

1 TIMOTHY
November 13, 2022

1 Timothy 2:8-15

⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹likewise 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, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. ¹

“This is the Word of God” – “Thanks be to God.”

Welcome to perhaps the most controversial, confusing, and challenging passage in the New Testament...outside of end-times theological mapping.

We delve into a letter written by an apostle of God to a young pastor of a newly birthed church comprised of people (brothers and sisters) who love the Lord and seek to honor him, as well as those who do not love the Lord, but love only themselves, who teach heresy, seeking to bring glory to themselves alone, in a city defined by paganism, idolatry, and immorality calling out issues that cannot be ignored. A letter that is not only to a pastor, but read to the entirety of the body for the glory of God and for the good of the church.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (1 Ti 2:8–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But more than just a letter by an apostle named Paul. Historians and anthropologists studying the first century will see Paul as one of numerous Jewish scholars and one of many known intellectuals of the day. Thus, they view his writings as his alone, framed by his cultural understanding of patriarchy as a Jewish man in a Roman culture.

Yet, others who see the words we read here attributed to Paul, by the hand of God through numerous councils filled with church leaders and those chosen as his instruments as not just Paul's cultural viewpoint regarding gender roles, but actually God's inerrant, immutable, forever right and holy teachings related to identity and holiness.

I do not say that to get an amen...as is evidenced, but as a foundational statement regarding my viewpoint. And certainly a viewpoint impacted by those who have taught me and led me throughout my life, but I also believe based on my own faith in God, study of his Word and reliance on his Holy Spirit's guidance.

Unlike some who seemingly elevate the Bible as some form of fourth person of the Trinity, I simply ascribe my belief that the Bible is holy not because a printer emblazoned that word in gold leaf on a faux leather cover, but because God in his love and providence as set this Word apart from all other teachings. Thus it is our guide, our proof, our lamp, our light and points fully and clearly (even when we are confused and confounded at times) to God himself.

Thus, we read Paul, but we don't read Paul. We read God. And through the Holy Spirit's inspiration and the sealing of this teaching given to us by God, for God, and about God, we seek to know how we must live.

But, this is so much more than behavior modification. This is transformative, redeeming, freeing, and life-giving.

I hope and pray we don't miss that today, or any day. Men and women – listen today, not to me because I'm something, but to God through is

Word because he's everything and he loves you as he created you. He is not the constrainer of life, but the giver of life.

PRAY FOR WISDOM TO HEAR WELL TODAY

Few passages of scripture cause so much confusion as the one I just read. Theologians have debated verb tenses, word meanings, original languages, contextual clues, centered teachings and more in this passage for years. Certainly, for decades, but seemingly even more in the past fifty or so years.

We certainly live in the world, or as Augustine called it "The City of Man" but we must not be of the world. You've likely heard that trope for years. Sticking with Augustine's teachings, that means we are actually citizens of "The City of God." A good reminder in a world gone mad, right?

Yet, even knowing this that our mission field is in this world and we are to live on commission to spread the gospel here so that more may hear, we cannot ignore the reality that our "of the world" avoidance is rarely effective. We are impacted. We are influenced. We have space in our brain that has been leased by the world and thus our thoughts and worldviews, left to our own devices and personal philosophy of me-centeredness, often is not a biblical worldview.

And this infiltrates the church as well.

What does that have to do with this portion of Paul's letter? Much. Why? Because just hearing me read this fuels some thoughts and emotions that make many uncomfortable. Questions regarding gender come to the surface. Appropriate roles in society, in the home, and in the church for men and women arise. The New Testament teachings...in another letter...regarding marriage are considered. The illustration of Christ as the groom and the church as the bride are prominent and right, but flies in the face of our current cultural situation of marital allowance.

Yet, that's for another day. But...it does all connect.

At our core, identity is vital. Who are you? Whose are you? What are your roles in life? What is expected? Who expects what? Who came up with such expectations? Feminism vs. patriarchy? Say there are appropriate roles for men and women, what about those who claim to be of God but have abused those roles? Sexual abuse? Spiritual abuse? Abuse? Morality issues? Sexual norms? Parenting? Appropriate vs. inappropriate?

Isn't this fun.

So in a world turned upside down, we need something to hold onto.

Ever been in one of those roller coasters that loops? It's fun until you get to a certain age where your body says – stop it or I'll stop you. Nonetheless there's a big difference in riding a wooden roller coaster that goes really fast and a metal one that loops. One of the most obvious differences is that metal harness that comes down over your shoulder. On the old wooden ones, there's just a bar that comes across your lap and you are bouncing around on that seat as you fly on, but in the loop, you're harnessed in with a bent bar that goes around your shoulder because if you're not, you're flying out. Insurance requires those bars and you appreciate them.

In a world going fast, and looping upside down and seeking to knock you off any firm foundation, you need something holding onto you, something keeping you safe, something making sure you can get to the end and say “Whooo...what a ride!” without losing, well...yourself.

God's word is that and so much more.

