

1 Timothy 2:8–15 (ESV)

God calls men and women to a holy order in the church

INTRO:

- This is one of the most controversial passages in the NT but that is what happens when you teach through books of the bible verse by verse
 - A small percentage of you will be offended – too restrictive to women
 - another small percentage of you will be offended – too much freedom for women
 - And some might be offended at what I have to say about men.
- Good news is your salvation doesn't hinge on this and if we disagree, its ok.
- As a reminder of what I said last week, we are talking about something we find both beautiful and joyful. (Please go back and listen)
- I think it necessary for me review the foundation of what we believe the Scriptures teach us

Men and women are created equally; both men and women are made in the image of God. Men are not better than women. Women are not better than men. Both are equal in their personhood, in their value. They both equally reflect the image of God.

We also believe and find joy in that God made men and women different, and that's more than just parts and plumbing. It's more than just a social constructs... We believe that God created something deep in the soul of a man and deep in the soul of a woman that is different and distinct, and that that is beautiful.

The theological word for this position is complementarianism, which means that man and woman are equal in the image of God, that they are different with different gifts, tendencies, and callings expressed in the roles of the family and the church.

We believe that God created man to be a steward in the world; that He gave him a mission and a calling, and then God gave him a helper suited for him for companionship, to be a helper, a helper-that's the same word used in Psalms to talk about God. It's the same word used in the New Testament to talk about the Holy Spirit. So that word "helper" is not a term of denigration; it's a term of honor.

His compliment was a woman taken out of his side, not out of his head to rule over him, not out of his feet to be ruled by him, out of his side to walk by him as a helper. And we believe this was beautiful.

We also believe that sin has warped this. Man and woman are placed in a beautiful garden, and they're told to make the world look like this garden. Fill the earth and subdue it. Be fruitful and multiply. And the evil one comes in the form of a serpent, questioning God's authority, His character, and His word. And Eve is deceived by the serpent and disobeys God. And Adam, whom Genesis 3 says was with his wife while this was happening.

Adam abdicates his role of leadership and follows his wife rather than submitting to the Lord. And the Bible tells us that though Eve was deceived, Adam was responsible, and Adam's sin brought the effect and stain and guilt of sin into the world, and this sin created immediately distance.

Such that this beautiful picture that God has made is no longer seen as beautiful, and it no longer works out in a beautiful way.

Sin broke the design, so we needed more than advice for things to be repaired.

Jesus came to redeem men and women, and He also established the church as the family of God, where that design is meant to be seen again.

The same Lord who was there in creation is now inspiring Paul to tell this household how holy order looks. That is where we are in 1 Timothy 2.

OPEN:

- You won't find this passage of the Bible on a t-shirt, coffee mug, or behind the goalposts.
- You can sometimes think your salvation is in question – or that someone is questioning your salvation. This isn't a salvation issue, but it is a family of God issue.
- You're saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. (not childbearing)
- The word 'holy' is used for men in verse 8 and 'holiness' for women in verse 15 (if they continue in faith and love and holiness)
- Paul does not mean any of those. Holy means set apart for God. In this text it looks like men who take responsibility without turning it into privilege, and women set apart for Him—not for show, and not to domineer, but for a holy order.

God calls men and women to a holy order in the church

1. Men take up holy responsibility, not privilege.

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

- **This verse seems to address both apathy (passivity) and abuse of men**
- Abusive or domineering authority looks at authority as privilege. Authority and headship is not privilege but responsibility and when we do it biblically it is loving and always for the sake of good of others.
- Healthy complementarianism requires something from BOTH men and women.

2. Women communicate holiness, not sensuality.

Vs 9-10 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.

- One of the things going on with the new Roman woman is that she was starting to dress like the temple prostitutes. So you had married women walking around out in public looking like unmarried women who were sensual.
- He's saying the way you dress, communicates something about you,

Good works: **Titus 2:3–5 (ESV)** *3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.*

- Women, you are queens of the universe. You are not inferior to anybody. You're not inferior to your husband, but God has called you to willfully choose to submit your life to Him to be His helper. That the Word of God may not be reviled, which is really what this is about.

3. Women have holy, teachable hearts, not controlling ones.

- Now, this passage has been misunderstood and abused. It is ugly when men abuse it or abandon it. It is beautiful when it is practiced like Jesus, and people flourish under it.

Vs 11-12 *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.*

- First of all, notice the inclusivity – women are not excluded from worship services.

