

July 23, 2023

The View

"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." – John 12:21

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate when is passed.

We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: "Jesus at work in the Gospels."

Young Adult Class (room 12): "Jesus: making the best use of the time." Ephesians 5:15-17

Room 15/16: "Building a Great Marriage"

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey: "Protecting Our Children from Evildoers"

Matthew 18:1-6

Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

"Praying the Psalms" (Auditorium)

HS/College Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home

Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson (david.r.sanderson@intel.com)

or Seth Reagan (sethreagan@gmail.com)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes: 5th grade and lower

6th grade and up, auditorium: Praising God in Song

Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

Gender Issues

...no, not *that* gender issue.

There has been a seismic shift in how some churches view the role of women in public assemblies in the last few years. Women teachers in mixed audiences are common in many denominational churches but it's also taking place in churches of Christ. The issue itself is not new. It was creeping into the post "progressive" churches in the 1980's. What's new is the rising number of churches that have given in (or given up) on this point at some level.

The change can be directly traced to a decline in respecting biblical authority. To address this issue, we'll examine one text in the New Testament. Some of what follows is distilled from an article I wrote for *Guardian of Truth* (now *Truth Magazine*) several years ago:

I Timothy 2:9-15 is the pivotal passage in the New Testament on the woman's role in the church. Nearly every interpreter agrees that this text restricts the woman's role in some way.

Unless there is a compelling reason why this passage should not be applied by churches in the 21st century, then every other passage on the role of women must be reconciled to this one.

Before turning to an examination of the text, particularly verses 11-12, I want to suggest first that, regardless of our conclusions about this text, any real solution to the turmoil over this issue will turn on the willingness of women to accept their God-given role in the church. Those women who clamor for "place" violate not only the spirit of several passages that speak specifically to the demeanor of women, but also many others that forbid every disciple, whether male or female, from striving for "place" and seeking "the best seats" in the kingdom.

So, "what kind of woman pleases God?" The teaching in passages like I Peter 3:1-6 and I Timothy 2:9-10 could not be more clear: women glorify God by cultivating a "gentle and quiet spirit" (I Peter 3:4) and "by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness" (I Timothy 2:10), not in the public arena, as some men are commanded to do. If a woman insists that these stipulations belittle her then she has a problem with the apostle Paul, not with us.

So, what does I Timothy 2:11-12 say to honest hearts about the role of women? The use of the plural forms in I Timothy 2:1 (entreaties, prayers, petitions) and 2:8 (men) suggests that Paul is concerned particularly with the public assemblies in this passage, though not necessarily "at the building." The instructions here would apply to any mixed gathering of God's people (compare the language

in I Cor. 11:17, 20, 33-34 — "when you meet," or "come together" and 14:26 — "when you assemble").

Paul tells Timothy that he wants the men to pray in these gatherings, lifting up "holy hands" (2:8). Verse 9 (lit., "likewise women") connects Paul's next statement with the preceding instructions. Men are to conduct themselves in a certain way when they pray ("without wrath and dissension"); likewise, women are to conduct themselves in a certain way. A woman is to fill her role in the church in a different way than a man. Men are charged to take the public part (not all men are comfortable with this, but that's not Paul's point). Women, too, are to do those things that are "appropriate" (v. 10, NIV) for a woman who professes godliness (that is, one who is seeking to glorify God in her life).

So, what is "appropriate"? It's clear that verses 11-12 restrict the public role of women in some way. What is Paul restricting? Look at the text: "*Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*" Note that there is no restriction in the passage to Sunday morning "worship services." Whatever Paul is forbidding applies to all instances of "gatherings," including a Bible class in a home.

The Greek words Paul uses here are significant. The word "quietly" (NASB) is from *hesukia*, translated "in quiet fashion" in II Thessalonians 3:12. Paul is commanding a certain demeanor from women, an attitude of heart that produces quiet subjection, a far cry from clamoring for a public role. "Subjection" is from the Greek word *hupotasso* and means the voluntary decision to obey another.

In v. 12, Paul amplifies his statement in v. 11. He says that he does not permit a woman "to teach or exercise authority over a man." Since women are commanded to teach on occasion (e.g., Titus 3:3-5), we know Paul is not ruling out all teaching for women. The key phrase is "over a man." A woman cannot teach nor hold a position of authority in the local church that would place her in a superior position to a Christian man. This is the only instance in the New Testament of the Greek word *authenteo*, rendered "exercise authority" (NASB).

Radical feminist protests notwithstanding, the meaning of the word is settled: it means to "assert the self" or to "dominate." Such dominance is most obvious where a woman takes a formal teaching role in the church. But "teaching over a man" can also take place from the pew, or at a kitchen table, or whenever a woman attempts to "assert herself" and dominate a man in a Bible discussion.

