

Today is an unusual sermon as it is part two of a two part miniseries within a larger series. We have been working through 1 Timothy and last week I was preaching the last half of chapter two. But there is too much in that passage to adequately present in one sermon. So I am finishing chapter two today, the subject of which is part of last week's subject.

Last Sunday's sermon began in the book of Genesis. There I showed you how God gave men and women different roles from the beginning. Let me remind you of the two main points of that beginning.

God made Adam responsible for working the garden.

God made Eve a helper to Adam. There was no shame in being the helper. There was no prestige in having the responsibility. They complemented each other in the roles God gave them and the work to be done by them. They were equal in essence. They were both made in the image of God. But their roles were different.

Then we began to look at the same subject in 1 Timothy 2.

1 Timothy 2:8 (NIV) I want (the) men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

The men in the church are to be spiritual leaders. That is, they are to model to the church an emphasis on seeking the will of God in all things. Lifting up holy hands means lifting up committed lives to God. Then he turns to women in the church. He is going to speak about their role too. But he comes at it from a negative angle.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 (NIV) I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

Verse 9 begins, "I want women also..." Other translations begin this verse with "likewise", or "in like manner", or "similarly". Just as men are called to their God-given role in the church, so women are called to theirs. However, like men, women are tempted to resist submitting to this role and instead, seek the role of men.

We see an example of this in the book of Numbers. Miriam, the sister of the prophet Moses, tried to put herself up to be a leader of the Israelites alongside

Moses. God said no to what Miriam was trying to do and disciplined her with leprosy.

What she did then, other women were doing in some of the early churches. Women were resisting the role God had for them in the church. We see this problem in the churches in the cities of Corinth and Ephesus. Both of these Roman cities were wild. They had the reputation of being "anything goes" kind of cities. Immorality, especially of a sexual nature, was rampant. These attitudes influenced Christians too. One of the ways this attitude played out in the churches was that women tried to take the role of men in those churches.

Now how did they try to do so? Well one way was through sexual attraction. Some women are tempted to use their sexuality to manipulate men in order to get what they want. This often works because of man's weakness to sexual temptation. There has been much in the news lately about the problems this has brought to several men.

Paul commands the women to exhibit no hint of such behavior. He tells them to dress modestly, decently, with propriety. Paul then condemns braided hair, jewelry, and expensive clothes. Why? Because in that day, in the city of Ephesus, that is how the temple prostitutes adorned themselves. And instead of rejecting such "fashions" the Christian women were adopting them. Let's finish verses 9-10.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 (NIV) I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

God calls women to good deeds, to be models of helping.

He is not saying that women should not pray or that men don't have to do good deeds. Elsewhere in the New Testament we are ALL commanded to pray and we are ALL commanded to do good deeds.

The emphasis of this particular passage is on the differing roles God has given men and women in the church. The role of men is to keep the church focused on praying for God's will. That calls for a submissive spirit from the men.

The role of women is to support and help the work of living out God's will, but not leading the church. This calls for a submissive spirit from the women.

To the extent that we fail to submit to the roles God has given us, we limit what God will do in this church and through this church. Again, God can and does do big things through godly people, those committed to living out His will. Our resistance to the roles He gave us limits what God will do in us and through us as a church.

Men, take up the role of spiritual leaders in the church. Women, take up the role of spiritual helpers in the church.

Now, I know the passage so far doesn't really sound like it is speaking of differing roles. But he is getting there.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 (NIV) A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

That last word would be better translated as quiet instead of silent. There is a difference. He was not writing that when we gather as a church the women are not to say anything at all. He meant that they should speak with regard to their role in the church. This last word is the same word used in verse two.

1 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) (pray) for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

This phrase, "quiet lives" does not mean not making any sound. It refers to a life where we mind our own business. Paul did not expect women to remain absolutely silent in the gathered church. There are other New Testament passages that speak of women both praying and prophesying in the church. So total silence is not what Paul is writing of in verses 11-12. He is not prohibiting all teaching by women. We know this because of other New Testament passages that speak of women teaching.

