

I hope you enjoyed your break from the regular preacher these last two Sundays. After today you might need another break.

We worship a wonderful God. We worship the God who created all things. He created them good and with purpose. We are going to look at part of what God created this morning and note the purpose involved.

Genesis 2:7 (NIV) ... the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

God created a man, the first man. He looked different from all the other creatures God had made. He was different physically, emotionally, and intellectually. And he had purpose. God gave him a job to do.

Genesis 2:15 (NIV) The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

This was his job, his God-given responsibility. He also had another job, a temporary job.

Genesis 2:19-20 (NIV) Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field...

We don't know how long this process took. It may have taken months for Adam to name all the creatures. Maybe he spent several days observing the behaviors of an animal to determine a name. And likely God brought at least a pair of the animals because the males and females are often different in looks. Adam observed the animals long enough to determine that there were none like himself. The animals complemented each other as male and female. Adam noted that there was no creature matching himself.

Genesis 2:20 (NIV) ... But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

Adam needed a helper. And none of the animals would suffice. He needed someone like himself.

Genesis 2:21-24 (NIV) So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

God created a woman, the first woman. It was obvious to Adam that she was a creature like him. She did not look exactly like him. But she was of the same kind of creature as Adam. And while her purpose was in keeping with Adam's purpose, she was designated to be his helper. Now let me draw several conclusions for you.

In God's creation men and women have different roles.

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 work God had them doing. They were equal in essence. They were both made in the image of God. But their roles were different.

These different roles were true of them before sin entered the world. Before sin entered the world, men and women had different roles given to them by God.

These roles were not shaped by culture. Culture was shaped by their God-given roles.

These different roles are consistent throughout the Bible. We see these roles today in 1 Timothy. Paul is writing of the different roles of men and women in the church.

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

Christian men are to be spiritual leaders in God's church. He commands the men to pray.

Why? Why does he need to command prayer? He does so because prayer is not natural to humans, and particularly not to men. The way most people use the word natural today is as a good thing. If it is natural, then it is good. I was born was good. I start out good.

This is a false teaching. God has revealed that we are born as sinners. We start out bad. Our natural state, our out-of-the-womb state is sinners who sin. Rebellion against God is our natural state. We come out of the womb resisting authority. That is why when you tell the two year old child not to touch the TV, he or she will look at it and touch it anyway.

Resisting God's will is our natural bent. He is commanding men to change, to go against what is natural for us. He commands us to pray.

Secondly, he tells us to lift holy hands. Holy means dedicated to God. Let me remind you of the key word of this letter to Timothy. The key word is godliness. The definition of godliness is as follows.

Christian Godliness is seeking to live the will of our God in response to the Gospel.

He commands men to lift holy hands to God, seeking the will of God in all things. It is the responsibility of Christian men to keep us focused on the will of God. This is not a privilege. It is work. It calls for self-denial. That is one reason so many Christian men run from this. They do not want to have this responsibility. That includes some who are here.

If anyone SHOULD be here on Wednesday nights to pray together for the church, it should be the men. The men should be leading the church in seeking the will of God. And just as Jesus could not do many miracles in his hometown because of their lack of faith, Jesus is limited in what He can and will do in this church because men are not fulfilling their role as spiritual leaders.

He commands the men to lead in prayer in the church. He commands men to be spiritual leaders. He commands men to lift holy hands to God, seeking the will of God in all things.

Third, we are to lay aside our personal goals for the church. He says we are to be spiritual leaders "without anger or disputing". We are to be men at peace with each other. We are to be modeling Christian reconciliation.

What causes the anger and disputing that you see in some churches? Personal agendas cause anger and disputing in churches. Some of the members are not focused on what Jesus wants. Instead they are focused on what they want. That is what causes anger and disputes.

It is the responsibility of men to keep the church focused off of personal desires and on the desires of Jesus. Jesus is the head of the church. The church is not a place to compete with each other. We must lay aside personal agendas. We are to be like Christ Jesus when He walked the earth. We see a strong man, yet one who humbled himself before God. He lived to do the will of God, not his own will. He lived to live God's agenda for His life. He did not seek to get his own way. This is what Christian men are expected to do. We must lay aside any personal agendas and, together, seek the will of God for His church.

God has a specific role for Christian men. He commands the men to lead in prayer in the church. He commands the men to be spiritual leaders. He commands the men to lift holy hands to God, to seek the will of God in all things. He commands men to lay aside personal agendas and any other natural sinful tendencies that stand in the way of God's will.

God also has a specific role for women. I will cover the rest of chapter two next Sunday. But some of you may already be anticipating, or dreading, what we will cover next week.

The truth is that we are all learning a new way of living. We are learning a way that is not natural to us. We are learning a way that does not fit into some of the values of our current American culture. And that is hard for us to do. It is hard to be different, hard to be politically incorrect. But the culture is not our standard. God's revealed will is our standard for how we are to live.

The emphasis of this passage is on the differing roles God has given men and women as followers of Jesus. Men are to be SPIRITUAL leaders, even though that is not their

natural tendency. The reason that causes problems is the men who leave out the spiritual part. They read such verses and think, "I'm the boss." That is NOT what Paul is teaching. Jesus is the boss. Men are to be living that out and keeping the church focused on this.

Men, are you willing to accept God's role for you in His church? Our next hymn is one of consecration, of dedication to the Lord. It is titled, "I Am Thine, O Lord." Can you sing that today? Will you pray that to the Lord?

Will you pray that men, realizing that you have not been the spiritual leader God calls you to be? Today, He is calling you to repent of your sin.

The question before us as male and female followers of Jesus this morning is this. **Will you accept God's will for your life?**

Invitation

We are saved from hell by God's choice, purely as a gift. There is nothing you can do to earn heaven. No amount of going to church, praying, reading your Bible, helping others, or giving money to charity will earn you a spot in heaven. Jesus paid the entire price.

However, He calls for total surrender of your life to Him in grateful response to receiving eternal life. You are not your own. You were bought with His life. Now you belong to Him. The rest of our lives we are learning what that means. We must learn to go against what is natural for us in relation to God.

It will require us to give up everything that we think of as our own. We must turn everything over to Jesus. This includes our time, talents, skills, hobbies, money, hopes, dreams, and even our beliefs in how we think life ought to work. It means to accept the role that God created us to live in His kingdom.

If you are not yet a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, He invites you right now to believe in Him, to trust in Him. He died to pay the penalty for all of your sins. Thus, by putting your trust that His death paid for your sin, you will be forgiven of all sin and will gain eternal life in heaven.

Today choose Jesus.