- The word 'quietly' or 'quiet' is used three times in 1Timothy 2. In none of those contexts can it mean absolute silence. (eg. Titus 2:3-5).
- Rather, it talks about a heart that's stilled and free of inner turmoil. It's talking about a heart that's teachable, a heart that's open to the teaching that the woman is receiving in the context of public worship.

Acts 22:2 (ESV) 2 *And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.*

I do not permit a woman ... exercise authority over a man

(NOT TO ANY RANDOM MAN!)

- It's important for us to realize the command to be submissive to the elders of a church is given to all Christians.
- This isn't a command singling out women. This is a command given to all Christians. In fact, Hebrews 13:17 tells all Christians to respect your elders, to obey them, and submit to them.
- Is she teachable? Is she willing to learn from the elders of her church?

I do not permit a woman to teach

- What does it mean to teach? Is Paul saying that a woman can never teach at all anybody anywhere in the context of the church? The answer would have to be no...
 - Titus 2
 - Timothy's your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice
 - Acts 18, Priscilla along with Aquilla taught Apolos.

1 Timothy 5:17 (ESV) 17 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*

- What you have in the context of First Timothy are two of the three roles of elders. (teaching on this next week)
- They're to lead - *rule well*, and they're to teach, *preaching and teaching*, and so in the context of First Timothy, this command of not allowing a woman to teach or exercise authority means this: that a woman may not serve in the office of elder. Additionally, a woman may not teach in a way that bears the weight of elder authority.

- Now, to be very clear, these ideas of roles and differences have nothing to do with ability, competency, or intelligence...nothing.
- Men are not superior. Women are not superior.
- They are equally made in the image of God and gloriously different, so that they complement one another.
- We didn't create this idea. We get it from the Bible, and we love it. We think it's beautiful.

Why our orthodox view of complementarianism

- Complementarianism: Men and women are equal in value and different in role. In the church and the home, men bear a responsibility of leadership that women do not.
- Egalitarianism: Men and women are equal in value and in role. Leadership in the church and the home is open to both.
- Church history is our witness: For nearly two thousand years, the mainstream of the Christian church—from the early fathers through the medieval period and the Reformers—understood the teaching and governing office of elder to be reserved for qualified men. This consensus held until the nineteenth century, when broader cultural shifts began to open the question in some Protestant circles.
- This is a hermeneutical (the study of how we interpret and understand the Bible) issue not a gender issue
- This means we rely on the authority of God's word (first sermon of this series) to show us how the family of God should operate.
- If we don't rely on the Word, we default to one or a combo of these three
 - Culture (approval)
 - Emotions (control)
 - Experience (comfort)
- Are any of these your real motive? And are you looking at Scripture eisegetically for support of your view?

Prescriptive vs descriptive

- The difference is this: a passage is *descriptive* if it is simply describing something that happened, while a passage is *prescriptive* if it is specifically teaching that something should happen. OR another way to say it:
 - Descriptive: The Bible tells what happened. It does not, by itself, tell every church to copy it.
 - Prescriptive: The Bible tells what to do. It is a command, grounded for the churches.
- Simply put, is it a description or a command?

• **The difference is important. When a biblical passage is only describing something but is interpreted as prescribing something, it can lead to errant thinking and behavior.**

- An example of the importance of descriptive vs. prescriptive passages concerns the question of how often communion should be observed. From Scripture, it appears that the early Christians observed the Lord's Supper weekly (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20–25). Yet none of the passages that describe the Lord's Supper being observed weekly actually prescribe that it be observed weekly. Can the Lord's Supper be observed weekly? Absolutely. Must the Lord's Supper be observed weekly? No.
- There are exceptions, of course. The book of Acts sometimes prescribes, and the Epistles sometimes describe.
- The passages that put **qualified** men in the teaching office, and that call husbands to lead, are prescriptive. Paul commands it, and he grounds it in creation, not in a local problem. The passages used for egalitarianism are mostly descriptive:
 - Women prophesying
 - Priscilla helping instruct Apollos,
 - Junia being noted among the apostles (Which exalt women in general... thank God for that) —
 - or they have to reinterpret the commands (prescriptive Texts)
- There is no passage that says, "Women, teach and exercise authority over men in the church."
- There **are** passages that say not to.