- In Colossians 3:16, Paul writes that we should all teach and admonish one another. In that regard, women can teach spiritual truth they have lived out. Women can share testimony of their own experiences with the Lord.
- In Titus 2:3, Paul instructs the older women to teach the younger women.
- Timothy himself received religious instruction in the home from his mother and grandmother.
- In Acts 18:26, both Aquilla and Priscilla, husband and wife, corrected the teaching of Apollos. They did so privately, not in public in the church.

The teaching Paul is writing of is teaching in the church that relates to authority in the church. Women were not to take on the men's role and resist the women's role.

In Baptist churches the pulpit, used figuratively, is special. That is, the pastor preaches the Bible to the church that has gathered. This is an authoritative teaching which is what Paul has in view.

Paul then gives several reasons in support of your role in the church. You may not like what he says. But he speaks for God in this.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 (NIV) For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

We have all been affected by the sins of Adam and Eve. We all inherited the guilt of Adam's sin. That is why we die.

Additionally, women have been affected by Eve's sin. Women share the consequences given to Eve by God.

Genesis 3:16 (NIV) To the woman he (God) said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children."

This was not just true of Eve, but of all women. Pregnancy and giving birth are very difficult for women. This was part of the penalty for Eve's sin and applies to all women. You have also inherited dishonor from Eve's sin. You have a bad name with her.

This brings us to one of the most difficult verses in the entire New Testament.

1 Timothy 2:13-15 (NIV) For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

This last verse has brought much confusion over the centuries. It is a difficult teaching. And I doubt I will be able to make it clear this morning. But I hope to put you on the right track. The confusion centers on two words in this last verse. The problem is that we read them with the wrong meaning.

The first word is the word "saved". It sounds as if getting to heaven, for women, is due, in part, to having a baby. But that cannot be, for Jesus paid the entire price of our salvation with His death on the cross. There is nothing left for us to do. So if it can't mean that, what does it mean?

This word saved appears many times in the New Testament with the meaning of "salvation from sin, eternal life in heaven." But it is also used a handful of times with a different meaning. Let me give you two examples.

Matthew 9:21 (NIV) She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

Here, the same Greek word is used of healing, not salvation from the penalty of sin.

Luke 23:35 (NIV) The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

Here the word is used twice, but neither time is it about being saved from the penalty of sin. Instead, it means Jesus should be able to save himself from dying on the cross.

In that same way, Paul is using the word save to mean something other than eternal salvation. He is using it in the sense of restored or made whole.

The second word we need to look at is the word "through". This word can sometimes be used in a causative sense. Again, it sounds like women are saved "by means of" childbirth. But it cannot mean that.

(through = "by means of" vs. "past the limitations or difficulties of")

However, the word "through" can also mean "past the limitations or difficulties of" something. For example, we might speak of a person fighting his way through red tape. And that is how it is used in this verse.

It is used this way similarly in 1 Corinthians 3. In this passage, Paul is writing of teachers in the church being judged by God on Judgment Day. He writes that the test of each man's work will be the disciples he leaves behind and what they believe. We'll just look at the last verse in that passage.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 (NIV) If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

The flames test him, judge him. He is not saved by means of the flames, but despite the flames. His works will get burned up, but he will survive. He is not destroyed by the test, but will be preserved through the test.

This is how the word "through" is being used in 1 Timothy 2:15. Woman will not carry the dishonor of Eve's sin forever. Part of the punishment for that sin was the curse of painful childbirth. The honor of Christian women will be saved by living through the pain of childbirth, "**if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.**"

This is not written of individual women. You don't all have to give birth for this to be true. He writes of women collectively as "they".

This brings us to the end of this passage. God has created us for different roles. These roles are for the church, not for the world at large. It is okay for women to

teach science or math to men in a college. It is okay for women to be the boss in business or government. We can sin by ignoring what he says here. We can also sin by going further than he goes. And many cause problems in churches by doing one or the other.

The correct response is to humble ourselves before God and submit ourselves to the role He has designated for us. That is the course that leads us to effectiveness as His followers.

Again, the temptation of both men and women is to resist our God-given roles in His church. The path to faithfulness, godliness, and effectiveness as a church is through submission to His will.

Part of His will is that you believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world and receive Him as your Savior and Lord. He invites you to do so this morning. A sample prayer of response is at the end of the sermon outline.