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**Message: Complementarianism at CCC, Pt. 2**

**Transcribed Message**  
**September 18, 2022**  
**Genesis 3/1 Timothy 2**

It was really in response, I think you could say, to things that were happening in the church, and obviously within the culture as well, that in about the 1950s somebody didn't come up with the word "evangelical" because it'd been around before, but kind of invested the word "evangelical" with new meaning. There's a difference between an evangelical and evangelistic. That gets confused a lot of the times by people. Evangelistic is the sharing of the gospel. Evangelical came in the 1950s to be known as somebody who believed that the Bible was the word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God. They believed that it was important for the gospel to be shared, for there to be a conversion and trusting in Christ and what He had done on the cross for salvation. They also believed in the importance of the return of Christ. There were a number of basic doctrines that if you believed those things you became defined and known as an evangelical. Obviously within the definition of what that is, there were still many things that evangelicals had differences of opinion about.

When you think in terms of all the things that evangelicals didn't agree on, the creation account that begins the book of Genesis was one of those things. How are we to understand that? All of the end time events. Evangelicals have many differing views on that. How is the church to be structured? How's it to be governed? The details of the life of the church. The whole matter of spiritual gifts was and still is a discussion within evangelicalism. Baptism. Do we baptize babies or do we baptize people when they make a profession of faith? The Lord's supper. Is there a real presence of Christ in that supper? Is it mystical or is it simply memorial? All of those things are things about which evangelicals have different understandings and differing ideas. Another one that they have a difference of opinion on is the role of women in the church. The role of women in the church and whether more specifically women should be elders and pastors.

I mentioned last week that the elders of Covenant have stepped into a position that is a minority position. When you look at the recent survey in *Christianity Today*, and I don't have any idea who they asked this of, so maybe they asked a whole bunch of egalitarians their view on this one. But let's just say that it was a good cross-section within the evangelical church. These are the numbers that this recent survey suggested were true of the evangelical church. Should a woman preach the word of God from the pulpit on a Sunday morning? That was the basic idea of the question. As you look at that, those ages 36 to 44 most strongly, almost 80% of them, said yes she should. Then of course the ages of 45 to 54 only had a 67% agreement with that particular point of view. When I said last week the elders are comfortable and they know full well that within the evangelical church and largely within the last 30 or 40 years, not disconnected in my mind from what's going on in the culture, much of the evangelical church is now in the position that we have been contrasting ours with.

We're back here this morning to look at the second part of that. As we do that, I want you to understand the position paper as you've probably already seen from last week is still available in the foyer. Grab a copy if you weren't able to be here last Sunday. You can go to the website, you can listen, you can read it, you can watch what we talked about last week which is really kind of the foundation for what we're looking at this morning. But our thesis is very simple. How we conduct ourselves in the church, how we conduct ourselves as the people of God when we gather is of concern to God. It is our responsibility to know God's plan and follow it.

By way of quick review, we put forward two basic perspectives. Even though there are more than two views, we focused on two that are primary. One is a view which is called egalitarian. Now as I talk this morning and as I teach this morning, and when I say we, I'm not assuming that everybody in this room is with me, okay? The "we" is a reference more to the elders and the leadership of our church. But as we understand this view called egalitarianism, an egalitarian says there are no distinctions. There are no roles that are unique to one's gender. That doesn't have anything to do with it. In the church and in the home that's not relevant. Male leadership is an option. Female leadership is an option. Take your pick. There are no distinctions.

The complementarian view that we have adopted is there are unique roles that are related to one's gender in the home and in the church. A guy named Peter Creft gave us a little statement that I think summarizes it to some extent, the complementarian view. He said, "Women really are superior to men at being women, and men are really superior to women at being men." We believe as complementarians that is by divine design, because we are committed to this one unchanging word. This one unchanging word is how God has chosen to rule His church today.

The word of God. This unchanging word. It is our understanding at Covenant that this book is how God has chosen to rule and direct and govern and guide His church today. I say to you that the world, and you know this because you live it every day, the world is absolutely hell-bent and determined to eradicate the differences between men and women and between male and female. We think that from one day to the next it can't get any more absurd. It can't get any more crazy. But the world is absolutely determined and I believe what we looked at last Sunday is in large measure a part of what the enemy desires to do within the home, the church, and the family. We're living and we're willing to live a culturally different and distinct lifestyle, one that we know when we presented this paper to you, is going against a very hostile culture. We are very well aware of that. But our heart is to submit to the Bible, to the word of God, and to what we believe God teaches.