So, here in this passage, we see Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit giving God's instruction to a pastor of a church full of people who

are rattled by messed up teaching, confusing diatribes by those who would soon be disciplined and released from membership, and upended by a theology of “ought to be” rather than the teachings of the great I AM.

Trusting God in this, we say “This is the word of God” and thanks be to God for it.

I’ve gone back two verses to those I ended last week’s sermon with because, as you know, Paul did not put chapter breaks or verses, but in this letter was addressing serious issues and none stand alone as if they are proverbs.

IT IS NOT ABOUT MEN

⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

The first look is prescriptive right? This is what men should do. They should pray. They should show surrender through the open hand. Men, males, are to do this. Men cannot be passive for prayer is active. This is expected and right. Sure.

But, this is not just about men. It’s not a manhood verse. It’s not a men’s ministry, macho, eat some BBQ around the campfire, go hunting, smoke some cigars, and get your act together to be a “real” man teaching. Those are fun, but often superficial. This is a statement that points toward the One whom we gather for, about, and center our lives upon.

The giver of life is God. The sustainer of all is God. The hope we have is him. Thus, God’s bride, his church, his family of redeemed children adopted through the blood of his one and only Son, forgiven and transformed are to pray. And...who should lead this? Who should set the pace? Men of God – that’s you. That’s me. And even more succinct, this is a word to the elders in the church. That office defined later in this letter for the men of God called out, set apart, qualified not simply by

behavioral choices, but by the protection and hand of God through the Holy Spirit. Men. Pray.

No motion. No second needed. I desire that in every place...every place the church is gathered, every place the body of Christ is located together, every place the local church is that men should pray – in peace and in unity and with open hands showing total submission and surrender to the God of the universe – overwhelmed by his glory and goodness.

IT IS NOT ABOUT WOMEN

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.

We looked at this last week and the teaching is clear, but often misunderstood. This is not God saying, throw away your jewelry or do your hair differently. It is Paul using the most common reality in Ephesus that was that those women who are more focused on their own looks, dress, and getting others to look at them have fallen prey to the same spirit of the age that was driving the pagan women of Ephesus.

And just to be clear when we live in a world where a pastor can create a website telling other pastors how to dress stylishly and Instagram accounts like Preachers n Sneakers exists, it is clear that men are dealing with the modesty issues and appropriate dress code things as well.

But...for centuries women have been looked at as objects by the patriarchy so the issues are varied...and the church is not immune.

Bottom line for those who don't want to be told how to dress and for those who grew up going to youth camp with rulers measuring the length of your shorts and your parents yelling at youth pastors because "there aren't long shorts or one-piece swimsuits available" or whatever, don't hear what isn't being said, and don't read what isn't written.

Here's the deal – if your goal is to be seen, it is difficult for others to see Jesus. For men and women – take this to heart.

Oh and here's this...

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.

And this one sets the place on fire.

Here's what is not being said – “Women cannot talk.” That is not what is being said. Remaining quiet is not a Pauline statement of muteness. This word for quiet harkens back to what Paul said about living a “quiet life” earlier in this chapter. The tone and extent of the word is revealed. It is not about absolute silence, though some have wrongly sought to make it so. The revelation of the meaning is not about zipping your lip, but about exercising authority over a man.

And even that rubs some wrongly.

It is not about allowing all men to lord over the women in their lives in such a way that dishonors God, dehumanizes women, and creates a second-tier existence for those created by God to be female.

There's more here than I will get to today, but the Word teaches that God calls certain qualified men to positions of overseers in the church. Yes, that is reserved for males, born male. Yet, not every man is called to such. So, while this speaks of women not teaching with authority (and I don't believe that refers to a classroom discussion or a home study group, but I do believe it refers to the office of pastor/overseer/elder that we will get to in the coming weeks.

There is a submission and a support of the authority of the men God has called to oversee the church.

While some shrink back at that, it may be more of an issue with having anyone in authority over them. Many struggle with that and have for centuries.

Can women teach? Absolutely and most everyone here has been blessed by the teachers in your lives who were identified as Miss or Mrs. because they were born as female image-bearers of God. A bestowed identity, not a chosen one. And...a godly identity.

Women taught in scripture – Timothy’s mother and grandmother, the older women in letter to Titus, Priscilla and Aquila both teaching Apollos, and numerous others.

So, what is prohibited? The preaching/teaching with authority reserved for the pastor/elder/overseer. More to come.

And please just because you think it ought to be different, and just because I may think something isn’t as it ought to be, let the word of God be your foundational guard. Your harness to truth.

IT IS ABOUT GOD

When our arguments are about our roles in God’s family, we can miss that it’s God’s family. Sure, people have messed up his plans, his church, and his order all the time, but when rightfully ordered, rightfully prayed, and rightfully submitted, God is glorified and it is good.

Men – be the man God has created and called you to be.

Women – be the woman God has called you to be.

Each vital. Each valuable. Each needed and each submitted to the lordship of our sovereign God, in unity for his glory.