

1 Timothy 2:11-15 “What Does Quietness Sound Like?” (September 4, 2011)
Genesis 2:18-3:24
Psalm 113

Genesis 3:15 contains the first promise of the gospel –
the promise that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the serpent.

From that day, childbirth has been connected with salvation.

Every time a child is born,
there is a fulfillment of the creation command, “be fruitful and multiply,”
but there is also a fulfillment of the gospel promise of “the seed of the woman.”
It is true that this promise was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.
But the pain of childbirth was designed not only to remind you of Eve’s sin –
the pain of childbirth was also designed to remind you
that salvation only comes through the cross.

When Jesus was drawing near to “his hour” he said in John 16:20-22

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.
You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.
When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come,
but when she has delivered the baby,
she no longer remembers the anguish,
for joy that a human being has been born into the world.
So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again,
and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”
Jesus taught us that childbirth is a picture of salvation –
the agony of labor results in the joy of new life.

Our Psalm of response, Psalm 113 draws on the Song of Hannah from 1 Samuel 2.

The LORD, our God, who is high and exalted
has mercy on the poor and the lowly,
raising the poor from the dust,
the needy from the ash heap,
and makes them sit with the princes of his people.

And as the greatest example of this,

“He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.”

Sing Psalm 113

Read 1 Timothy 2

We need to see the context for our passage:

In verse 1, Paul urges “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings
be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions,
that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” (v1-2)

Certainly we should also pray for these things privately,
but Paul is dealing with Timothy's public role as a minister of the gospel,
and the language of supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings
should make us think of the public prayers.

In addition, the fact that Paul immediately goes on to discuss
the qualifications for overseers and deacons
also encourages us to think in terms of the "public ministry" of the church.

Further, at the end of chapter 3, he says:
"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." (3:14-15)

Why do I start with this?

Because there are two different lines of thought in Paul's letters regarding women.
In Galatians 3:28-29 Paul will say that in Christ
"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free,
there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring,
heirs according to the promise."

Some have used this to level all distinctions within the church
in an attempt to argue that Paul is a thorough-going egalitarian.

On the other hand there are passages like 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,
where Paul says "the women should keep silent in the churches.
For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission,
as the Law also says.
If there is anything they desire to learn,
let them ask their husbands at home.
For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

Of course, there is also 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, which says
"Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head,
but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered
dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven."

I'm not going to try to tackle the "head covering" issue today (!),
but from these passages, it is clear that there is *some* sort of speaking permitted to women
and yet there is some sort of silence that is also expected!

The key principle of interpretation here is that "scripture interprets scripture."

If your interpretation of scripture winds up contradicting another passage of scripture,
then most likely, your interpretation of scripture needs some work!
If God is the author of the whole of scripture,
then the whole of scripture should be consulted in order to understand any part.
Obviously, this requires us to know the whole of scripture!
If you would understand and apply the scriptures properly,
then you need to see how the scriptures fit together.

Of course, some have gone the route of saying that Paul was wrong!
They do Paul justice in terms of admitting that Paul meant what he said,
but then they assert that in this respect,
Paul simply adopted the prejudices of his day.
Then, they say, since we no longer accept this view of women,
we are free to discard what Paul says!
And they will appeal to Galatians 3 and say that 1 Timothy 2
is incompatible with the true egalitarian theology of the gospel!

The problem is that this route allows us to overthrow the scriptures –
and establishes an authority other than God himself.
After all, if *some* of the Bible is not divinely inspired and authoritative,
then who gets to decide which parts we can ignore?

I'll admit that I naturally gravitate toward a more egalitarian position.
I live in an egalitarian culture – and I have seen how well women can do.

But I must submit to the Word of God.
The scriptures do not demand that we submit to the culture of the first century.
Cultures change.
Societies vary.

But there are certain things that remain the same.
And Paul says that there are some things that God has ordained
since the creation of the world –
and since the fall, there are certain constants in human relations.

(As we saw last week, men in all ages have tended to use anger to control and dominate;
and women in all ages have tended to use clothing to control and manipulate.)

So let us look at Paul's instruction in terms of the practice he expects,
the rationale that he gives,
and the result that he promises:

1. The Practice: Submission and Quietness (v11-12)

11 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.

People have hypothesized about all sorts of contexts.

Why did Paul say this?

What was going on in the church at Ephesus?

If we were supposed to know the situation in Ephesus, Paul would have told us.

Some have assumed that Paul thought that the women were becoming too contentious –
but Paul does not say this.

