



KING'S HARBOR CHURCH

Love God. Love People. Make Disciples.

Affirming The Witness of the Gospel (1 Timothy 2:8-15)

I. INTRO

A. Pastoral Search Update:

1. One candidate has clearly emerged from the other candidates -- and the ST, Elders, and Staff are working together to affirm and plan a Candidating Weekend (most likely the first weekend in March).
2. You will receive a letter from me in the form of an all-church email this coming week. We are planning on announcing the candidate that the ST and the Elders (with Staff input) are presenting to you, the congregation, next weekend.
3. Also, it's been mentioned that some people in the church think that three candidates will be presented. That was never the idea. In 20-years I have never served a church that had three candidates presented to the congregation. On rare occasions there have been two candidates presented. But when one candidate is clearly the front-runner the best choice is to present only one candidate. In our case, according to the ST (who were chosen to represent our congregation), the Elders, with input from the Staff, the candidate that will be presented is the clear front-runner.

B. Let's begin with a question: If there was a God, and if that God created males and females with identical value, dignity, and worth – and wanted males and females to partner together for the universal flourishing of both creation and humanity, what would that look like?

C. The Hebrew concept for “universal flourishing” is found in the word SHALOM.

1. SHALOM was present in the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned.

2. How can we define SHALOM? Biblical SHALOM means undefiled harmony God, a universal flourishing...the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in equity, fulfillment, and delight.¹
- D. Let's take the question about males and females partnering together for universal flourishing into our text for today – because the text will take us back into the Garden of Eden as well.
- E. I'll read it, pray, and then we'll look at some controversial verses in the Bible: *"Therefore I want the [males] in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without [impulsive] wrath and dissension [speculations and arguments].⁹ Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.¹¹ A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.¹⁵ But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."* --1 Timothy 2:8-15
- F. Did you feel your heart beat a little faster when you read that? I did!

II. BODY

- A. Simply stated, this passage presents us with a **theological knot** that we need to carefully untie – because it contains both teaching that is related to the specific historical context AND teaching related to what is called "central revelation" – or, teaching that is true in every culture. Two principles of biblical interpretation that will help us:
1. **The Principle of Harmony:** We are to interpret difficult passages in the light of the whole of Scripture. This is sometimes called the law of non-contradiction. Wrestling with paradox ("seeming contradiction") is called scholarship.
 2. **The Principle of History:** God has revealed Scriptural truth in the context of specific historical and cultural settings. Paul is writing to Timothy and the church at Ephesus in the first century, which is a

¹ Cornelius Plantinga. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, Eerdmans 1995:10.
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specific historical, cultural context, which means we have to ask a couple of questions of the text:

- a. What part of the text is cultural expression that would change from culture to culture?
 - b. What part of the text is central revelation that never changes?
- B. So, with that said, I see two overarching points that Paul is making in this passage (with several sub-points):
1. **Paul is addressing DIVISIVE men in the church (2:8)**
 2. **Paul is addressing DISTRACTIVE women in the church (2:9-15)²**

C. We will look at them one at a time:

1. **Paul is addressing DIVISIVE men in the church (2:8)** *“Therefore I want the [males] in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without [impulsive] wrath and dissension [speculations and arguments].”*
 - a. Paul has spent the first portion of his letter addressing some serious concerns about what has been going on in the church in Ephesus, so v. 8 is the culmination of Paul’s concerns from chap 1.
 - b. What Paul is addressing in 2:8 is men who were praying during all-church gatherings in Ephesus in an improper manner. They were praying with sinful anger in their hearts, they were praying with prejudice, they were praying in a state of unconfessed and unrepentant sin.
 - c. So, Paul instructs them in two ways in v. 8:
 - 1) Pray with purity before God...lift holy hands in prayer. It’s not the posture (although hands raised is the universal sign of surrender), it’s the purity of having been cleansed and renewed by the gift of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Pray with peace before others *“...Without [impulsive] wrath and dissension [speculations and arguments].”*
 - a) What we’re seeing in 1 Timothy, and we’ll see again in the weeks to come, is that there were all kinds of disputes and arguments that were going on in Ephesus.

