

Armagh Baptist Church – 18th April 2010
The Life and Times of Timothy 5
1Timothy 2:9-15
A Word to the Women

Introduction

I want to begin by saying that the passage before us this morning is not an easy passage to speak on. First of all some of these verses are very hard to understand or interpret, but it's also difficult because of the climate or culture we live in today. It is very different from the 1st Century, especially as far as Women's Issues are concerned.

We live in an age of Political Correctness, Equality of the Sexes, and Women's Lib. Today, for example, you are not supposed to talk about a "man-hole cover", but a lid for a person chamber. Today it's no longer a Chairman, but a Chairperson. It's no longer a Fireman, but a Fire Fighter. (We're supposed to use terminology that is inclusive of both sexes).

In Paul's day in the 1st Century, Christianity was in fact far more progressive in its attitudes towards women than either the Greek or Jewish Cultures. Both of them tended to keep women down; to treat them as no better than objects that were the possession of the men. Paul's comments here would have been seen as very progressive in his day. Today they seem out of date and archaic, in fact they sound very chauvinistic. So what are we to make of them?

Well, culture might have changed in the course of 2000 years, but God's Word does not change. Our task is to interpret it and apply it to today's world. But the principles of God's Word are there because God put them there, so they are as relevant for us in Armagh in the 21st Century as they were for Timothy in the 1st Century.

I want you to notice first of all why Paul is writing these things to Timothy at all: Look at 1Timothy 3:14-15. It is so that he will know how various groups of people ought to conduct themselves in God's Household - In *'the Church of the Living God.'* This is important because the Church has the responsibility of being *'the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth.'* So it's how various groups of people should behave IN CHURCH.

eg.	MEN	(2:1-8)	(N.B. there are 20 verses on men,
	WOMEN	(2:9-15)	but only 8 verses on women.
	ELDERS	(3:1-7)	So don't conclude that Paul is getting
	DEACONS	(3:8-13)	at women or is being hard on women.
	THEIR WIVES	(3:11)	He's not! He'll be equally challenging
			towards men in ch.3).

Nevertheless, an important point is being made here. God does see a distinction between the sexes - that we ignore at our peril. Modern society and culture may be trying to obscure that distinction - but I believe it is reaping all sorts of horrendous problems as a result. We haven't seen the half of it yet! This distinction between the sexes is God-ordained, not man-made, or Paul-imposed!

Paul is speaking as an Apostle of Christ, by the command of God (1:1) so these are not just his own ideas! So we can't just write these verses off as Paul's prejudice against women - they're not. They are God's Word to us today, and we must respect them as such.

Notice in vs. 8 & 9 the distinction is clearly drawn between men and women.

(v.8) MEN re Prayer.

(v.9) WOMEN re Dress.

Now that's not to say that women shouldn't pray - (v.8) because they should! (See Acts 1:14, 16:13). So women please feel free to pray.

Nor does it mean that men shouldn't take care how they dress (v.9), Or that men shouldn't do good deeds, as well as wear decent clothes (v.10)!

In fact, it doesn't say much, if anything, about how Christian men should dress in the Bible, but for that matter, it doesn't tell us we should all wear shirts, and ties, and jackets or suits either. That's a tradition that has grown up over the years. As long as a man dresses modestly he can come to church whatever way he likes. And if our suits and ties are putting others off from coming to Church, because they would feel they don't fit in, then maybe we should think again and be prepared to dress down a bit?

So having drawn a clear distinction between the sexes, Paul goes on to deal with women in particular in these verses:-

1. WOMEN AT WORSHIP (vs.9,10)

Here he deals with their dress, what they look like when they come to worship. I want you to notice that Peter had to deal with the same issue in his letters.

(See 1 Peter 3:1-4).

I believe the same points are being made in both of these passages, and they are simply these:-

(i) That a Christian woman should not go overboard in her pursuit of the latest fashion. Her clothes should be decent and respectable, but above all modest and proper - in other words not overly revealing.

Women need to remember they come to church to worship God (v.10). They are not here to attract (or distract) the male of the species! So dress modestly.

(ii) That Christian women or girls should concentrate more on true godliness, or inner beauty, as much, if not more than they do on outward appearances:

- Peter mentions the "gentle and quiet spirit".

- Paul mentions the importance of "good deeds". (v.10)

It's not so much how you dress that counts with God, but how you behave that matters. God looks at the heart more than he looks at outward appearances.

But then Paul moves on to his next point:

2. SHOULD A WOMAN TEACH IN CHURCH? (vs.11-12)

Before I deal with this passage in 1 Timothy, I'd like you to come with me to Titus Ch.2. to look at vs.3-5 first of all.

A Woman *does* have a teaching role in the life of a local church:

- It's Woman to Woman.

But when you come to 1 Timothy 2:11-12 we find that

- It's NOT to be Woman to Man.

Verse 11 puts it positively, that a woman should **LEARN** the things of God. She is not just to pass that responsibility off to the men, or to her husband. She herself is to be a learner - a disciple of Christ, and of God's Word.

She is to learn "*in quietness and full submission*"

- That does not mean "silence."

