

“WOMEN AND THE BIBLE”
Teaching Day – Boston Church of Christ
April 10, 2021

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“WOMEN AND THE BIBLE”

Part ONE – “Built on a Rock”

a. BIBLE INTERPRETATION

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and your role (“tour guide”) – explain the day

I. “This is a big deal”

- (1) We care about women
- (2) How we answer these questions reflects our convictions about God’s Word
- (3) This topic has the potential to divide

II. Key principles that will guide our Bible study

- (1) Principle #1: We believe that all of the Bible is the Word of God
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17
- (2) Principle #2: We apply a proven approach consistently
 - Begin with the clear teachings and let the Bible explain itself
 - Figure out what the passage meant to the original readers
 - Resist the temptation to let the world’s culture interpret the Bible
 - Strive to truly obey Scripture, individually and as church
- (3) Principle #3: We value scholarship but we give it a supporting role
 - You can understand this – but you need to study it diligently
 - Word studies: we use in response to scholarly arguments that need to be refuted
 - We have excellent translations
- (4) Principle #4: “Three Buckets”
 - “*Salvation issues*”, teachings that are essential for what it means to be a Christian
 - “*Sound Doctrine*” (or healthy teaching, 2 Tim 4:3), i.e. what God made clear in His word and what is healthy for the disciple and the church
 - “*Matters of Opinion*” i.e. what is not clear cut in God’s word and therefore should be left to the opinion of the individual

III. Approach to this whole topic:

- (1) Key concern: unity
 - Community teaching in ICOC and BCC
- (2) Working with “The Bible and Gender” from the ICOC Teachers.
- (3) Focusing on a small set of passages that speak directly to the topic
- (4) Topics that are not addressed today – today’s teaching is consistent with our studies of these three topics
 - Jesus in the Gospels
 - Role of gender throughout the Old Testament and New Testament
 - Early Christian literature

Conclusion

- ***This is a big deal*** – and today is an answer to Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21-23

Part TWO – “God’s Plan from the Beginning”

a. CREATION ACCOUNT

Introduction

- (1) We are continuing to climb the mountain of Bible study. We are in the basecamp called “The Plan from the Beginning.”
- (2) A basic question: Are men and women identical in every way or are there differences in roles? Let’s look at the Creation account with this question in mind.

I. God’s Plan from the Beginning

- (1) God created the earth – “and he saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:1-25)
- (2) God created man and female – in His own image: Genesis 1:26-31
- (3) The serpent deceived the woman – questioning God’s goodness: Genesis 3:1-5
- (4) The woman eats, the husband eats – the disaster is complete: Genesis 3:6

II. Before the Fall and after Fall

- (1) “In his own image and likeness”
 - What does this mean?
 - Male and Female: equal but not the same
- (2) Designed for different roles
 - It is not good to be alone (2:18)
 - “Ezer Kenegdo” (2:18) – reminder: original languages to refute misleading scholarship
 - “Helper Suitable” has not inferior meaning as it is used for God in OT
 - “Helper Suitable” is a very good translation of “Ezer Kenegdo”
 - What about being a single man or a single woman?
 - Incomplete?
 - Mankind versus a single person
- (3) What changed with the Fall?
 - The Fall didn’t create the gender specific roles but it corrupted them
 - Indications for differences in roles **before** the Fall
 - The order: Adam was created first, then Eve (note the sequence in 2:7 and 2:18-23; 1 Timothy 2:13)
 - The naming of woman: Adam named Eve; Eve did not name Adam (2:23)
 - The primary accountability: God called Adam to account first after the Fall (3:9)
 - The purpose: Eve was created as a helper for Adam, not Adam as a helper for Eve (Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 11:9)

III. Two mainstream interpretations

- (1) Complementarianism and Egalitarianism
 - This is a new study for us but the two camps have been around for a long time
 - Complementarianism: Men and women are equal in the image of God while maintaining complementary differences in their roles in marriage and church