Let me add this additional thought before we jump into our study this morning. It has often been suggested that if you are a complementarian, then you are opening the door in some way to male domination. The charge is easily offered that complementarianism leads to the oppression and abuse of women. I want to say to you very simply. You can be an egalitarian or you can be a complementarian and you can be a doofus. That's just it. You can be oppressive to women. You can be abusive. You can be dominant in a way that God never intended. It doesn't have anything to do with which of these positions you adopt. I just simply reject out of hand that if you take this position this is the path that you're going to go down. Every time a complementarian pastor or church leader messes up, this is the refrain that is played back to us. What did you expect was going to happen? I say to you that we can find many examples of egalitarians unfortunately who have done the same thing. That is in my mind not part of

this argument. That's why God has given us Ephesians 5, men. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. That's why He gave us Colossians 3. That's why He gave us 1 Peter 3 and a host of other verses because He knows the propensity of our heart. That's why He's given the ladies among us instruction as well.

Let's look at two central passages this morning in understanding the roles of men and women in the church. That is our primary focus this morning – what's happening in the church. Let's go back to the beginning again. Now where do we go when we are going back to the beginning? Genesis. That's right. Let's go back to Genesis. Last time it was Genesis 1 and 2. This time we're going to Genesis 3. We're confronted right away with two different views when we come to this chapter just as we were last week. Here they are again.

Our egalitarian friends look at Genesis 3 and they see male headship coming after the fall. Male headship is after the fall. Headship and the unique roles that men and women are to have is a result of sin. That is a hugely important point. It obviously sets the tone for everything else that they would say. The 10 things that we looked at last Sunday that come out of chapters 1 and 2 are largely ignored, or they're explained away, or they're minimized, because they clearly express a different understanding of this text. Complementarians on the other hand come to Genesis 3 and they see male headship before the fall. Before the fall.

In other words, God's perfect world while it was impacted by sin, before sin came Adam had been given some unique responsibilities. Adam had been charged by God with some things that he was to do as the head of his home. We see this as being something that was in place before the fall ever occurred. Again, don't ask me. Don't ask the guy sitting over there or the lady over there. What does the Bible say? We're in Genesis 3. Let's look.

I want you to see two things. The first thing we're going to see is the emergence of sin. Look at the first six verses of Genesis 3: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field." We're reading the text and that should immediately perk our ears up. "The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say you shall not eat of the tree in the garden?' and the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the

trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die.' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate." Now this is the emergence of sin in the story of the Bible. Genesis 1 and 2. A perfect world. Genesis 3.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field. Adam and Eve are in the garden. Adam is there. The text tells us. He's there. He's right there with Eve. With them is one who is called the serpent. The serpent begins the conversation with Eve. That's going to become important when we get farther into our study this morning. He begins the conversation with Eve and he begins the conversation by just flat out lying to her. That's how he begins his conversation with Eve. He begins by contradicting the very words of God. I don't know what Adam is doing and thinking at this time. He is in the garden with Eve. The text tells us he is standing right there with her as this conversation with the serpent unfolds. He's listening to every word that is spoken and at no point does he interject in this discussion. At no point does he say Eve, wait! God has specifically told me we should not do this. There's nothing like that in the text.

Eve believes the lie. She takes of the fruit. She rebels and sins. She hands it to Adam and he joins with her in the rebellion. Just let the text soak in. That is the story to this point. Verse 8. "And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" now here's the interesting part of the story. When God comes on the scene, who does He ask for? Who does He call out to? Of course, it's Eve, because Eve is the one who the serpent talked to, and Eve was the one who ate of the fruit first, and Eve is first in line. Right? No. The text specifically tells us that God comes into the garden as He had done evidently on other occasions in fellowship with them and He

doesn't come to Eve. He specifically comes to Adam and says Adam, what in the world has happened? What in the world have you done?

Adam is in this story held accountable by God for the spiritual welfare and condition of his family. That is very important in understanding the issue that is before us today. It is Adam who is accountable. Now do not miss my point. Eve is responsible. Eve sinned. Eve is going to bear consequences. But in terms of accountability, in the eyes of God most of us as we would be reading this story would say of course God's coming to Eve. She's the one who listened to the serpent. She's the one who the text tells us believed the lie, contradicting the very thing that God had told her husband who no doubt had told her that we should not do this.