In fact, the only people he condemns for being contentious in this chapter
are *men* (andros).

Rather, he seems to be articulating a general principle –

similar to the principle that women should dress in “respectable apparel” (v9).

Women should learn quietly –

the word for “quiet” is used of a crowd that becomes quiet
in order to hear the speaker (e.g. Acts 22:2)

“with all submissiveness” –

this is the normal verb for submission (upotasso).

I know that many women bristle when they hear the word “submission” –
and for good reason!

We rarely use the word unless we are talking about women!

But this word is used 42 times in the NT.

42 times – and only a handful of those are talking about women!

So let me say clearly that submission is something that should characterize *all of us*.

Luke 2:51 says of Jesus,

“And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive”
[to his parents].

Jesus himself, as a twelve year-old child, was submissive to his parents.

Romans 13 uses the same word to speak of submitting to government authorities.

Titus 2:9 speaks of slaves submitting to their masters,

which has a proper application to your earthly masters at work.

You men need to *submit* to those who are in authority over you!

1 Corinthians 16:16 and 1 Peter 5:5 speak of being in submission
to church authorities – to the elders

Likewise, there is a submission to one another in the gospel
that should characterize all of us.

Do we “submit to one another” out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5)?

Do we humble ourselves – or do we seek our own way?

And so husbands,
if you are not practicing submission to the authorities in your life,
do not be surprised if your wife finds it difficult to submit to you!

But wives,
if your husband fails to submit to those in authority over him,
that does not give you an excuse!

Here in verse 11, Paul especially encourages women to learn quietly with all submissiveness.

But to whom are the women submitting?

Paul simply says “in all submission” or “with all submissiveness.”

Some have argued that this is a “submission to those in authority in the church,”

which is partly true,

but the point of this way of saying it

is that it focuses our attention on the woman –

not on the one in authority.

The point here is that it is a woman’s task “to learn quietly.”

[We *will* come back later in 1 Timothy to find out *what is she learning for!*]

And then he goes on to expound on this:

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man;
rather, she is to remain quiet.” (v12)

The word “quiet” is the same phrase “in quietness” as in verse 11.

Literally, “she is to be in quietness.”

But there are two things that Paul does not permit a woman to do:

First, “to teach” – the word here is the basic Greek word for instruction – *didasko*.

And second,

“neither do I permit her to have authority over a man.”

The word here, *authenteo*, is hotly debated.

Because it *can* be used of a murderer or a usurper,

therefore some have argued that Paul is using it only to say

that women should not *usurp* authority over men.

But the word *authenteo* is used far more widely

to refer simply to someone who has authority, or who exercises authority.

But Paul’s choice of words *is* interesting.

He doesn’t use *exousia* – a far more common (and general) word for “authority.”

He uses a word which emphasizes the *exercise* of authority.

Paul is saying that with respect to matters of teaching and rule in the church,
women are to be quiet.

He’s not explicitly dealing with the question of “women’s ordination”

(I doubt that question ever crossed his mind),
rather, that in a church that would never have thought about women's ordination,
it was still necessary to encourage the women to exercise submission and quietness!

I want you to think about that.

Today, we get so caught up in the debate about women's ordination,
that we forget that Paul is addressing a church
that probably had no such controversy!

Why did Paul think that he needed to say something here?

His explanation of his rationale in verses 13-14 is very helpful!

2. The Rationale: Creation and Fall (v13-14)

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

Paul says that there are certain things that are true
simply because of the way God made things in creation,
and because of the way that humanity fell into sin.

Verse 13 focuses on creation.

The first reason why women are to remain quiet in the church
is "because Adam was formed first, then Eve."

This creational order is at the heart of the relationship between man and woman.

And this creational order exists not only in marriage,
but also in the church.

As there is headship and submission in marriage,
so also there is headship and submission in the church
(indeed, Paul will use this language in all sorts of social relations).

I want you to see that Paul says that women may not teach or exercise authority in the church
because Adam was formed first.

Paul says, "God made things this way."

But, we can't stop there –

because we have no idea what things would look like in a perfect world!
because we don't live in a perfect world!

We live in a world characterized by sin, death, and deception.

As Paul puts it, "and Adam was not deceived,
but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

This is a fascinating statement!

Usually Paul holds Adam responsible for sin and death:

“sin came into the world through one *man*, and death through sin” (Romans 5:12)

“because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man.” (5:17)

“For as by a man came death...for as in Adam all die...” (1 Cor 15:21-22).

But here he points the finger at Eve!

What is Paul doing?

Paul is consistently applying his doctrine of headship.

