed to Christ, the eternal Son of the Father. We are therefore free because we have been adopted as sons of the Father. Just as we understand our Lord, Jesus', divinity from the fact that he was begotten of the Father from all eternity, so do we understand our

freedom in the gospel from the fact that through Christ we have been adopted as God's children by the washing of water with the Word.

St. Matthew records Jesus teaching the freedom of patriarchy when he instructs Peter to catch a fish and find a coin inside for the temple tax. When Peter is questioned about paying the temple tax, Jesus asks him (Matt 17:25), "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" Peter answers, "From the strangers." Jesus says, "Then the sons are free." Jesus teaches the disciples true patriarchy. Because they are sons of their Father in heaven they are free from the principles of this world. The only thing that compels them to follow any worldly order is the love of God, which as St. Paul says, has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom 5).

And it is precisely because the children of the Father have this love of God that they are eager to follow the good order God has set in place. Usually when we think of good order we think of what works. But good order is much more than mere pragmatism. Good order is what God has ordered. As St. Paul says in I Corinthians God is not a god of disorder, but of peace. The opposite of disorder is peace. We can therefore say that Paul sees order as inseparable from peace, and vice versa. Paul also sets up against disorder from verse 33 (&Kutuotuoioiu) with the women's learning in submission (t3TtOtUooé00CDGUV). Both of these are derived from the word for order, tåklg. A woman learning in silence and submissiveness is part of order. It is therefore a pursuit of peace.

The reason why women can't publicly teach men in the church is because to do so would be bad order. Again, this is not a mere pragmatic argument, but an assertion of God's order in creation. It is an affirmation of the doctrine of patriarchy. And such patriarchy lends itself to peace.

But we must remember how Paul approaches this discussion of order. He begins chapter 14 with these words: "Pursue love." This beginning of the chapter shapes our understanding of the end of the chapter, namely, that all things should be done in decency and in good order (Tåktv•, 14:40). Order is the fruit of love. If it is not the fruit of love, then it is mere pragmatism, run by selfish ambitions and political compromise.

And of course we cannot neglect the chapter, which precedes this chapter on order. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul gives an ode to love as the highest spiritual gift. Love bears all things and believes all things. It rejoices in the truth. Such is the godly pursuit of patriarchy. Love believes all things. That is to say, it is not suspicious. A husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church, because he trusts that Christ will see him through in his duties. A wife submits to her husband as to the Lord, because she trusts that her Lord will not forsake her even though her husband is unworthy. The love of God, which is poured into their hearts, is the driving pursuit for the Christian who pursues patriarchy. After all, this is what binds the Father and the Son together, and this divine love is revealed in our salvation when Jesus obeys the Father for our sake. "As the Father loves me," Jesus says, "even so do I love you (John 15:9)." And immediately after this, Jesus says, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept

my Father's commandments and abide in his love." This keeping of God's commandments is confessing God's authority, just as Jesus confesses it. It is seeing that when we follow what God's Word says about how our lives are to be order, that we see it in light of Christ keeping this commandment in order to save us.

Jesus submitted to the Father so that the Father would exalt him. But he was not exalted for his own sake. Rather, he was, as St. Paul says to the Ephesians, given to be head over all things to his church (Eph 1:22). Therefore, when the Christian husband and father rules his wife and children, he is being obedient to his Father. But he is not obedient for his own sake; rather, he joyfully keeps his Father's Word for the sake of those whom God has given him to love.

Faith is what makes us free. You will know the truth, Jesus says, and the truth will make you free (John 8). Love is therefore the defining feature and characteristic of this freedom as it is acted out in the Christian life. When the Christian pursues love he does so because he is free. He is free from the deceitfulness of sin, which tries to keep God's commandments out of envy, falling into the trap it has set for itself. He is free from wofTies of this life, because he know that his Father knows what he needs.