Which causes me, guys, then to say this. As I look at this part of the story, this is on us, guys. This is on us as well. This is God saying to you as the husband, as the father, as the head of your home that the well-being, the flourishing of your wife, the flourishing of your children is on you. You are first in line in terms of accountability to God. If you want your wife to flourish spiritually, emotionally, relationally, physically in whatever capacity God has called you to make sure that you're doing all you can, that's on you. That's on me. The flourishing of our children spiritually is on us. It's not just on us, as we're going to see, but it is on us whom God gives this accountability. That is a weighty thing, isn't it? That is a heavy thing. But it just simply underscores the importance of your own personal walk with God. Sure, it's weighty. Sure, it's heavy. But you can't do it by yourself anyway because God is going to be the only one who is going to enable you to do this. This is why it's so important for you and for me as the heads of our home to be and becoming the man that God has called us to be. If we're not, then we need to repent this morning and we need to begin. If we fail, then we need to repent and begin again. But this is the calling that God has placed upon us. I don't think we're overemphasizing something out of this story. It's right there before us.

Now look at the judgment for sin which simply underscores this even further. Verse 16: "To the woman He said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.'" Now here we have the judgment for sin. Here we have again two different views for what I just read. Our egalitarian friends say what we just read was the

reordering of God's creative order. What we just read was the reordering of creation. We now have for the first time, egalitarians say, headship. For the first time, we have headship. For the first time we have God placing the man as the head of his home.

Complementarians read the same verse and say no. No, wait. You've missed the whole point. What we have here is not the beginning, but what we do have here is that the difficulty is now interjected into the relationship because of sin. Please don't raise your hand, but have any of you experienced any difficulty in any relationship within your home, your family, or other network? And of course, every hand in here we would all have to raise both of our hands. Why is that? Because of Genesis 3:16. It's not that God is reordering His creative work here. It is that sin is bringing its consequences into the relationship. Look what He says. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband but he shall rule over you. When sin has the upper hand in Eve's life, and in your life, ladies, when you're not walking in step with the Spirit, it's easy for you to want to take control and resist your husband's leadership and say I've got this. I'll do it. Move over. A lot of passive, wimpy husbands just simply move over. That is just doing exactly what Eve does right here.

In the same way for Adam, and the same way for us, guys, if we are not walking in step with the Spirit. But instead, we are serving self rather than loving your wife and serving her, then our tendency is either to become passive if she's taking over, or to become dominant and oppressive and unloving and unkind and controlling and all of the things that we do so well when we're not walking in the Spirit. That's why we have Ephesians 5. That's why we have Colossians 3. That's why we have 1 Peter 3 and a host of other verses, which I heard somebody say not that long ago – that was me. I just said that not that long ago.

So, we take the 10 observations from last Sunday because that's the foundation that we laid. We have that very quick high view of the rest of the Old Testament and the function and role of women within the economy of the nation of Israel. We stepped into the gospel and we saw how Jesus related to women in a very beautiful, positive way. We saw the book of Acts – men and women serving as the point of the spear and taking the gospel to the world. Then we add into that this Genesis 3 passage, but we have one more. We're saving, as you might imagine, the best for last. Or if it's not the best, it's the

most controversial. It's the most challenging. 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verses 11 through 14. We don't have time to do a deep dive into this passage. We've already done that. We've taught through all of the pastoral epistles in the past. 1 and 2 Timothy. Titus. You can go to the website and download, watch, listen, read the whole text of 1 Timothy chapter 2 primarily as we went through those verses together. But I just want to set the stage here again and say the context when we come to 1 Timothy 2 is basically asking and answering the questions what is expected when the people of God come together as a gathered community.

Now we know that's the case because not only are the pastoral epistles written with that in mind, but if you look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter and about verse 14 look what he says: "I hope to come to you soon but I am writing these things to you so that if I delay you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." Where do we start? Our thesis statement. It is of great concern to God as to how we conduct ourselves when we gather together. It is important that we reflect what the Scriptures teach.