- Preston Sprinkle's book *From Genesis to Junia* highlights many women who served faithfully in the early church. His central argument is that Junia in Romans 16:7 was a woman whom Paul calls "outstanding among the apostles," which he takes as evidence that women can hold full teaching and leadership authority.
- But that short greeting leaves several things unclear. Scholars still debate whether Paul means she is "outstanding among the apostles" or "esteemed by the apostles," and whether "apostle" here means one of the Twelve, a wider circle of church planters, or simply a sent messenger. More importantly, Romans 16 is descriptive—it reports what was true of Junia. It does not command churches to place women in the teaching office.
- Every major argument for an egalitarian view works the same way. It leans on descriptive texts (women prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11, Priscilla helping instruct Apollos in Acts 18, Junia being noted in Romans 16) while having to explain away the clear commands: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12), the qualifications for elders that assume male leadership (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9), and the order Paul grounds in creation (1 Corinthians 11:3–10).
- Descriptive examples do not cancel prescriptive instructions.
- To be fair: egalitarians do not agree those commands are for today. They call them cultural. My point is that they still have to explain the commands away. They do not have a command of their own.

In the church (teaching and governing office):

- 1 Timothy 2:11–12 — "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man."
- 1 Timothy 3:1–7 — Elder qualifications assume a man ("husband of one wife," manages his household).
- Titus 1:5–9 — Same elder qualifications for every town.
- 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 — 'As in all the churches' Women are not to speak in a way that violates the order of the churches; they are to be in submission.
- 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8–9 — "The head of a wife is her husband... man was not created for woman, but woman for man."

In the home (marriage):

- Ephesians 5:22–33 — "The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church... wives submit to your husbands."

- Colossians 3:18–19 — “Wives, submit to your husbands... Husbands, love your wives.”
- 1 Peter 3:1–7 — Wives submit to husbands; husbands live with understanding and honor.
- 1 Corinthians 11:3 — Headship of the husband over the wife as part of the larger order under Christ.
- These are the primary prescriptive texts. The commands are consistent across multiple letters and are grounded in creation (1 Timothy 2:13; 1 Corinthians 11:8–9) and in the relationship of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5).
- How we practice: **A woman can do anything a non-elder can do.** Deacons, staff, leaders, teachers, etc.
- Under abusive men, this text wounds. Under apathetic men, it means nothing. Under men who lead like Jesus, it is a holy order, and women flourish in it. That is the appeal.

4. This holy order comes from creation, not from culture

- Now, one of the objections to this understanding of the passage is that Paul is making an argument from culture and not creation, and as if Paul could read our mind, he starts with verse 13

13 *For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.*

- Paul doesn’t root this prescriptive command in the culture of Ephesus, but he roots it in creation.
- Paul’s proof text was Genesis 1-3, not the temple prostitutes or the new Roman women.
- He does the same thing for the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 11:8–9 (ESV) *8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

- There is a holy order and it is given by God so therefore it is beautiful and joyful.

15 *Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in **faith** [our responsibility] and love [He loves us and we love others] and holiness [counter-cultural, counter-emotional, counter-experiential], with self-control [not controlling externals, but internals].*

- It's not saying that you get saved if you have a baby.
- Paul has just said Eve was deceived and fell. The false teachers were likely telling women that marriage and childbearing were unspiritual or dangerous.

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) 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 for your husband, and he shall rule over you."*

- Verse 15 answers that fear: women will be *saved through* the trial of childbearing—the very place that carries the pain and curse of Genesis 3—just as someone can be saved through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15). Like the three young men in Daniel 3, they pass through the furnace and are preserved. Childbearing is not the means of their justification; it is the fiery trial connected to the fall that they pass through and are kept safe in.

CONCLUSION

- You're not saved when you have a baby. You're saved because God became a baby. Laying down his Heavenly privilege
- That baby, fully God and fully man, lived without getting into either ditch of apathy or anger/abuse.
- Though the first Adam sinned in the garden, the second Adam obeyed in the garden – not my will but yours be done.
- On the cross, in anger He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy His abusers, but instead hung there until the sacrifice was finished for you and me.
- He never used his authority as a privilege, but laid that down to pick up the responsibility to seek and save the lost. "I've come not to be served, but to serve and give my life a ransom for many.
- If He loves and cares for our eternal souls that much, then He loves and cares for how we operate in church and home – so much that He made sure to give us a holy order.

God calls men and women to a holy order in the church.

When practiced HIS way, it's beautiful and joyful.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. Where do you most feel the pull of the two ditches for men (apathy or using authority as privilege) or the pressure for women to either grasp control or abandon the design—and what would it look like for you, personally, to take the next step toward the holy order Paul describes?
2. How does the “saved through the fire” reading of verse 15 change the way you hear the whole passage, and what does it look like in everyday life to continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control inside the design God gave rather than resenting or rejecting it?