² Adapted from Dr. David Platt’s teaching series on 1 Timothy (TS4 2011).

- b) There were false teachers, provoking disputes, anger, and quarreling within the church. So, Paul says, "Don't pretend to pray when you're in conflict with others."
- c) This is the same thing that Jesus said in Matthew 5: *"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. -- Matthew 5:23-24*
- d) ****Do you have any unresolved disputes, anger, unforgiveness, distrust, or bitterness? For KHC to move forward as a healthy and vital church, we need to be honest about this. Hebrews 12:15 tells us that a "root of bitterness" can spring up, cause trouble, and defile many.**

2. Paul is addressing **DISTRACTIVE Women in the Church (2:9-15)**

a. Three sub-points:

- 1) **Adorn yourself with modest dress**
- 2) **Adore God through a Christlike behavior**
- 3) **Apply yourself to living out your calling with grace and sensitivity**

b. Adorn yourself with modest dress. *"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, ¹⁰ but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness." --1 Timothy 2:9-10*

- 1) Some women were focusing on extravagant external appearance during all-church worship rather than focusing on godliness and reverence for God. (That's the biblical instruction that transcends culture – not the braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothes.)
- 2) So, instead of attending all-church worship services to glorify God, many women in Ephesus were apparently

attending gatherings with the intent of drawing attention to themselves and either their sensuality or economic status – or both.

- 3) In the Caruso household when our children were growing up, we came to describe young women who dressed provocatively as being, “lonely in their heart...”

c. Adore God through a Christlike behavior.

- 1) *“...But rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.”* --1 Timothy 2:10
- 2) Matthew says the same thing, right? *“Let your light so shine before [people] that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”* --Matthew 5:16

d. Apply yourself to living out your calling with grace and sensitivity.

- 1) With vs. 11-15 Paul moves to the issue of leadership, which is a topic that he engages from here to the end of chap. 3. Verses 11-15 also address gender roles in the church as Paul prepares to instruct Timothy and the church on the moral and personal qualities of elders and deacons in chapter 3.
- 2) *“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. ¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. ¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”* -- 1 Timothy 2:11-15
- 3) Here’s the question we must ask of the text – Is Paul’s response for this church and this time only? The answer is both “yes” and “no”:
 - a) The “yes,” answer is that there are indeed some women who have come under some unsound teaching and bad doctrine that certainly seem to be usurping authority in the church. So, yes, Paul is addressing that specifically.

men and women are permitted to preach, teach, and lead under the “umbrella” of the church’s doctrinal stance set by the Elders.

- ii. Strict-Complementarian View: Men and women are different in role and related authority in marriage, the home, and in the church. The roles of Pastor and Elder (which includes preaching) are reserved for men who serve as humble godly spiritual leaders.
 - iii. Hyper-Complementarian View: Carrying the Complementarian View beyond marriage, the home, and the church into society – believing that women should never have authority over men -- even in vocational endeavors.
- f) So, you might ask, where does KHC land in these three views? The Elders will determine our final stance with input from the permanent Pastor when he arrives (and from the congregation). In my conversations with the Elders, Staff, and some key leaders I would say we currently land somewhere between Soft- and Strict-Complementarianism (I believe that we can safely eliminate the Hyper-Complementarian View as an option for KHC).
- g) Here is a quote by the late and highly regarded pastor, theologian, and missiologist John Stott: “The context is one of justification by grace alone through faith alone. It affirms that all who by faith are in Christ are equally accepted; equally God’s children, without any distinction, discrimination, or favoritism according to race, sex, or class. So whatever may need to be said later about [gender] roles, there can be no question of one sex being superior or inferior to the other...[Gender] equality, then, established by