Then you look back at chapter 2 and verse 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." Verse 10. "but with what is proper." So it's propriety that that is in view in these verses within this context. What's proper. What's right. What's to be expected as a gathered community. Now understand this. As we go through these verses and as we look at these principles, in my mind there is not a universal application in these verses to all women, to all men. There is a view for that. That's not our view. We are not laying down some dictum that has to do with all men everywhere and their relationship to all women everywhere. I think that's a misunderstanding and I think it's an over emphasis of what the Scriptures teach. This is in relationship men – specifically to you and your wife – and to you ladies – to you and your husband – and it is to us within the operation and function of what is proper as a gathered community of Covenant. It is not beyond that. It shouldn't be applied to those settings. It is what is happening in the church when the church gathers.

What is the restriction that Paul puts in place in this passage? In verses 11 and 12, he's going to give that to us, but before we read those verses, let me give you a



couple things as we look at this text. This first one is obviously right there in front of us. These are unpopular verses. When I read these verses in a little bit they're going to once again shock our modern sensibilities. I think the Holy Spirit fully knew that would happen when He gave us His word in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and then when we would be reading it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But these are unpopular verses. They are rejected by some just because they're not believable. They're not applicable. And they're explained away by a lot of others which we saw reflected I think in that survey. Tim Keller, you'll remember I quoted a couple of months ago with regard to this passage, and I did so knowing full well that we were coming to this at some point as elders and in the presentation of this paper. Tim Keller said this: "We know what these verses mean. We just don't like what they say." We know what these verses mean. We just don't like what they say. And again, I simply say to you it is through the word of God that God rules his people. Obviously, a significant piece of that equation is the Holy Spirit who is the author of this word. But it is through the word of God. It's not what I want. It's not what you want. It's not how I feel. It's not how you feel. It certainly can't be what our culture wants us to do.

Because, my friends, if we yield on this point, then the culture is just going to come at us at the next point. And if we yield at that point, then the culture is just going to come at us at the next point. I think as you look at church history in America and you look at the mainline denominational churches, that's their history. They yielded. They gave up on the idea that the Bible is the authoritative, inspired, inerrant word of God. It wasn't that long before they gave up on Jesus being the Son of God, and that death on the cross might not have really happened. But if it did, it was simply an example of a good man showing us how to treat other people. Coming back. Jesus coming back. Are you kidding me? Why would we believe He is coming back? So this is the caution I think that we bring to this. God has given us a difficult assignment if you will in the face of our culture to accept these verses.

Let's look at what he says to us here because in my view our very understanding of biblical manhood and biblical womanhood is largely going to be decided by how we handle Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Genesis 3, and 1 Timothy 2. Our view of biblical manhood and biblical womanhood is defined largely in those four chapters. What does

he say? What is the restriction? verse 11. "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness." The very first thing we need to say is the restriction is not on learning. The restriction is not on learning. In fact, it's an imperative. It's a command. This is stated as a command. It is: ladies, be a learner. The word "learner" here is the very same word for disciple. Be a disciple. Be a learner. Here to me is the irony. The irony is that in Paul's day he had to actually command that women be allowed to be learners because the culture of Judaism out of which the church came did not have a sense of equality of the treatment of men and women. Women were not allowed in many of the ways that men were to learn the Scriptures. This is by definition countercultural. She is to be a learner.

Now here to me is the irony that today Paul might very well say, hey guys. Guys, are you listening? Don't lag behind your wife in learning the Scriptures. That's what God through the Holy Spirit through Paul would probably have to say to us today. Because sadly a lot of guys are lagging way behind your wife. Not all, but a lot of men are lagging way behind their wife in terms of their commitment to studying the word of God. Is that crazy or what? I love what John Piper said. I didn't write it down so I'm going to try to remember it by heart. What he said about this passage. He said those ladies who are single, I want to say a word to you. he said this passage says to you at this season of your life, give yourself to the word of God. You give yourself to the study of Bible doctrine. You give yourself to the study of theology. And he said a couple things will happen. One, not only will you become a godly woman, not only will you be infused with the word of God, but he said secondly, you won't have any those immature boys who haven't grown up yet come along and want to date you and be involved in your life. They're going to be scared to death of you knowing the Bible and doctrine and theology the way that you do. Because no boy is going to want that in a woman. But he said this. A man, a godly man, a spiritually minded man? That's going to be attractive to him. That's what he's looking for. That is what he wants. That was a side note.

