

## Written Copy: 1 Timothy 2:11-15 What's Paul's Problem With Women?

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost – Proper 20

Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Text: 1 Timothy 2:11-15

<sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

### Exegetical Statement (the text's context)

Paul addresses to Timothy instructions and expectations regarding how corporate worship should be done. He strongly encourages there be prayer for people in all walks of life, including the emperor and local leaders, so that they would be God's hand at work to keep the peace and allow the proclamation of the Gospel. This is what the will of the Lord who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. And this is the truth: there is One God, and there is One mediator between sinful humanity and the Holy God, and that is God who became man in Jesus Christ. He mediates by giving His life as the full ransom price for all men, and His life is the testimony of it given at just the right time. Paul was appointed to be the proclaimer and apostolic ambassador of the testimony, proclaiming to the Gentiles faith and truth. In order that this proclamation may be heard men should worship with right hearts and attitudes, not quarreling with one another. Women should adorn themselves not to draw attention away from the Gospel, but as an outward witness of the reverence they have for God. Women should not teach or preach in worship, but allow a man to be the spiritual head of the household in the roles God designed for Adam and Eve. It was when both violated these roles that the Fall happened. However, by Eve fulfilling her vocation as mother, through her descendant Jesus Christ, she and all women and men are saved as they remain in faith toward Him and grow in the faith and knowledge that sanctification brings.

### Focus Statement:

Paul is focusing on how worship is to be conducted. Adam and Eve fell when they violated God's unique vocational roles given to each. But through the descendant of Eve as she functioned in her unique role as mother came the descendant who would serve as the One Mediator between the One God and man. He gave His life as the ransom price on behalf of all men. Paul encourages that the vocational role of man as spiritual head of God's household, public teacher and preacher of the truth of the Gospel be followed so that all might be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

In our current culture, we struggle with Paul's instructions about the role of women. We misunderstand the context, and therefore misunderstand the message. His words have also been applied wrongly to women's roles outside the Church, as well as Church governance apart from the Pastoral Office.

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

Rejoice in the unique roles God has given to men and women in His Church. Together worship with holy hands and reverent attire that focuses on Jesus and not on self, and thereby do their part in proclaiming the saving Gospel.

### Subject Sentence: Honoring God's Vocation Proclaims the Gospel

## **Introduction:**

So, we have before us today this passage from the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, the young man whom he raised up to be a pastor, and who is serving as such in Ephesus. It's a pretty straightforward letter until we get to this part: **1 Timothy 2:11-15** **<sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved through childbearing---if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.** What are we to do with this passage? I mean what is up with Paul? Does he have a problem with women?

This passage is part of the appointed Epistle Lesson for today. It is a difficult passage, one that many pastors outside of the LCMS and even in the LCMS don't want to deal with. In fact, ELCA (The Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America) who also will read from 1 Timothy Chapter 2 today as their appointed Epistle Lesson will stop at verse 7. That is because since they allow women to be pastors, and it would be hard for one of them to read it and preach on it. But as I read through our three lessons preparing for today, I couldn't imagine just reading these verses and letting them stand as they are without stopping and studying them. And I couldn't abide with cutting them out because they are a part of Scripture given to us. And as Paul told his young pastor in **2 Timothy 3:16-17** **<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.** This is true of all passages of Scripture, even the hard ones.

I had heard in Seminary that once upon a time, a brave but naïve Pastor tried to preach about these verses. But the women in the congregation rose up and began to pelt him with rotten vegetables. They knocked him out, dragged him out of the pulpit, tied him to the bumper of a car and drug him a mile or so down the road. When he finally got loose, he took off running and was never seen at that Church again. Now I'm pretty certain that was a tall tale. But just in case it wasn't, I asked the elders to have my back in case any of you women here today brought rotten fruit. When they found out what I was preaching on they told me I was on my own. Now that is a joke.