Sin came into the world through Adam.

Death came to all men through Adam,

because by *his* sin, death reigned over all.

Adam is the head of humanity.

As in Adam all die...

But that doesn’t mean that Adam was the first person who ever sinned!

No, Adam was not deceived – but Eve was deceived.

Who was the first sinner among all humanity?

Eve.

But did her sin render the whole of humanity sinful?

No – because she was not the covenant head of humanity! (Adam was).

We have no idea what would have happened if Adam had remained upright.

How would Eve have been restored if Adam had not joined her in her sin?

Who knows? (Paul doesn’t seem interested in that question)

Paul’s point here is that Eve’s sin has had an impact on her daughters.

Think of how God said it to Eve:

“your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” (Gen 3:16)

In Gen 2:15 God “took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

In Gen 3:17-19 God tells Adam that because he has listened to the voice of his wife,

the ground will be cursed because of *him*,

and now the ground will bring forth thorns and thistles.

Some have said that with modern technology, this is no longer true –

with modern fertilizers and pesticides, we have taken out the thorns and thistles.

Just this week I was reading about a fungus which is decimating Michigan’s apples,

because it is resistant to all the fungicides!

Because of man’s sin, the creation itself is resistant

to all of man’s efforts to restore dominion.

In the same way, in Genesis 2:18, God determined to make a suitable helper for man.

As we have seen before, a “helper” in Hebrew
is someone who does something that you cannot do for yourself.
What Eve does to help in Genesis 1-4 is have babies.
Adam is not able to “be fruitful and multiply” without Eve.

And in Genesis 3:16, God says to Eve,
“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.”
Eve’s unique ability to bear children is precisely the focus of God’s words to her.
Just as man’s particular calling “to work and keep/guard the garden”
is precisely the focus of God’s words to him.

So Paul appeals to both the order of creation and the order of the fall
as reasons why women should not teach and exercise authority in the church.

But Paul does not stop at creation and fall.

Paul also talks about salvation!

3. The Result: Salvation through Childbearing (v15)

*15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness,
with self-control [sophrosune].*

The phrase “saved through childbearing” has attracted a lot of attention.

Some think that it means that women will survive childbirth –
but that is simply not true!
Lots of godly women have died in childbirth!

The word “saved” here means “salvation” –
and especially in the immediate context,
where Paul has just talked about the creation of woman,
and the sin of woman,
it would be cruel of him not to then talk about the “salvation” of woman!

And in fact, the singular here is especially important.

Paul has been talking about “a woman” –
let “a woman” learn quietly;
I do not permit “a woman” to teach or to exercise authority

Now he continues that singular emphasis:
“she will be saved through childbearing”

but then immediately he jumps to the plural:

“if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”

I don't know if Paul hit on this in his first draft,
or if he had to really work through this to get it right!
But he found a brilliant way to emphasize the centrality of woman's ability to bear children,
without making it sound like *every* woman has to physically bear children!

She (woman, generically) will be saved through childbearing,
if *they* (women, collectively) continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Many of the fathers thought that they detected a reference to Mary in the singular.
And certainly Mary's was the childbearing that brought salvation to all!
Indeed, Paul's interaction with Genesis 2-3 would have reminded his readers
of that first promise that salvation would come through the “seed of the woman.”

But the birth of Christ does not eliminate woman's unique ability and role.

In other words, Paul is saying to the women in the church,
no, you may not teach or exercise authority over men in the church;
but in childbearing,
indeed, the Greek has the article, which may suggest that it should be translated,
“in *the* childbearing”
you will be saved.

For many women this occurs as you imitate “the childbearing.”
It is entirely appropriate for women in labor to remember that this was how Jesus –
the Son of God – came into the world!
(At least meditate on that now, while you're pregnant!)

Of course, there are some women who are not able – for one reason or another –
to bear children.

Paul's statement about how “*she* will be saved through the childbearing,
if *they* continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control”
emphasizes the fact that the physical act of childbirth is not essential for a woman
but still every time a woman gives birth to a child,
it is a reminder to all of us that through suffering comes joy and salvation.

But notice the things that Paul expects of women:
faith – do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?
love – do you love *even* those women who are hard to get along with?
holiness – being set apart – distinct from the world – not conformed to your culture?
and self-control...

We saw “self-control” in verse 9,
where women were exhorted to exercise modesty and self-control in their “apparel”.
Now it reappears as the defining hallmark of a woman’s character.

Self-control has to do with disciplining one’s appetites.