creation but perverted by the fall, was recovered by the redemption in Christ.”³

- h) What Stott is saying is that there is a **distinction between relationship and order**. Men and women both fully represent the image of God (*imago Dei*) and are fully equal partners before God and have distinct differences and roles.
- 6) Let’s take these thoughts back into our passage and finish up... *“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. ¹³ For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. ¹⁴ And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”* -- 1 Timothy 2:11-15
- 7) Let’s remember that Paul, in this historical context, is addressing women who were out of order and usurping authority due to the heretical teaching that was happening in the church.
- a) Notice that Paul takes it back to the creation order – again, there is a distinction between equality and order.
- b) Paul is (certainly) NOT saying that women are more easily deceived than men – he is saying that the SHALOM of God was disrupted through the sin of BOTH Eve and Adam. While Eve was deceived (pride was her sin), Adam was sinfully passive. (A contemporary paraphrase might be that he “wimped out.”)
- c) This passage doesn’t determine my own commitment to complementarianism but it does affirm it. I see Paul seeking to clarify the distinct roles of men and

³ John Stott. *Issues Facing Christians Today*, Zondervan; 4th Rev & Updated ed. 2006: 332.
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women before he launches in to teaching about eldership in chapter 3.

- 8) That brings us to v. 15: *But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.*"
- a) I was listening to David Platt, President of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, speak on this passage and he told the congregation he could explain this verse in three simple words: "Only God knows." (2 Pet 3:16: Peter says that Paul's "*letters contain some things that are hard to understand.*"
 - b) Something that commentators have noticed about Paul's letter to Timothy is his frequent insertion of what appear to be portions of creeds, or prayers, or hymns that the Ephesian church was apparently familiar with.
 - c) This verse may be related to one of those.
 - d) Here is the best answer that I have found: 1 Timothy 2:15 talking about salvation through the offspring of Eve.
 - i. The idea here is there is a deliberate reference to how, even though the woman ate the fruit first and sin entered the world through her, the Savior also entered the world through the woman.
 - ii. This is the promise in Genesis 3:15: "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*" --Genesis 3:15
 - iii. This verse is referred to as the *Proto-Evangelium*, which is Latin for "first gospel."
 - iv. It is God immediately initiating a rescue plan for humanity by declaring that one would

come through the offspring of Eve who would trample the devil.

- v. So, through the line of the woman the Savior would be born.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. An aspect of SHALOM, that was established at creation, was an ideal order in which men and women are fully equal, interdependent, and meaningfully distinct. Then SHALOM was disrupted.
- B. Christian theology has recognized gender distinctions to be important and beautiful, if not somewhat mysterious. I believe to remove, denigrate, or make gender distinctions interchangeable is to lose an important aspect of our humanity.
- C. As we close, one helpful way to understand this relationship is through the metaphor of a dance that is inherent in our sexuality. For the dance to be enjoyed, each partner must assume his or her active, engaged role.
- D. Gender distinctions are intended to be complementary versions of God's image so that humanity might live in full communion with God in worship, to nurture relationships through family and communities, and to jointly exercise humble service in and to the world by unlocking all of its creative potentialities.

P.A.S.S. Questions For KHC Community Group Leaders

Sermon Dates: Feb 11-12, 2017

Sermon Title: Affirming the Witness of the Gospel

Sermon Passage: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

P - Participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. What is your basic perspective of male and female roles? Do you see males and females as distinctive or as basically the same? (Make sure you honor varying opinions!)

A - Application (makes it personal)

2. Is this text talking about apparel or something else? If something else, what is Paul talking about?
3. How are good deeds related to saving faith?
4. Why is Christian dress an appropriate item for discussion in our modern world?

S - Scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

5. What is Paul's MOST basic premise in these verses?

S – Sharing (aim for a time of honest reflection, authenticity, and transparency in a safe atmosphere modeled by you). [Choose one of the following as a final dialogue question.]

6. Considering Paul's words, who bears the responsibility of leading, training, and teaching within the local church?