- Egalitarianism: Men and women are equal in the image of God and the standard for fulfilling a role in marriage and the church is giftedness not gender
- (2) Gender roles in the remainder of the Old Testament (let the Bible interpret itself!)
 - Leaders in Israel were male with very few exceptions (Debra as one female judge)
 - Twelve tribes were named after the males
 - There is overwhelming evidence that men were in charge of their families
 - No priestly roles for women throughout the OT
 - All of these things indicate gender specific roles
- (3) Jesus and women
 - “Jesus and women” is a great study and we don’t have time to talk about it today (we are pressing 3 years of study into 3 hours 😊)
 - Jesus treated women in a way that was completely countercultural.
 - Jesus, the Jew, highly valued women and many women were part of his team
 - John 4: speaking to the Samaritan woman or in Luke 7, he let the sinful woman wash his feet
 - Jesus broke the rules when it came to women
 - It would have been easy for Jesus to name 6 male and 6 female apostles
 - Why did he not do so?
 - Jesus was certainly not trying to be “culture compliant”
 - We are not going to study this out today because of time but also because Jesus’ dealing with women is completely consistent with our study
- (4) Galatians 3:28
 - A signature scripture as proof that the gender specific roles are gone under the New Covenant?
 - This is a grave misinterpretation of this Scripture
 - These verses studied in the context don’t speak to gender roles but that in Christ we are all of equal value – independent of our gender, social or ethnic status
 - When it comes to salvation, we are all the same
 - Encouragement to study the corresponding chapter in ICOC book

Conclusion

God’s plan from the beginning was very good. But man rebelled and corrupted the perfect design. In the next study we are jumping into the New Testament and explore what the apostles say about this topic.

Part THREE – “Gender in Your House and in God’s House”

a. GENDER SPECIFIC ROLES IN THE HOME

Introduction

- (1) We are continuing to climb our mountain of Bible study.
- (2) Gender in Your House and in God’s House – Part I
- (3) Ephesians 5:21-33

I. Family and Culture

- (1) Household Codes or “family guidelines”
 - A reference to Colossians 3:18-19 and 1 Peter 3:1-7
 - “Christianized” Household Codes
 - A Command for all: Mutual Submission
 - Two new words – both of them are a bit “tricky”
 - Submission
 - Headship
- (2) Submission defined
 - Following someone else’s will
 - “Willingly out of reverence to Christ”
 - Forty times in NT
 - Christ the head of the church: Ephesians 1:22, 4:15-16
 - Submission to God in James 4:7
 - Even Jesus submitting to God in 1 Corinthians 15:28
 - To the governing authorities
 - Jesus as main example: Matthew 26:39
- (3) Headship defined
 - “Benevolent authority with servant leadership”
 - Christ is the head of the church
 - Use of the term “headship” in this study
 - Why? Divine order hinted on in Genesis
- (4) A word study: kephale – “head” or “source”?
 - Meaning
 - A straightforward reading of the text, along with the archeological evidence, reveal that kephale (head) means authority
 - Interpreting the word “head” to mean “source” creates various “Christological problems,” for example: in 1 Corinthians 15:28 Paul says that Christ will be in eternal submission to God, the Father
 - Taking kephale to mean source contradicts most of the imagery in the New Testament, for example: first century hearers of “father and son”, which is a recurring image in the New Testament to describe the relationship between God and Jesus, are not going to think “source” but “authority”
 - All major Bible translation translate this term as head

- Detailed discussion in ICOC paper (90/91) with the conclusion that the interpretation as “source” is “weak” and “unpersuasive”

II. Marriage, an image for Christ and the Church

(1) Ephesians 5:31-33

- An inspiring and challenging image!

(2) New covenant but “pre-fall” creation order still intact but it assumes the re-creation of human beings as the new creation

- The church consists of disciples who have been re-born in baptism and are filled with the Holy Spirit
- Otherwise all of this does not work

(3) Husbands and Agape love

- The love that is self-less, self-sacrificing!
- The love with which Jesus loves the Church!

Conclusion

- (1) Paul’s teaching was countercultural back then, it is so today!
- (2) Introduce next two videos

b. GENDER SPECIFIC ROLES IN THE CHURCH

Introduction

- (1) We are continuing to climb our mountain of Bible study.
- (2) Gender in Your House and in God's House – Part II
- (3) 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

I. A call to order in the Assembly

- (1) The Church in Corinth: Background
- (2) 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