Throughout Jesus' instruction, he was determined to reveal the Father to his disciples. This is evident throughout his sermon on the mount. The God who sees in secret will reward you. He rewards what is in secret. That is, he rewards what is hidden from the eyes of the wise. This should be a great encouragement especially to Christian women who strive to confess the doctrine of patriarchy. The world does not appreciate or celebrate their gentle and quiet spirit. But St. Peter tells us that this is very precious in the sight of God (1 Peter 3). This again is the God who sees in secret. He exalts the lowly.

When I talk to the ladies who are in the LWML I like to emphasize that when the poor widow put a mite into the offering for the temple, only Jesus noticed (Luke 21 : 1-4). He noticed, because his Father who sees in secret noticed. No one else noticed, but faith, which lays hold of what God sees, grasps such honor more than any earthly riches. We should therefore ask ourselves if it is a good thing to parade our pocket change around and seek recognition for it. This seems to miss the point of patriarchy. That is, it misses the point of our heavenly Father's rule and authority. He rules in spirit and tlllth, not in pomp and circumstance. Certainly, we don't want to discourage giving money for missions or needlessly put down pious women who want to support the church's work. But there is much to say about instilling the example of the pious women of old, like Sarah who called her husband lord. She did this as a confession of the gospel, not for Abraham's sake, but for the sake of the Lord who gave him to her as her head. It was a confession of the gospel that her true Lord and Father promised her what she could not see. He promised to exalt her with the blessing of a son through whom his holy Seed would be born.

Sarah's devotion to her husband makes her as much the mother of faith as Abraham is the father of faith We should maintain what the old Lutheran teachers calledfides directa, faith,

which is directed toward the promise and thereby receives passively the righteousness and salvation promised through Christ. But with that we also teach the *fides actualis*, the act of faith whereby it seeks and strives after God's promises. When Sarah submits to her husband she is concretely seeking God's favor in the promise. This is how St. Peter describes her with the other holy women of old, namely, that they "trusted in God," and were thereby submissive to their husbands. This is precisely why Sarah is such a model for all Christian women. When a woman submits to her husband as to the Lord she is not merely obeying some arbitrary moral precept. She is holding God to his promise, seeking the favor of her heavenly Father who promises that no good thing will be denied her who fears the Lord. She is actively laying hold of that which Mary received in her womb and sang about with joy, the Mighty One who has done great things to her, whose mercy endures from generation to generation.

Sarah is an example to women to submit to the order of God's patriarchy because of her faith. And this brings to mind the fact that justification through faith alone apart from works is the central teaching of all teachings of Scripture, including the teaching of patriarchy. When we understand patriarchy apart from faith then we fall into the slavery of the flesh, which breeds the works of the flesh described by St. Paul in Galatians 5. But when patriarchy is understood through faith in God who sent his Son to do for us, then the fruit of the Spirit is made manifest. So let us describe how the pursuit of patriarchy under the gospel of the Spirit of Christ.

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4 See F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. J.T. Mueller, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), II: 432-46.

St. Paul writes: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." Again, love is the prime characteristic of the pursuit of godly patriarchy. In the joy of the gospel we have peace with God through faith in Christ (Rom 5). St. Paul describes in Romans 5 how we rejoice in our afflictions, because such afflictions produce endurance and longsuffering. And this all produces hope. This is hope for what is certain.

When a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church, he does so not only for the sake of his wife, but for the sake of all wives and mothers who are blessed by God. He takes up the cause of God who is the defender of the widow and the father to the fatherless. He takes up the cause for the woman whose husband is abusive and negligent. He is not serving merely his own home, as if he should selfishly have regard only for his own household. But he bears all things in this love, bearing with the weak husband and the worry-ridden wife who trusts in the same loving heavenly Father as he does.

This is why even a single man with no wife or children pursues the same thing. When a single man is an pastor at a church, he is teaching with God's authority who our heavenly Father is. And when a single man serves as an elder he takes up the cause of all women by supporting his pastor in his duty to care for the children of the Father. And in this bearing with one another, they all learn together the hope, which does not put them to shame, because the same love of the Holy Spirit has been poured into all of their hearts through faith in Christ.