What is this? She is to do this quietly. What does that mean? Quietly in all submissiveness. The word "quietly" actually appears a couple of other times in this text and it dare not be in our mind the idea of absolute total silence. In fact, the whole idea here I think is that of an attitude. It's translated and understood in other places as being

untroubled in one's spirit, of being content. I think that is the way we should understand this. Paul is not saying here I don't want to hear a female voice when you gather together. He's already said in 1 Corinthians 11 that women are praying and prophesying when you are together as the gathered community. He has already spoken to that in 1 Corinthians 11. Here he is not saying absolute total silence. Let not a woman's voice be heard. That would be wrong. We want to hear the voices of the women of Covenant as we gather in this place on a Sunday morning. We want to hear not only their voices as they sing and cover over all of ours, but we want to hear their voices as they sing. We want to hear their voice as they pray. We want to hear their voice as they may read Scripture. We want to hear their voice as they share a story about what God is doing in their life. We would be at a greater loss if we never heard the voices of the women of Covenant here. Please don't look at this and say Paul is calling for absolute and total silence from women in the church. I simply do not see that. I think what he's saying here is their attitude should be one that honors the leadership that God has put in place in the church. There is no restriction on learning.

Notice secondly, there is a restriction on teaching. There is a restriction on teaching. Verse 12: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, rather she is to remain quiet." Same word. Now we read that and we're shocked. Our sensibilities are offended. This is not right. This is not proper. This is less than acceptable. So we ask the question: what is in view here? What is teaching? What is Paul speaking of? Well again, he can't mean that a woman is never to teach anytime, anywhere, any place, anybody. That would just simply be a contradiction of what we already have in other places in Scripture. You remember that it was Paul writing to Titus and saying you older women start mentoring and teaching these younger women in the things of the Lord. There clearly is a place for women teaching, in that instance teaching other women. You remember he wrote in the same set of epistles to Timothy and said Timothy, you should be so thankful. You should be so thankful that you had a godly mother and you had a godly grandmother because they have impacted your life forever. They have taught you the Scriptures. They have brought you the gospel. The reality is, folks, that there is nothing more impactful than a godly mother and a godly wife pouring her life into the lives of her husband and her children. She's leaving a legacy that will

last for decades. Impact her family and families to follow. Clearly the teaching here isn't nowhere, anytime, anybody, any place. We even know in Acts 18 that Priscilla and Aquila came alongside Apollos, a very gifted teacher, and it specifically says both Priscilla and Aquila that took Apollos aside and they taught him and instructed him in the more excellent way.

But here's the point. In the pastoral epistles, and this is very important, the word for teaching is used in a restrictive sense. It's used in a restrictive sense. Here's why. Teaching goes along with the exercising of authority. That's why. That's why we have this restriction. Teaching goes along with the exercise of authority. Teaching is more than just sharing information. If teaching is just sharing information, then we're missing the whole point of teaching the word of God. There is a governance aspect to the teaching of the word when the church gathers as we are right now in this place at this time. It is through the word of God that God rules His people.

Elders have two basic responsibilities. They are to govern and they are to teach. Don't miss the fact that 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus have more in them about church governance and about church leadership and about elders specifically than any other books of the New Testament. In Titus 1 Paul gives us the list of qualifications and responsibility for elders. A whole section. 1 Timothy 3 we have a whole section in which he is dealing with what are the responsibilities, what are the duties, what our elders are to be doing. It basically gets down to this. As elders shepherd God's people, they do two things: they govern and they teach. They teach and they govern. They govern and they teach. The essence of this instruction could be said this simply. I do not permit a woman to assume the office of elder in the church. That's what he's saying. I do not permit a woman to assume the office of elder in the church.

Now why is that? And again we don't have time to go into the whole argument, but I want to just give you two things that I think we can do so quickly and that are of help. First one is in verse 13 because right after he gives this instruction about this restriction, what does he say? "...for Adam was formed first, then Eve." If you say to me, it doesn't really matter who God created first, then number one why did the Holy Spirit record it that way in Genesis and why did Paul quote it a couple of times in his letters to the church? It does have significance. It is important. he goes there first in verse 13 for

Adam was formed first and then Eve. Then he goes to verse 14: “and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”

Now again let me just hit the high point of that verse. Eve was deceived. Adam was not deceived. But understand this. All sin includes deception. All sin includes deception. Anytime you and I sin we're being deceived, right? But the point that Paul is making here is how they sinned. Adam stood right next to Eve. He knew exactly what God had said they were not to do. Surely he had communicated that to Eve, but he was the one who received that first. He watched and listened to this whole conversation unfold and he knew exactly what was happening. He knew that Satan through the serpent was lying to Eve. Eve did not fully appreciate and understand the fact that she was being lied to, that she was being deceived. So she took of the fruit and she ate.