The word used in v.11 for 'quietness' is the same as the word used in v.2.

We don't pray for Kings and all those in authority that we might live in **silence!**

But that we might live quiet and peaceable lives - *undisturbed* lives.

Likewise women were not to cause a disturbance in the church by interrupting while God's Word was being taught. Sadly some of the women in Ephesus were doing that. They were enjoying their new-found freedom in Christ so much that they were talking out loud or even chatting to each other in the meetings, when they should have been listening and learning.

They wouldn't have been allowed to say a word in the Jewish Synagogues - so Paul is saying don't abuse your freedom in Christ now in the Church.

(cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33-35.) A proper order ought to be maintained in Church worship.

When Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:35 that it is disgraceful for a woman to **SPEAK** in Church, he means exactly what he says here in 1 Timothy 2:12, that she is not to speak in the sense of **teaching**.

(As today the word "Speaker" and "Preacher" often mean the same thing.)

So a woman is not permitted to teach, or to have authority over a man. As far as speaking or preaching in the church is concerned, she must be *silent* (v.12)

Incidentally the very fact that an Elder is to be “*Able to Teach*” (ch.3:2b), therefore excludes a woman from holding the office of an elder in the local church today. That is the only reason why we do not have women elders or pastors in this church, and for no other reason.

Obviously from what Paul says here in v.12 teaching involves authority, and for a woman to have authority over a man would be to reverse God’s created order. The World might choose to do that today in various walks of life, but all Paul is concerned about here is the practice within the Christian Church, and if God’s Created Order is not respected in the Church, then there’s not much hope for it being respected anywhere else.

This brings us then thirdly to look at the Reasons Paul gives for this position:-

3. THE REASONS (vs.13-15)

N.B. These are Paul’s reasons, given by inspiration of God, not mine. So don’t shoot me; I’m only the messenger!

1. Because Adam was formed first, then Eve (v.13)

This implies the *priority* of man over woman, not necessarily *superiority*. Adam was first in God’s Order of Creation - First in terms of rank is the idea. It doesn’t mean he is any better than a woman, it simply means as far as God is concerned he has been given more authority by God – including the God-given authority to teach God’s Word.

The same as a Sergeant has more authority than a Corporal, it doesn’t mean the sergeant is necessarily a better person than the corporal. It’s just he has been given more authority. In this case the authority has been given to man by God, so to go against it, is not just to usurp man’s authority, it is to usurp God’s authority - to fly in the face of God! God wants everything in his church “*to be done decently and in order*” (in rank) (...to quote 1 Cor 14:35 again).

2. Because Eve led Adam into Sin, not the other way around (v.14)

The whole thrust of this letter to Timothy so far is that the Elders that Paul appointed on his first missionary visit to Ephesus have been deceived by the Devil and by false teaching and in turn they have led the church off the rails and into error. Some *men* have been open to the deception of the devil. Timothy is going to have to get rid of them and appoint new elders, better quality elders who will not be led astray so easily.

The point Paul is making here is that *generally speaking* women could be more easily led astray in matters of doctrine than men.

Women are led by feelings and emotions more readily than men, who tend to think things through more calmly and logically. In the heat of the battle against the evil one, it's cool, calm and collected minds that will be able to stand firm.

3. If Women don't have a teaching role in the Church, they do have in the home (v.15)

Verse 15 is the hardest verse to interpret in this whole letter.

The commentaries give many different interpretations.

It obviously can't mean that a woman is saved simply by having children.

But bearing in mind all that has been said before, almost suggesting that a woman has little or no place to play in God's Work, v.15 is actually pointing out a very important role that *only a woman can play* in God's Work.

Not only can she give birth to children, a tremendous responsibility in and of itself (that too many women's libbers underestimate or try to play down) but if she herself is a Christian woman, then she has the tremendous responsibility and opportunity of teaching and bringing up her children to know the Lord, to learn his Word, to understand the Gospel. She has the task of teaching her children in her own home, and hopefully of pointing them to the Saviour.

But there's a proviso here: *"...If she continues in faith, love and holiness **with propriety**."* (Here we are back to vs.9-10 again).

Conclusion

In her teenage years my mother wanted to be a missionary, instead she married a pastor, gave birth to 6 children, and she brought us all up to know and love the Lord, and humanly speaking, in terms of salvation, she had a 100% success rate. All 6 of us are now saved and following the Lord!

Now I know that it doesn't necessarily follow that a Christian woman's faith will be reproduced in her children. I know there are many heart-broken women, because despite all their efforts, their children are not walking with the Lord today. But what I am saying is that the teaching role that a woman has in her own home is not to be underestimated, and within the life of this church, the teaching role that many of our women have as far as our children is concerned is amazing. They are to be supported in it, and in their teaching role towards one another within the life of this church, according to Titus 2:3-5.

So ladies should stop wanting to do things that God **hasn't** ordained for them. Instead they should get on with the important tasks that He **has** given them.

May God bless you as you teach our children and one another in God's ways; May we as men always support you prayerfully in your God-given roles (v.8).

© IAN GRANT