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In summary, Paul, commends a quiet attitude on the part of women, commands subjection of them to their male counterparts and condemns any teaching or exercise of authority by them that would be “over a man.”

This message is so clear that attempts to dull the application of it takes some real ingenuity. Of course, some argue that “Paul was a chauvinist,” or that the New Testament epistles are not authoritative but just “good advice.” But those arguments deny the veracity of the entire Bible. Some claim that Paul was dealing with a cultural problem in Ephesus and thus the application of the prohibition is limited to Paul’s time. But there is no evidence of that in the text.

Feminist Catherine Clark Kroeger argues that Paul is saying, “I do not permit a woman to teach *error*,” shifting the emphasis from woman to “error.” She argues that the particular error Paul had in mind was probably Gnosticism but there is no evidence that Gnosticism was a major issue before the second century A.D. In fact, Paul says nothing at all about the *content* of teaching in this text. It would have been easy enough for him to use the word “error” if that is what he wanted to say. But that begs the question — why would Paul single out women and warn *them* not to “teach error”?

On “exercise authority” (*authenteo*) Kroeger concludes that it represents “a tenet propounded by the heretical teachers.” But earlier in her article, she concludes that *authenteo* could mean “to proclaim oneself the author or originator of something.” While that definition is a stretch, she still recognized that *authenteo* is a verb but later, she makes *authenteo* a noun, a “tenet,” apparently because that

serves her purpose. Instead of sound exegesis she is forcing Scripture to accommodate her particular point of view.

Some argue that a local church eldership, or a Bible class teacher, can, in effect, nullify Paul’s limitation by “delegating” authority to a woman. But they do not have that authority to give. Again, the word *authenteo* means “to have authority over, domineer,” (verb) not “authority” (*exousia*, noun). The issue is not that a woman is taking away a male teacher’s authority, but that she is stepping out of her God-given role in seeking to teach over a man. God has not given elders or anyone else the authority to set aside God’s instructions in any matter on which He has spoken, including this one.

I’ll conclude by stressing that our interpretation of this text is not informed at all by a desire to “keep women in their place,” whatever that means. Nor do we wish to resurrect extreme views from the past. For example, Aquinas said that woman is “defective and misbegotten” and Tertullian claimed that women are the “devil’s gateway.” But there is nothing in Scripture that warrants such dismal views of women. On the contrary, women have often played a major (though non-public) role in the growth of church. Phoebe, Priscilla, Lydia and many others helped spread the gospel in a quiet, God-glorifying way, “by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness” (I Timothy 2:10).

Yes, women have a different role than men, but there are no second-class citizens in the kingdom of God and Paul holds no brief for men who regard women as such. People who view women that way can expect no more help from Paul than the most wide-eyed liberal feminist who is demanding she be allowed to lead the church.

Movies: The Sound of Freedom

I rarely, if ever, mention a movie in a sermon. If my memory is correct, I think I’ve only even mentioned three in my 29-plus years here at Folsom: “Shadowlands” and “The Most Reluctant Convert,” both about C.S. Lewis and a reference to “Monsters Inc.” Our grandkids loved that movie and watched it multiple times when they were little and it got in my head.

We don’t go to theaters much anymore and I’m not saying that to make a point; we just don’t, but I know that many of our members go now and then. It’s tricky because most movies these days have something less, often *much* less, than wholesome” in them. Jesus does not approve watching something that pollutes our mind simply for the purpose of being entertained. And you can easily find out about the content of movies before you go. There is IMDb.com which has a parent’s section for many movies, past and present and there is Focus on the Family’s pluggedin.com. The latter has an in-depth parent’s guide to most popular movies. For the new movie “Barbie,” for example, under “Crude or Profane Language,” it says, “God’s name is misused seven times and Christ’s name is abused once.”

Having said all that, many of us ventured into the theater in the past week or so to watch “The Sound of Freedom.” I wasn’t sure what it was about when it first came out, but later learned it was a true story about the effort to save some children from sex trafficking. It’s a jarringly emotional movie that effectively shines the light into the darkness of the incredibly evil empire of child sex trafficking. That there is even a market, let alone a massive market, for this terrible crime is mind-blowing. If you are inclined to disagree that this world is a perverse, crooked place, here is proof.

The movie’s theme motivated or, better, *reminded* me of the importance of making sure we — I mean all of us in concert with parents — do everything in our power to protect our precious children from predators. They are engaging in something so horrific that the words of Jesus, found in Matthew 18:6, apply to them:

“...whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Stay tuned... (see page 4 for some alarming child sex trafficking statistics).