But the truth is, I'm really not on my own. This passage has been breathed out by God the Holy Spirit. And since all of Scripture is useful, perhaps He has something that we should learn from it today. So, join me in turning to Him and asking His help with this: ***Lord God, may what I teach and I preach this morning, and may what these children of Yours who are gathered to hear Your word, may what will cross into their ears, and the meditations of their heart be good and acceptable in Your sight. For You alone are our Rock, Our Redeemer, Our God. In Your Son's name I ask this. Amen***

## **Important Point #1: The Context of this Passage**

There are three important points I would like us to consider as we look at this passage. The first has to do with the context it is set in. **1 Timothy 2:1-4** **<sup>1</sup>First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** We have Paul's urging that prayers and petitions be made for all people, to the end that there would be peace and a calmness that allows for the passing on of the knowledge of the truth that saves. The truth that saves is the Gospel Message. And it's to be proclaimed by the Church, especially in worship, where men and women respond in prayer to the Lord. Prayer is worship. And worship is the context with which we should read this passage.

This becomes even more evident in **1 Timothy 2:8-10** **<sup>8</sup>I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup>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, <sup>10</sup>but with what is proper for women who profess godliness---with good works.** Paul is advising this young pastor that in worship men should not be involved fighting amongst one another, possibly something that was a problem there in Ephesus, but instead lift up "holy hands": those that are dedicated not to glorifying themselves, but glorifying God through acts of love toward Him and toward one another. And he advises that women attire themselves in a manner that doesn't draw attention away from the Jesus Christ, or the Gospel, but instead is an outward expression of the inward reverence they have for their Lord and Savior.

Why is the context important? Because this passage has been used wrongly out of context to support women being prohibited from any kind of vocation in the secular world that would place them in authority over a man. It has even been used to keep women from being able to vote in congregational meetings. It is used by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to prevent women from doing most everything in the Church. Paul is not talking about women on the Church council, or voting, or even being part of Gospel outreach. He is talking about how young Timothy should carry out the duties of the Pastoral Office, in the corporate setting of worship teaching and preaching of the Gospel.

## **Important Point #2: Paul's Reference to Adam and Eve**

Important Point #2 has to do with Paul's reference to the Creation account and the Fall of mankind into sin. **1 Timothy 2:13-14** **<sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup>and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.** So, to properly understand his instructions about what women can and cannot do in connection with the Pastoral Office, specifically why we in the LCMS hold that women should not be pastors, we need to turn back the page to the first three chapters of Genesis.

**Genesis 1:26-28** <sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Our Triune God created both man and woman equally in His own image. And He blessed them as such, creating them to serve Him out of love and faithfulness in two distinct manners: be fruitful and multiply, procreate, fill God's creation with offspring. And the second: have dominion. That means to be good stewards, good managers, of this gracious gift of the created world, over all those things the Lord had spent six days in creating. And having God's untarnished image they could do that. They could unselfishly care for each other and the rest of Creation.

God blessed them uniquely to do this as a couple, as man and wife. Paul cites in **1 Timothy 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.** But Adam was never intended to fulfill God's marching orders by Himself. **Genesis 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."** Adam needed help, and needed someone who could help him shoulder the expectations God had for mankind going forward. After God states this, He has all the animals appear to Adam and Adam gives them names, a symbolic way of stating his dominion over them. But he realizes that not one of these animals can help him fulfill God's will and destiny for mankind. Adam says to himself, "Can a zebra help me? No. A lion? No. A warthog? Definitely not! A skunk? Come on now! None of them will do.

So, the Lord intercedes. **Genesis 2:21-22** <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Without Eve Adam would be incomplete in a physical, emotional, and spiritual sense. And Eve would be incomplete without Adam. But when the two become one, together, they have God's blessing to fulfill His marching orders of both procreation and managing God's gracious gift of the creation. What does it mean that they were incomplete without each other? It means that man and women each bring something to the table, neither can fulfill the work God has for them alone. We can see that today in our world. Generally, men are stronger and more suited for manual labor. But that's not to say that Eve didn't help to take care of the Garden too. But women have one thing that they are uniquely designed to accomplish, something that the man helps with but can never accomplish without a woman, and that is bring a new life into the world through childbirth. That is a special role that women have been given to play by our Creator God and they should be recognized for it and lauded for it.

And what about men? What special role did Adam play? He was created first. And before Eve had come along the LORD God said this to Adam: **Genesis 2:16-17** <sup>16</sup> **And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."** Eve wasn't on the scene yet when the LORD gave this command to Adam. And it was up to him to teach it to Eve, and also to make sure they both obeyed it. In this we see Adam as the spiritual head of the household.