Kindness and goodness are attributes of our Father in heaven, which appeared when he sent his Son who saved us not by works done by some infused righteousness within our hearts, but by his mercy whereby he justified us by the death of Christ through the washing of regeneration and renewal of

the Holy Spirit. This kindness and goodness of our heavenly Father is the very kindness and goodness given to us as we live together as his church. Therefore, the true patriarchy of our Father in heaven rules all of our hearts and minds.

Husbands and wives learn faithfulness from their Father in heaven who does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with the temptation always gives us a way of escape. Husbands and wives sin against each other, just as brothers and sisters in Christ do. But God gives us all the way out through the blood of his Son who submitted himself to his Father's plan to save us from eternal hell.

God is gentle, and this is why the gentle and quiet spirit of the submissive wife is so precious to him. It is because it glorifies him by showing what kind of God he is. And finally, the Spirit gives us self-control. In a world that tells us that independence from their fathers and husbands is the true virtue, which defines women, Christian women are led by the free Spirit of the Father to embrace what alone gives them honor.

Against these things there is no law. No law can accuse those who pursue what God calls good. And this is what St. Paul means in Ephesians 5 when he tells us to be imitators of God as beloved children. Being an imitator of God is living as though the law — and any made up law for that matter — cannot accuse us. This is because we find in our status as children of our Father, who rules us with his grace and mercy, what it means to be free. It means, as St. Paul continues to say in Ephesians 5, to be filled with the Spirit as we sing hymns, Psalms, and spiritual songs which teach us of our Father's heavenly rule. And it is from this that St. Paul invites us to trust in God, actively seeking his favor as we, one another, submit to his order out of reverence for Christ.

A husband learns that Christ is the head of man, and God is the head of Christ, when he exercises in faith the headship God has given him to carry out. A wife learns how her husband is the head of her when she submits to him. And through this she learns to rely on the top of the patriarchal chain described by St. Paul in I Corinthians 11. Through her submission to her husband, despite his faults, she learns that God is the head of all things. She thereby gains wisdom, and she is equipped to teach the younger women to seek the same honor (Tit 2:3-5).

#### Conclusion

Jesus said that Moses allowed divorce because of the hardened hearts of the men of Israel. For those who are under the law the order of creation and fatherly authority are determined by how sin bends the rules, and it therefore must be curbed according to the times. It is when we are under the law that we determine what is good on the basis of our present circumstances. Our circumstances might be less or more favorable to the welfare of women. Today, our circumstances are obviously different than they were in generations past. Women have more mobility and opportunities to compete with men. And while we are free to take advantage of some of the resources available to us in these circumstances, Jesus teaches us not to rely on our circumstance. Instead, we are to confess what God established in the beginning, regardless of our current context. God made them male and female. He established an order of fatherly rule, through which he promises to work.

So despite our circumstances, let us strive in freedom to confess the doctrine of patriarchy. Instead of thinking about what we are technically allowed to do in our practice, let us rather think positively of what helps promote this doctrine of patriarchy revealed by God in the Scriptures. Article fifteen of the

Augsburg Confession says that traditions are meant to teach and promote the doctrine of the gospel. The traditions we have are to be free expressions of what we hold dear in God's Word. This should be the same in how we confess the doctrine of patriarchy. What we have the boys and girls, and men and women do in the church should serve to teach them to emulate these high vocations of father and mother.

The doctrine of adiaphora is seen too often as a license for the human will to do what God never said he couldn't do. This is a legalistic view of adiaphora, operating from the mindset that always asks what is lawful but never asks what is beneficial. Instead, we should see this doctrine as a positive opportunity to confess in everything we do what God's Word says. Do we sing hymns that teach the doctrine of patriarchy? Or do we slavishly submit to editions of hymns that have been neutered to gender neutral language? Do we encourage the men to stand up and be leaders in their congregations, or do we sheepishly allow the men to take a backseat while the more energetic women take over? Do we encourage our sons and daughters to seek marriage and children as a priority in life over fancy careers, or do we neglect to emphasize such blessings out of fear of being legalistic? When we pursue patriarchy under the gospel, then we shouldn't worry about being legalistic. Because if we promote what is good, then there is no one to harm us. We rejoice in God's designed order as his beloved children. And we are free to confess it in all that we do.