

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.26.2023

## THE GOSPEL IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH - PART 8 - WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 1 Timothy 2:8-15

**8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; **9** likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, **10** but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. **11** Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. **12** I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. **13** For Adam was formed first, then Eve; **14** and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. **15** Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

### II. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

- Understanding and interpreting this passage about the role of women in the church and public worship has several challenges.
- First, it is controversial.
- Second, there are cultural pressures.
- Third, church traditions.
- Fourth, our personal bias and opinions get in the way of understanding this teaching.
- Fifth, the difficulties of interpreting the passage.
- The charge against Paul of being misogynistic or a women-hater is not supported biblically.
- Paul frequently names women as his co-laborers. His greetings and final salutations mention them. Many were his close, personal friends. He holds them in high regard.
- His ministry was supported by women.
- He found sometimes that his gospel preaching was received by godly women.
- The conversion of Lydia - Acts 16.

#### 1. APOSTOLIC RESTRICTION

11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Differing views of the meaning of this passage.

- First, Paul is simply in error.
- Second, Paul is addressing a cultural issue that was impacting the church at Ephesus.
- Third, the translation for “to exercise authority over a man” is not the best translation.
- Fourth, Paul’s other words invalidate this teaching.
- Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- This is the favorite passage used by those who disagree with Paul’s view of the role of women in public worship.
- However, passage has nothing to do with the teaching ministry of the local church; it has nothing to do with who is to lead the church.
- That verse concerns our salvation, Christ has equalized everything. There is no preferential status in regard to who can participate in the covenantal blessings. In Christ, we are all Abraham’s seed. We are one in Christ.
- Paul is not obliterating the distinctions that exist between ethnic groups or gender. These are not done away with, only that being a Jew doesn’t grant you preferential treatment in Christ.

So how are we to interpret this passage?

- If Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this down for the church at Ephesus and for the church throughout the ages, then it has important instructions for the church in every age and for order in our public worship.

#### **“LET A WOMAN LEARN...”**

- This statement is counter-cultural and revolutionary.
- In the Roman world, women were considered second class and academically and intellectually inferior.
- In the Jewish synagogue, men and women were separated and the teaching was geared towards the men. Men participated and the women remained silent.
- According to the Jerusalem Talmud, a collection of Jewish oral traditions, *“It would be better for the words of the Torah to be burned, than that they should be entrusted to a woman.”*
- Another version of the Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud, says that, *“The men came to learn, the women came to hear.”*
- God’s Word says the opposite of this.
- Before he gives a restriction, Paul writes something empowering for women. “Let a woman learn...”
- God requires her to learn. She is a disciple just like a man. A woman has the same responsibility as a man to grow in knowledge of the Word and Bible doctrine.
- While the church has not done this perfectly, history bears witness that Christianity has lifted women to higher levels of respect, dignity, and freedom.
- There are many examples of where the church has failed and mistreated women, but we have no reason to be ashamed or apologetic about what God has said about women in his Word.
- A woman can learn, she must learn, for she is a disciple of Christ.

#### **HOW A WOMAN IS TO LEARN—“QUIETLY WITH ALL SUBMISSIVENESS”**

- The word ‘quietly’ is repeated again at the end of v12. It bookends this restriction.
- The point is that women are to learn with a quiet and humble demeanor.
- This is about the posture a woman is to assume when the church is gathered and authoritative teaching is taking place.
- 1 Peter 3:4 But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.
- In the gathering of the church for public worship, women are to be quiet learners, not the teachers.
- Women are to be respectful to the leadership and the teaching authority God has given the elders of the church. They are to receive that teaching in a spirit of cheerful agreement.
- Women are to cultivate a spirit of submissiveness in their participation in public worship.
- We must acknowledge that submission has given some men license to abuse women.
- But submission should not be a dirty word among Christ followers.
- In Scripture, we are to submit to the Lord, wives are to submit to their own husbands, we are all to submit to one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and we are to submit to those who are our spiritual leaders.
- The Greek word for submission is ‘hypotagē’ and it means ‘to obey’ and ‘to yield to authority’.
- In Scripture, submission is viewed as something positive.
- “With all submissiveness...”—partial submission is not submission at all, for it reserves the right to rebel. Begrudging submission reserves the right to grumble. True submission is total.
- Jesus serves as the model of a life lived in full submission to his Father.
- In the case of what Paul is saying here, women are to submit in the church to men who are qualified to be elders and submit to their authoritative teaching.
- Now in all reality, what Paul is expressing of a women’s posture of learning is how all of us should learn. We should all possess a teachable spirit.
- We all need to have the same attitude as Mary who sat at the feet of our Lord to listen to his teaching (Luke 10:39).
- Paul is saying, this is the posture women are to take in public worship, and it’s a good thing.

