

Disciples of Christ, Men and Women

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- [0 : 00] So first, let's turn to Acts chapter 9, verses 32 to 43. And let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before your Word again.
- And we want to receive your Word as it really is. Not the words of men, but the Word of God.
- Amen. Grant us the humility and faith that is necessary. To take you at your Word.
- To be challenged, comforted, transformed by it. For the glory of your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Acts chapter 9, verses 32 to 43.
- Now, as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.
- [1 : 11] There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you.
- Rise and make your bed. And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord. Now, there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which translated means Dorcas.
- She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days, she became ill and died. And when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, Please come to us without delay.
- So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.
- But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.
- [2 : 28] And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.
- And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner. The main point of this passage is that the Lord Jesus Christ continues to work powerfully through his chosen witnesses to turn many people toward himself.
- The summary verse before this was chapter 9, verse 31. It said that the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
- So our passage continues to tell us how the church was being built up and was multiplying. It was in verse 33, it says that while ministering in Lydda, Peter found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, was paralyzed.
- So he's been a paralytic for eight years, and he's a man and not a child. So that means he wasn't paralyzed his entire life. So something happened to him during his life, something tragic, perhaps a freak accident or a stroke.

[3 : 42] And whatever the cause, Aeneas was bedridden now for eight long years. And Peter says to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you.

Rise and make your bed. And the paralytic in faith obeys this command immediately rising from his bed, which he had not been able to get up off of for eight years.

And then Luke tells us another, even more remarkable story in verses 36 to 42. Recently, a woman named Tabitha had passed away. Her Greek name was Dorcas, which means gazelle.

She had died in Joppa. She was a Christian, which is why she's called a disciple. And since Lydda, where Peter was staying, was near Joppa, they rushed some messengers to Peter to have him come to pay a visit.

And they urged him to come without delay, hoping, presumably, that Peter will be able to do something for Dorcas. Peter arrives on the scene, kneels and prays to God and seeks his healing power.

[4 : 46] And then he commands the dead body, Tabitha, arise. And because Peter speaks with the authorization of the risen Lord, even the corpse has no choice but to obey.

And Tabitha opens her eyes and sits up. What's notable about these two instances of healing and resurrection is that they parallel the healing miracles of Jesus' ministry.

Peter's healing of Aeneas of his paralysis parallels Jesus' healing of the paralytic in Luke chapter 5, verses 17 to 26. And Peter's raising of Tabitha parallels Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter in Luke 8, 49 to 56.

Peter commanded Aeneas in verse 34, Rise and make your bed, similar to how Jesus commanded the paralytic in Luke chapter 5, verse 24. Rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

Peter asked everyone to leave the upper room that Tabitha was lying in, as Jesus did in Luke 8, 51. When he allowed no one to enter with him to raise the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

[6 : 03] And Peter commands, Tabitha, arise. Just as Jesus said in Luke 8, 54. Child, arise. And Peter takes her by the hand, just as Jesus, in Luke 8, 41, gives her his hand and raises her up.

So the point that Luke is trying to make with these parallels is that it is Jesus who, by his Holy Spirit, continues to do signs and wonders through his apostles.

Note the way Peter speaks to Aeneas in verse 34. Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Rise and make your bed. Peter is fully aware that he has no power within himself to heal a paralytic or to raise the dead.

It's Jesus Christ himself who is doing these very things. Look also at the outcome of these miracles. After Aeneas is healing, the result is not Peter becoming more famous and gaining more fans and followers, but repentance and faith.

It says in verse 35, And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned toward whom? Not to Peter, but to the Lord. They turned to the Lord, meaning they repented of their sinful ways and reoriented their lives around the way of Jesus, trusting in him and following his teachings.

[7 : 29] The miraculous signs do not bring attention to themselves, but point to the person and work of Jesus Christ. And the witnesses of Jesus, including Peter, do not turn people's attention toward themselves, but toward Jesus.

We see the same pattern after Tabitha is raised from the dead in verse 42. He says, And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. The effect of these signs and wonders is to turn people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Have you turned toward Jesus? That means to reorient your life, your entire life, around him. That means to repent of your sins.

Consider for a moment the direction of your life. Is it on the way of Christ? Or are you doing your own thing? Going about your own way?

No one is saved by proximity. Having some Christian friends will not save you. Having attended church worship on occasion will not save you.

[8 : 45] Getting involved with Christian charitable organizations will not save you. Have you personally turned toward Jesus in your own life?

Have you trusted in Jesus? Have you believed in Jesus? That means to entrust your entire life to him. To put your faith in him and nothing else for your salvation.

Paralyzed, Aeneas, on the one hand, and dead, Tabitha on the other, are both highly apt pictures of our spiritual condition apart from Jesus.

Aeneas could never get off his bed on his own. Never. Tabitha could not lift a finger to do anything for herself.

Likewise, we can do absolutely nothing to save ourselves, and that's the consistent testimony of Scriptures Ephesians 2, verse 4 says, But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Jesus.

[10 : 07] By grace you have been saved. God does not let us bring any of our own merit of righteousness to him because he has determined to save us by his grace alone for his glory alone.

None of us has sufficient merit or spiritual, moral standing to earn our salvation. No one. No one in this room.