The self-control that a woman expresses in her appearance
should be rooted in the basic self-control that characterizes her life and conduct.
Paul does not think that women need to be “controlled” by men.
He believes that a woman who has been made new in Christ Jesus
can exercise self-control in her life of faith, love, and holiness.

Conclusion:

If you just read 1 Timothy 2, you might come away saying,
“well, I guess that means that women should never say anything around men!”

But this is why it is important to allow scripture to interpret scripture.

While we need to submit to God’s Word,
we must submit to the *whole* of God’s Word!

Paul insists that women should not teach,
but the scriptures make clear that it was a *good thing*
that “Priscilla and Aquila took [Apollos] and explained to him
the way of God more accurately.” (Acts 18:26)

Many have pointed out that the fact that Priscilla’s name comes first
indicates that there is no way to conceive of her sitting “quietly” by
while her husband does all the talking!

Likewise, Paul insists that a woman must not exercise authority over a man,
but he says that Phoebe, “has been a patron of many and of myself as well.”
(Rom 16:2)

A patron is a powerful figure in the Greco-Roman world.

A patron exercises authority in a community.

Indeed, in terms of Greco-Roman society,

Phoebe has exerted her authority on Paul’s behalf!

(and Paul appears to be very grateful – and thinks that Phoebe did well!)

So when Paul says, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man”
he cannot be understood in any way that would condemn Priscilla or Phoebe.

How do we wrap our minds around this?

And how do we apply it today?

First, let me paint you a picture of something like what Paul is thinking in his day.

Paul lived in a hierarchical world –

a world in which everyone had his place –

a world in which you *could* move up (or down) the social ladder –

but the rungs of the social ladder were pretty well defined.
And in a hierarchical world, gender relations are not so neat and tidy.
The wife or daughter of a patron – and especially the *widow* of a patron –
exerts profound authority over the men who are below her.

We tend to think in more egalitarian terms.

One result is that we don't think in terms of "levels" of authority.
There is very *little* authority recognized today,
which results in something of a power grab,
as everybody scrambles to assert what little authority is acknowledged!

The modern "patriarchy" movement is a good example of this.

They want to recover what they consider a "biblical" approach to the family,
so they declare that every father is a "patriarch."

Of course, in biblical terms, that is just silly.

Not every father is a patriarch!

Many fathers in biblical times were slaves.

Others were free, but laborers who were in no sense "patriarchs"!

Others were still dependent on fathers, brothers, uncles, etc.

Only a handful of you men here would be patriarchs –
so the idea that every father is a patriarch is (ironically)
an expression of modern egalitarianism.

What makes it especially perverse, however,
is that women in the modern patriarchy movement,
wind up with the worst of both worlds!

At least ancient hierarchical patriarchy gave elite women authority over lesser men!
But if all men are patriarchs, then there will never again be a Phoebe –
a patron of Paul, and of many other *men*.

Of course, we have a bit of a problem –

(and maybe you've seen it coming) –

I won't go the route of modern egalitarian patriarchy –
and it is impossible to recreate ancient hierarchical patriarchy,
so what do we do?!

Here is what the scripture's teaching should look like at Michiana Covenant.

Scripture does not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.

Therefore only men should be ordained as pastors, elders, and deacons.

(we'll talk more about deacons in a couple weeks!)

But we want Phoebes and Priscillas.

How do we see this expressed in the life of the church?

We have a woman serving as chairman of our Educational Ministries Team.

We have a woman serving as chairman of the Michiana Covenant Academy board.

We have a Women's Ministries Team that seeks to develop and encourage
ministries by and for women in the church.

As I was training for the ministry, I had opportunity to intern and observe in several churches.
I found that the younger women were eager to learn from the older women;
but the older women didn't think that they had much to offer.

They had been told to "be quiet" for so long, that they no longer had anything to say.

There is *so little room* in modern egalitarian culture for teaching and authority
that very often men are snatching up every little bit they can get.
We need *women* who *know* the scriptures so well that they can correct *preachers*,
like Priscilla and Aquila corrected Apollos!
We need women who have clout in society – patrons like Phoebe –
who are able to use their position and influence for the furtherance of the gospel.

How do we get there?

Take advantage of every opportunity to study and know the scriptures.
(Women in the Word at WTS is a great opportunity)
(Trinity study here)

"Submissive" does not mean "passive."

To submit means *actively* to *obey*.

Our Lord Jesus Christ submitted to his earthly parents, and to his heavenly Father.

Submission requires an active, energetic obedience
that exerts itself in pursuing the good of the other.

This is what quietness sounds like.

Faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.