But it is how they did that. How did they do that? Adam as the appointed head of the race and as the one who has been charged to lead, protect, and guide his family didn't do any of that. Adam, lead your family. Woops! Adam, protect your family. Woops! Adam, step in. Woops! He didn't do any of it. Eve, on the other hand, took Adam's role. She stepped into his role. What we see is an attack right out of the gate on the part of Satan against God's created order in which a man is charged with the responsibility of the flourishing of his home. He is accountable first. Everybody is accountable. Everybody's responsible. Nobody gets to say it's his fault or it's her fault. They tried that and it didn't work. But God says men, this is what I'm calling you to do. That order was attacked. That order was disrupted. And into that order the chaos came.

What does this all look like in the life of our church? Let's close with just a few comments about that. In our position paper, we walked through at the end of that paper some different scenarios in which we seek to explore what does all of this look like in the life of our church. Listen. Some of these are wisdom issues. It would be nice if we had a verse that we can turn to in which every situation that we can ever think of as the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Bible addresses. It doesn't do that. Church life in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was different than it is today. We understand that. There are eternal principles to guide us whether in the 1<sup>st</sup> century or the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but in some cases, we simply have to exercise wisdom. How does that apply to life in our church?

What we don't want to do is we don't want to go beyond what the word of God does. On the other hand, we don't want to do less than the word of God does. The elders grappled with these issues and came to the conclusions that we did as best we could to try and honor these God-ordained principles. So here are four things. First of all, we're brothers and sisters in Christ. We're brothers and sisters. That's how the New Testament speaks of our relationship. That's how we relate to each other. It is as brothers and sisters, image bearers of God, totally equality and dignity, value, worth, destiny. We are not, as I said last week, rivals. We're partners. So that's step number one.

Number two. We have women on our staff. We have a great staff. God has blessed us immensely. We have a great team. We had a staff meeting last Tuesday. There were 14 of us there. Not everybody can be there every time, but there were 14 of us gathered around the table. In this particular instance, there happened to be seven guys and seven gals. Todd leads us in that time when we're together. What do we do? We share together life and ministry. We talk and we pray and we take up issues that are affecting different areas of ministry. We value the voices of everybody sitting around the table. It has nothing to do with gender at that point. We're a staff, a team. We're pulling together. If you've got a problem, I've got a problem, because we're in this together. So that's a part of this working out of the life of men and women here at Covenant.

The third thing that is again apparent is we have women doing ministry. We have women doing ministry all through the life of this church. You look around on any given gathering time Sunday morning or otherwise, and some of them you see and some of them you don't see. Right now, every Sunday we gather in relative peace and harmony and quiet because we've got all bunch of people, men and women both, that are back there out of our view taking care of our little people. We have women doing ministry all over the place. They're valuable. We couldn't do life at Covenant without them. It just wouldn't be possible. Why would we even want to try? We don't. we want to do ministry together.

Then finally, what we won't have though is that we won't have women serve as elders. We won't have women serve as elders. We won't have women in the role of teaching elder. There are many voices out there today who claim to know a better way.

The elders have said that the men and women of Covenant in ministry together mesh better and do ministry better when men take the primary responsibility of leading as God has ordained as we believe. One thing is certain. We are all ministers together of the gospel. That's what has brought us together here. That's what binds us together. It is the gospel.

It is the gospel that God loved us so much that because of Genesis 3 and the fall of humanity into sin that He broke into history, sending of His Son who lived a perfect life and died a terrible death on the cross. He did so for my sin and for yours. If I will but believe and trust that what He did was enough, that I don't need to add anything nor can I add anything to that, I just believe and trust that what Jesus did is all that needed to be done. God says He gives us the gift of eternal life and I can assure you that every woman at covenant, and every man at covenant, wants everyone here this morning and everyone listening to know that, and to know that in a personal way. We invite you, if you have not yet made that decision and choice of trust in Christ alone by faith alone because of grace alone, to do it right now.

Let's pray. Great Father God, thank You for this word that is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Father, that is a blessing and an encouragement to each one of us. Thank You for your goodness to us as the people of Covenant. We love You. we thank You for the women of Covenant. We thank You for the men of Covenant. We thank You for the ministry that You called us to together. We want more than anything else for Your name to be lifted up and for You to be glorified. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.