II. Spiritual gifts versus roles in the Assembly

- (1) Ekklesia or "Assembly"
 - Paul's teaching about the people of God is his use of the important word *ekklesia*, a term meaning "congregation," "church," "gathering" or "assembly"
 - The word *ekklesia* appears 114 times in the NT, with sixty-two instances in Paul.
 - In Paul's writings *ekklesia* refers to (1) a local assembly or congregation of Christians, or (2) a gathering of Christians in a house church setting
 - A meaningful definition of "when the church meets" or "assembly" might be: a meeting of the whole church together or meetings of groups comprising the whole church for which attendance would be expected from the elders for each of the disciples
- (2) Use of gifts in the Assembly
 - The free use of gifts in the assembly to build up the church is an important concept in Paul's writings
 - Women praying & prophesying in the assembly
- (3) Headship in the Assembly
 - The principle of Biblical headship is at the core of Paul's answers to some of the underlying challenges in the Corinthian church assemblies
 - The male headship principle appears in the NT as principle in the context of church and family)
 - Whereas "headship" can be defined as "benevolent authority" or "servant leadership," how is it manifested within the assembly of the church?
 - It seems that there are two related issues:
 1. How is headship implemented i.e. who is "over" the meeting of the assembly? and
 2. What is the appearance?

While (1) can be objectively established, (2) is fairly subjective. In general, the evangelist or eldership is over the assembly, and we are dealing here more with the appearance
- (4) The possible "tension" between use of gifts and headship
 - There is a potential tension between the use of gifts and headship in the assembly
 - There is a grey area of what is the assembly
 - Caution: let's not be "pharisaic"

(5) What is not the assembly (e.g., “when two are three are gathered”)

III. Implementation

- (1) Implementation and appearance: both matter!
- (2) What the use of gifts and headship in the assembly looks like: “What you can expect in the BCC”.
- (3) A short, high-level list
 - Church governing roles (elders, evangelists) are male
 - Rich set of opportunities for sisters to use their gifts inside and outside the assembly
 - Speaking and praying in the assembly
 - Being a strong voice in leadership teams
 - Board seats in Church and Mission Societies
 - Women’s ministry leadership roles for marrieds and singles
 - Serving the poor: Hope chapter lead by single sister

Conclusion

- (1) We are not done yet – these are preliminary conclusions!
- (2) Introduce next video and final session

Part FOUR – “Mountain Top of Our Study”

a. ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ASSEMBLY

Introduction

- (1) Last stage of our climb – let’s do it!
- (2) Mountain Top – Part I
- (3) Passages that are important but difficult.

I. Review principles from first lesson

- (1) Paul wrote some things that are hard to understand! (2 Peter 3:16)
- (2) Recap of the interpretation principle we established in Part ONE:
 - Begin with the clear teachings; let the Bible explain itself; the Bible does not contradict itself
 - Figure out what the passage meant to the original readers, this includes identifying situational corrections and timeless principles
 - Resist the temptation to let the world’s culture interpret the Bible, exegesis versus eisegesis
 - Obedience, individually and as church, is key to understanding and freedom (John 8:31-32)

II. Context: what is happening in 1 Corinthians 14?

- (1) Conclusion from 1 Corinthians 11
 - The Assembly is where the roles play out
 - The free use of gifts under headship
- (2) The context of 1 Corinthians 12-14
 - 1 Corinthians 12
 - All about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Assembly
 - Image of the Body: one (!) body means “complete unity”
 - 1 Corinthians 13
 - Agape is more important than any of the gifts!
 - This is the agape love we read about in Ephesians 5, the love with which Jesus loves the church and husbands ought to love their wives.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:1-25
 - Back to the issues in the Assembly! Paul instructs about the proper use of gifts in the Assembly is powerful!
 - 1 Corinthians is about corrections and corrections: a man sleeps with his father’s wife, lawsuits among church members, sexual immorality, marriage issues, disorderly and chaotic assemblies, favoritism at the Lord’s Supper, etc. etc. The two chapters 12 and 13 are teaching inspiring doctrines on the Body of Christ and Agape love.

III. Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

- (1) The meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:26
 - “Brothers and Sisters”: the Greek word means brothers, but it is a good translation to include sisters - it may be an equivalent of “you guys”

- Word of instruction: the term for *teaching* – there was some kind of teaching going on
- A very interactive and highly participative worship service!

(2) The meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

(3) Apparent contradiction between 11:2-6 and 14:34-35?