And how did he handle this vocational responsibility? He failed. **1 Timothy 2:14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.** Eve stopped and listened to Satan disguised as a serpent and was deceived into thinking that what the LORD had blessed her with was not enough, that the LORD had been holding out as Satan suggested. If she would just eat of this one tree she would then be just like God, knowing good and evil. The only thing is she was already like God, made in His image. She knew what was good and pleasing to the LORD, knew it better than we do today. What she didn't know, and didn't need to know, was evil. And when she succumbed to the temptation of Satan, ate the fruit, then evil was all she knew. She knew how to be a transgressor of God's will and plan, and was no longer able by herself to obey God.

And what of Adam? The spiritual head of the household that God gave the commandment to? He abdicated his position. He let Eve decide for both of them that they needed what God had been holding out on them. And he followed her into falling from grace. She ate, and he went along. But notice how when God confronts them in their sin, who does he speak to first? Adam! **Genesis 3:9-11** <sup>9</sup> **But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"** Eve listened, Eve ate and gave it to Adam. But the one God addresses first is Adam. Why is that? He was responsible for the Fall by not fulfilling his role as spiritual head of the household.

Despite the Fall, both man and woman retain the special roles God gave them. Women still are the ones to bring new life into this world, although painfully as one of the consequences of sin. The man is still charged with being the spiritual head of the household. But truth be told in our culture today he is still abdicating that responsibility. And when you fail to follow God's intended design for life, bad things happen. Things work better when we follow God's design and plan. Just as the man is still supposed to be the spiritual head of the household, men are called to be the spiritual heads of God's household, the household of faith as it exists in various places like this one. When we set aside God's intended design for spiritual governance because our culture demands that a woman be allowed to do everything a man can, we run into trouble. There is a documented trend that denominations which ignore the Scriptural call for men to be pastors will eventually ignore God's design for marriage to be one man and one woman. And even further they will ignore the fact that "God created them male and female.

## **Third Point: Saved Through Child Bearing**

The third point to consider is this difficult end to our passage: **1 Timothy 2:15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing---if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.** Paul has just got done saying that woman became the transgressor. Yet the LORD loved Eve very much, and every woman born since. All the women born after Eve were born with original sin, were born transgressors of God's will and plan for them. The same is true of Adam. He sinned by abdicating His role as spiritual head of the household, ate the fruit, and fell from grace along with Eve. And men have been abdicating that role of spiritual head ever since. And what about Pastors? What about me? I fail in my role to care for the flock as the LORD has called me to do as well. Every single one of us fails. But every single one of us has been saved through childbearing.

It's important to know that this passage is best translated as "the child bearing", or "the child given birth to". And what child might this be? Paul has already told us in **1 Timothy 2:5-6 <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.** We are all saved from the eternal death our transgressing God's will and design calls for by this one child born to the Virgin Mary. He was born to be the One who would mediate peace between a Holy God who cannot tolerate sin, and people who loved to sin. He fulfilled that role by paying the ransom price, the price that would bring peace between God and fallen man. The price was His body and blood given on the cross. Given by the only one who could fulfill this role for you and I, the God who became man in Jesus Christ. His life, death, and resurrection is the testimony that saves you from eternal separation from God and brings you back into His fold, His family, His Church. And it came to you at the proper time, at the right time, in your baptism, and every time you hear the Gospel Message here in worship. At just the right time, so that you hear, believe, and hold fast in faith to Him who prepares you now for eternal life to come.

## **Conclusion**

Paul does not hate women. But he loves the Lord and sought to be a faithful apostle and proclaimer of God's truths. The LCMS does not hate women. We hold them in high esteem and honor them for all the vocations they do within and without the Church. Most especially we honor them for their role in bringing a new life into this world, a wonderful and miraculous event blessed by God. Eve transgressed God's law, so did Adam, so have I, and so have you. But we are saved by the work of that one special child born to the virgin Mary, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is your mediator and my mediator with God, so that we might not receive the eternal death we deserve. Our lives goes better when we follow God's design, will, and purpose. And recognizing God's design for men to be spiritual head of His household means we proclaim His truth in word and actions. He has roles for both men and women in the Church and in society. And He desires that both men and women receive His greatest blessing, eternal life lived out with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen