

3. A narrow-minded truth

May 6, 2007

One of the biggest complains against Christianity from non-believers, especially liberals, is that Christianity insists exclusiveness. They say that it claims to be the only faith that leads to eternal life and all the other religions will take people to hell. Well, we are guilty as charged. Among many aspects of the exclusiveness of Christianity, there are a couple of things are mentioned in the chapter 2 of the Book of 1 Timothy that causes more controversy than others.

The first one is the deity of Jesus Christ and His sole way to eternal life. The second one is that it sounds like Christianity is against women's place in home and society.

This morning we are going to find out from the truth, the Word of God about these things.

A. PRAY FOR ALL MEN AND KINGS

1 Timothy 2:1-4 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Yesterday morning we had a delightful time at our monthly Men's Prayer Breakfast at my home. There were 14 guys who poured out their hearts to the Lord. We prayed for our country, our President Bush, the Senators and Congressmen and other leaders around the country. We prayed for the marriages for the believers of Jesus Christ and the role of husband and father.

The Bible tells us that we need to devote ourselves to prayer for any and every situation we face. That means we pray to the Lord all times for all the believers as apostle Paul told us. Prayer is an indispensable weapon in our spiritual battle against Satan and his forces.

When we pray we need to draw near to the Lord with confidence because Jesus intercedes for us. We need to come to Him as the first recourse, not our last, so He can help us with His abundant mercy and grace.

The reason why we don't have is because we don't ask in prayers. The other reason is that we ask for it with selfish motives.

We are told not to be anxious for anything but pray to the Lord and let Him guard us with His peace that passes all men's understanding.

Last Thursday, May 3rd was the National Day of Prayer. At our Midweek service we, too, joined millions of believers across America to pray for this country and the leaders.

Our country leaders need our prayers and supports even though we may not agree with them. During the Clinton Administration, it was very hard for me to pray for the President and her cheating husband, because everything they tried to do and did were against the Word of God.

We also need to pray for the Democrats controlled Senate and Congress that stand against our belief. We need to pray for their salvation that they may become believers of Jesus Christ.

God has given those in authority the ability to influence society. And our prayers can have an influence on them. Pray that their decisions honor God and allow the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be spread freely and that they do the will of God.

What is God's will? It is God's will that "all men" come to the knowledge of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This does not mean all people without exception, because certainly billions rejected and will reject the invitation of Jesus Christ. But it means all people without distinction – Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, religious and pagan – all have equal opportunity to come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

We understand that it is about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. In simple terms, God knew which person was going to receive Jesus Christ into his or her heart and He had confirmed it before the creation of the universe.

B. ONE GOD AND ONE MEDIATOR, JESUS CHRIST

1 Timothy 2:5-7 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying--a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

In the modern world most people think that any road leads to God, if followed sincerely or with a good heart. Many people think that God would be unfair or narrow minded to have only one way to salvation. The Bible states against these ideas.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

There is need for only one Mediator and that Mediator is Jesus Christ. No other person can qualify. Jesus Christ is both God and man. So only He can be the "Mediator" between God and man. In His sinless life and substitutionary death, He met the just demands of God's holy law. He was the "ransom for all." The word 'ransom' means "a price paid to free a slave." His death was "on behalf of all."

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Verse 5 and 6 are the ones to remember to show anyone who thinks that Jesus Christ is not God.

How does this Good News get out to a sinful world? God calls and ordains messengers who take the Gospel to lost sinners. Paul was such a messenger. He was a preacher, which means the herald of the King. He was an apostle which means one sent with a special commission and he was a teacher.

C. THE ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

1 Timothy 2:8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

It was customary for Jewish men to pray with their arms extended and their hands open to heaven. Our traditional posture of bowing the head, folding the hands, and closing the eyes is nowhere found or commanded in Scripture. The important thing is not the posture of the body but the posture of the heart.

I don't think that "without wrath" is a good translation. Rather, it should have been translated as "without anger". A person who is constantly having trouble with other believers, who is a troublemaker rather than a peacemaker, cannot pray and get answers from God.

How can we expect God to answer our prayers when we ourselves don't believe that God is going to do according to His will? We can not.

James 1:6-8 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

D. THE ROLE OF GODLY WOMEN

1 Timothy 2:9-15 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Whenever a pastor dips his hands into the sticky topic of women's roles in the church, he invariably stirs up a hornet's nest of controversy. This is not the first time I get into the controversial area, nor will be the last time either.

Ladies, while you are standing in front of your closetful of clothes and thinking, "There is nothing to wear," please ask yourself: "Would what am I about to wear stumble my brothers in the Lord or make unbelieving males to think that I am inviting their lustful eyes on me?"

I know you may say, "Some guys would lust after a tree trunk if you put a skirt around it." Yes, that is true. But you don't need to provoke your brothers in the Lord to lust after you.

I am not suggesting that you should wear a gunny sack to be a godly woman. You ladies know how to be beautiful without showing too much skin. Actually, when a woman tries to be provocative in that way, it cheapens her image. How you dress reflects your heart.

Then some ladies might think, "If I look like an unmade bed, they would think that I am godly." Well, the late great Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee said this in his Texas drawl, "If a barn needs a paint job, paint the barn." Be modest.

V11-12 is a rather unfortunate translation has led some to believe that it is forbidden for women to even speak in church meetings. The idea is 'without contention' instead of 'total silence'.

In these ancient first century cultures, men and women sat in separate sections. Some wives interrupted the church service by shouting questions and comments to their husbands during the service. Since it was permitted for men in public assemblies to ask questions, some wives circumvented to get their answers.

Women's submission is recognizing God's order in the home and the church. When a Christian wife joyfully submits to the Lord and to her own husband, it should bring out the best in her. For this to happen, the husband must love his wife and use God's order as a tool to build with, not a weapon to fight with.

The word for 'submission' here literally means, "To be under in rank." It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. It certainly does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or that women are inferior to men.

In June of 1963, the Supreme Court upheld the argument of the atheist Madelyn O'Hare and pronounced that God would be evicted from public society across the entire spectrum of the American governmental system. From that day to this, not only has prayer been outlawed, God's very name has been forbidden to be mentioned in any federal, state, county, city or municipal context. Since America turned her back on God, He said to her, "You are on your own."

Since then we lost a war against a little country called Viet Nam which we could have made it a parking lot any day or night. We lost 50,000 men and women in that place. That is not the only thing happened:

- Citizens no longer have the same respect for government's authority.
- Students no longer have the same respect for teacher's authority.
- Wives no longer have the same respect for husband's authority.
- Children no longer have the same respect for parental authority.
- Employees no longer have the same respect for their employer's authority.
- People no longer have the same respect for the police's authority.
- Christians no longer have the same respect for church authority.

When it comes to morality, the only thing that matters is what one wants to do just like what happened during the time of the Book of Judges: *"everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*

I am sure y'all have noticed that many of TV commercials depict husbands as fumbling idiots and wives as the smart ones who take control of the situations. That is the very concept the devil puts in our hearts to go against God's authority.

Our failure to exercise and submit to Biblical authority isn't just wrong and sad. It is a sin against the very nature of God.

In v12, apostle Paul makes it very clear to us that women are not to have the role of teaching authority of doctrine and Scriptural interpretation in the church over men. However, women are permitted to teach in certain areas. Older women should teach the younger women as it is in Titus chapter 2.

Some of you might say, "This is so outdated. Hello, this is the twenty-first century and you are politically incorrect." I would say, "Hello, this is the Word of God and you are biblically incorrect." Let all men be liars, but the Word of God is true.

The first command God gave to the human race is found in Genesis 2:16-17:

Genesis 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

This command was not given to woman at all. At the time that command was given, Eve was not yet created from Adam. In other words, Adam received his command and his authority from God, and Eve received her command and authority from Adam.

Both Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and Eve clearly sinned first. Yet, the Bible never blames Eve for the fall of the human race, but always blames Adam. Adam had an authority Eve did not have. He also had a responsibility Eve did not have. Adam failed in his responsibility in a far more significant way than Eve did.

V15 is considered as one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. On the surface, it could be taken to mean that if a woman continues in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control, that God will bless her with survival in childbirth – which was no small promise in the ancient world. Or are women saved eternally by giving birth to children – but only if they continue with godly virtues? What about women who can't have children? Are they denied salvation?

A better way to approach this passage is based on the grammar in the original Greek language. In the original, it says, "She will be saved in the childbirth." This means that even though women were deceived, and fell into transgression starting with Eve, women can be saved by the Messiah – whom a woman brought into the world.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to make a habit of praying everyday.

If we don't plan to pray, chances are we won't. Of course, prayer can erupt spontaneously. But regular times of undisturbed prayer will keep us deliberately focused on our Father.

2) The important thing is not the posture of the body but the posture of the heart.

3) Ladies, be modest in your apparel.

4) Wives, your submission to your husband is directly related to the submission to the Lord.