- Why does Paul say the women should keep silent in the assembly in chapter 14 when in chapter 11 it is clear that women are speaking and Paul does not disapprove?
- Because Scripture does not contradict itself, serious students must view both chapter 11 and chapter 14 as theologically consistent one with the other
- Since we believe in the inspiration of Scripture and affirm the resulting commitment to sound principles of biblical interpretation, we cannot say chapter 14 trumps chapter 11 or that chapter 11 trumps chapter 14
- We cannot ignore either of the two passages, we have to say “yes” to both

(4) Resolution

- All of the issues in chapters 11-14 are taking place in the Assembly
- The first occurrence (14:17-28) is employed to command a *tongue speaker* to be silent when no interpreter is present - no reference to gender is made
- The second occurrence (14:30) is employed to command a *prophet* to be silent when another prophet receives a revelation - no reference to gender is made
- The third occurrence (14:34) is employed to command *women* to be silent instead of being disruptive
- Each of these commands calls upon a different group within the assembly to cease certain types of audible disruptions
- Therefore, the instructions in 14:34 do not constitute a universal prohibition of women speaking in the worship assembly; instead, just like the two preceding “be silent” commands, the command in 14:34 is intended only to call for silence relative to vocal disruptions
- 14:34-35 is not a universal prohibition but a correction about disruptive behavior

Conclusion

(1) Recap Paul’s Principles

- Gifts of the Body of Christ to be used freely in the Assembly for the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ.
- The headship principle provides order for the Assembly (1. Corinthians 14:40! *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*)
- Paul overriding goal is unity!
- 1 Corinthians 1:10

(2) We reached the first of two peaks

(3) Introduce next video and final session

b. ROLE OF WOMEN AND CULTURE

Introduction

- (1) Last peak – we are almost there!
- (2) Mountain Top – Part II
- (3) Recap from 1 Corinthians

I. Context: Timothy in Ephesus

- (1) Situational but a “church planting manual”
- (2) 1 Timothy 2:8-15
- (3) “One of the most controversial verses in the Bible”
- (4) Context
 - Paul addresses men (prayer) in a situational correction
 - Paul addresses women (dress) in a situational correction
 - Paul addresses women in some kind of correction
 - Paul uses the Creation Order argument to state a timeless principle

II. Interpretation

- (1) A word study: *authenteo*
 - “to teach”: Is the standard word for teaching in the church. What kind of speaking or teaching does he have in mind? As we have established, Paul cannot be prohibiting all speaking by women in the Assembly.
 - “to assume authority” (grk *authenteo*): this is the 3rd original language word study for us today. What does *authenteo* mean?
 - a. Read it in different translations
 - NIV – “not to assume authority over a man”
 - ESV – “not to exercise authority over a man”
 - KJV – “not to usurp authority over”
 - b. Two main options: usurping authority meaning just grabbing control or having authority in an orderly manner.
 - c. *Authenteo* is not found in any other place in the Bible
 - d. It seems that Paul is prohibiting some kind of authoritative teaching by women.
 - Conclusion: non-conclusive (ICOC teachers agree) and we cannot use this Scripture by itself but we need to let the Bible explain itself.
- (2) Let the Bible interpret the Bible
 - What we have established so far from 1 Corinthians 11-14
 - Women speak in the assembly
 - The headship principle is followed
- (3) Using 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 to understand 1 Timothy 2
 - Paul affirms the headship principle by referring it back to the creation order
 - Women were not allowed to speak in the assembly in Corinth if they were guilty of attempting to exercise authority over or usurp authority from brothers

Conclusions

Conclusion for this section:

- 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is a difficult passage and we have to be inconclusive on the translation of the word “authenteo”
- However, our key findings from our studies so far are confirmed by 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and we can use 1 Corinthians to understand the main teaching of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

CONCLUSIONS OF OVERALL TEACHING DAY

Key Questions from the beginning of our day:

(1) What does the Bible teach about women?

(2) Are men and women identical in every way?

(3) Are there differences when it comes to roles of men and women?

- Women and men were created by God to equally reflect the nature and character of God
- Women and men are not identical in every way - they were created by God for roles in the family and the church that overlap but are not identical
- In the family and the church women and men need to be empowered to use their gifts while fulfilling their gender specific roles
- There is much more to learn but there is a pattern we have discovered
- This is a major milestone in our community teaching process
 - we are not done yet and we will discuss further steps in a moment
 - I welcome your questions and will do a follow-up video with answers