#### **“I DO NOT PERMIT A WOMAN TO TEACH”**

- What is the restriction or prohibition Paul gives? Women are to learn but not teach.
- Does that mean a woman is never to teach?
- Some have taken this to mean that there is no way, never a place where a woman can teach any man.
- Priscilla and Aquila - Acts 18:26
- Peter’s explanation at Pentecost of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy - Acts 2

- Paul gives instructions for men and women on how to exercise prophecy and prayer in orderly public worship (1 Cor 14).
- Paul instructs both men and women in Colossians 3:16, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another..."
- Prohibiting all teaching from women goes against biblical command and example.
- However, there is one place where it is not appropriate for women to teach and that is in the proclamation and exposition of God's Word in the context of the gathering of the church for public worship.
- Paul uses the present tense verb form "I do not permit..."
- He is stating this as an apostolic command that extends beyond the readers of this letter.
- This restriction is for those occasions when the church gathers for the authoritative preaching and teaching of God's Word.
- This restriction is for where God's word is being transmitted publicly and authoritatively carrying with it the exercise of the doctrinal and disciplinary authority tied to the preaching ministry of the elders of a church.
- Teaching of this capacity was Paul's official role as an apostle and it is given to qualified elders of the church.
- What the Lord is instructing via Paul's letter, is that a woman is not to transmit apostolic doctrine publicly and officially in the context of the local church gathering.
- Incidentally, most men are prohibited from doing the same thing.
- This verse has nothing to do with the equality of men and women.
- It does not mean that all men are to teach all women.
- The Scripture does not teach that women are to submit to all men.
- All women in the church are to submit to the teaching and discipline of the elders of the church.
- In that respect, they are the same as all men who are not ordained elders of the church.

### "...OR TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY OVER A MAN"

- Teach means to instruct, and it always has a positive connotation in the apostolic letters.
- That Paul has preaching in mind in this restriction has to do with how he ties that with exercising authority.
- The phrase, "exercise authority" means to "have authority".
- As we saw earlier, some try to excuse this statement to mean Paul was only talking about the wrong kind of exercise of authority, one that is domineering and controlling.
- But there is a balance to the grammatical structure Paul employs to communicate what he is saying.
- That women should not teach respects the command for a woman to learn quietly and to not exercise authority over a man respects the command to learn with all submissiveness.
- This is what Paul taught all the churches.
- 1 Cor 14:33-38 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, 34 the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36 Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 38 If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.
- Paul's clear instructions have been the traditional position of the church through the ages. Not until the rise of feminist ideology in the west have we begun seeing the proliferation of female pastors.

## 2.APOSTOLIC RATIONALE

- Paul backs up his argument by grounding the rationale for his restriction in two biblical events.
- He is not using them as illustrations, he is connecting them to the reason for his prohibition.
- 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.
- Here is the Biblical rationale for the restriction: Creation order and design, and the Fall.

## 1. CREATION

- Adam was created first. Why is that important?
- The nature of the created order establishes the relationship between male and female.
- Adam was created first and Eve was made from Adam to be his helper.
- Their roles were complimentary. They were not, however, the same.
- Paul's reasoning is rooted in divine revelation of the order of creation that gave men headship and authority over women. This extends to his teaching on church order.
- God desires that the order of his creation be reflected in his church.

## 2. THE FALL

- Eve was deceived, not Adam. Now, Paul is not making the point that because Eve was more gullible and susceptible to deception that she should not teach or exercise authority over a man.
- Eve's sin was her attempt to overthrow the creation order. She was tempted by the thought of having her eyes opened and being like God if she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.
- When God confronts them, Eve says, "*the serpent deceived me, and I ate...*"
- But Adam cannot claim deception. He knew full well what he was doing. God had given him the divine commands.
- Adam was with Eve when she sinned. He remained silent. He did not lead, he abdicated his leadership.
- Instead of teaching, he listened to the voice of his wife.
- Eve's sin was usurping the leadership role attempting to overthrow the creation order to teach her husband. That put him under her authority reversing God's good ordering.
- That role reversal was costly to humanity.
- God holds Adam spiritually responsible even though Adam tried to blame Eve.
- God makes it clear to Eve that her part in all of this would lead to her continual quest to attempt to usurp and subvert her husband's authority.
  
- Here's the point: The Bible does not teach that men should preach because they will do a better job and women can't be trusted because they are more susceptible to error.
- The apostolic restriction is based not on who's the better teacher but on the order God established at Creation.
- The Fall of Adam and Eve shows what can happen when that created order is reversed.
- Those who seek to overthrow God's order for the church are sons and daughters of Eve—like their mother, they become transgressors.

## 3. APOSTOLIC REASSURANCE

15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

- The point Paul is making is that it is for the well-being of women to maintain this order in the church and live out their role in the context of public worship.
- He's not saying that women are saved by having a baby.
- It is the one distinction between men and women that no one can deny. This is unique to women. It's a good, God-given gift.
- The idea is that a woman is saved not by becoming a man, but by embracing her God-given calling as a woman.
- She is to work out her salvation with fear and trembling, as all are to do, but she does that as a woman, not by trying to become a man or do what a man is supposed to do.
  
- This may also be a reference to the promised seed of the woman in Genesis 3 and refers to the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
- Paul closes with an exhortation for women to continue in the virtues of faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

## CONCLUSION

- The sad reality in the church is that this is not a women problem—it's a man problem.
- This is what happens when men fail to take their responsibility and women have to step up to lead.
  
- We are thankful for the amazing women of Sent Church.
- You are valued. You are treasured. You are appreciated. You have a place. Your gifts are needed.
- Our commitment is always to be faithful to God's Word.
- Our practice of male-only eldership is grounded in fidelity to God's Word and the order he has established for his Church.
- We do not bow to cultural demands where they contradict and violate Scripture.
  
- We value the teaching gift of women.
- We want our women to be mighty in the Scripture.
- We want to equip women to disciple other women in the congregation.
- Instead of focusing on this narrow restriction of teaching activity reserved for qualified men in the church, focus on where God can use you.
  
- The biblical burden of this chapter rests primarily with men.
- It's not so much about what women cannot do BUT what men must do.
- Men, lead in your home, lead in the church.
- I am convinced, when we follow God's order, we will find that our church will be a place where both men and women thrive, and it will be a place of life, health, and healing, for the glory of God.

## APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?