No one in this entire world. In fact, we all have a mountain of demerit. We have a debt we could never hope to repay because of our sins.

But Jesus died for us on the cross and in our place to pay our debt, and he was raised from the dead so that we might live forever.

So that we might have salvation. That's the good news of Jesus Christ that this healing and raising of Tabitha and Ineos is a picture of. Now let me turn to my second topical sermon that I told you guys about on women in ministry.

[11 : 15] We are a complementarian church which believes that men and women have complementary, interdependent roles as opposed to interchangeable roles, both in the home and in the church.

More explicitly, we believe that in marriage, God calls husbands to headship and wives to helpship in accordance with Genesis 2, 18-25 and Ephesians 5, 22-33.

Similarly, we believe that in the church, God calls only men to teach and exercise authority over the church in accordance with 1 Timothy 2, 8-15, which means at minimum that only men may be elders and pastors, while women are called to utilize their various gifts in other contexts of the church body.

And it's that latter question that I want to address today. What can women do in the church? What does women in ministry look like?

This question was raised by several members of our church at our members' meeting in 2020 and so when we were first scheduling out our series in the book of Acts, we had planned to address this as a topical sermon at this point of the book.

[12 : 33] And we see the ministry of many men throughout the book of Acts, but the essential and indispensable ministry of women often is missed.

And so we're going to survey the book of Acts to look at women in the early church and their involvement in ministry and bring in other scripture passages as well to illuminate this subject. And though the sermon is primarily addressed toward our sisters, men will find plenty to glean from God's word because much of this applies to you as well.

So let's begin with the passage that we already looked at today, Acts 9, 36-43. First, it says in verse 36, Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which translated means Dorcas.

Before we talk about the ministries of women, we need to first address their identity as disciples of Jesus Christ. Women in the church are disciples of Jesus Christ, meaning they are discipled by Jesus Christ and commissioned to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

They are taught by Jesus to follow Him in His way. At the time of the early church, Jewish rabbis did not accept women disciples. For example, Rabbi Eliezer from the first century expressed the popular cultural sentiment of the day when he said this, Rather, should the words of the Torah or the law of God be burned than entrusted to a woman?

[14 : 03] Whoever teaches his daughter the Torah is like one who teaches her lasciviousness. But in stark contrast, Jesus calls every woman to be His disciple.

In Luke 8, 1-3, we see that outside of the twelve apostles, Jesus had a larger group of disciples that followed Him around, a group that included women like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, among others.

And Jesus' discipling of women is beautifully illustrated in Luke 10, verse 39, where when Jesus enters the home of Martha, it says she had a sister named Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching.

To sit at the Lord's feet is the technical way of describing the posture and relationship of a disciple to his or her teacher. Sitting at the feet of a Jewish rabbi was an exclusive prerogative reserved for His disciples.

And that's where we find Mary. Acts 22, verse 3, says that Paul was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. Gamaliel would not have let Mary sit at his feet as one of his disciples, but Jesus does.

[15 : 24] He calls every single one of you, man and woman, to be His disciple, and He commissions you then to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Mary's sister Martha who was slaving away in the kitchen and was frustrated and angry with her sister Mary for sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to Him and not helping her in the kitchen.

So she storms into the living room and then confronts Jesus and says, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.

But Jesus is unyielding. He says, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her.

Mary had chosen to be with Jesus. She had chosen to listen to Jesus at His feet. She had chosen to be His disciple. In effect, Jesus is saying, Martha, I didn't come into your house so I could eat the delicious meal that you work hard to prepare.

I came to your house that you might be with me. That you might listen to me. The word portion is a metaphor for portions of food.

[16 : 50] Mary chose to sit at the Lord's feet to listen to His teaching, literally to listen to His word. Martha was busy doling out food, but Mary had chosen the better portion of God's word.

She had chosen the better dish, the bread of God rather than the bread of man. Many things are expected of women these days. Many things demand your time, energy, and attention.

But the late Anne Ortlund, wife of Pastor Ray Ortlund Sr., counsels women this way in her book, *Disciplines of the Beautiful Woman*. Quote, Don't think of yourself first as a wife or a single person or a mother or a worker in some field.

You will someday stand before God all by yourself. of course, God wants you to be a faithful wife and a mother and a worker and a student, but never to the neglect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Are you regularly sitting at His feet? Are you listening to His Word? Or are you too busy to listen to anything He is saying to you?

[18 : 22] Rise up, women of God who cherish the Word of God and prioritize the worship of God. So first, God calls women to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Second, God calls women to be ministers of mercy. Verse 36 tells us that Tabitha was full of good works and acts of charity. Verse 39 gives us an example of the good works that Tabitha did.

It says, All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. Of course, every Christian man or woman are called to abound in good works, but good works are also specifically commanded for Christian women as their proper spiritual adornment in 1 Timothy 2 verses 9-10.

It says, Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works.

Same phrase. The proper attire for Christian women is not expensive articles and elaborate adornments that bring attention to themselves, but rather good works that serve others.

[20 : 02] Christian women should beautify themselves not with things that bring attention to themselves, but by paying attention to and serving others.

in the same letter in 1 Timothy 5, Paul outlines qualifications for widows who should be enrolled to receive financial support from the local church.

He says that, among other things, these widows should have, quote, a reputation for good works. And he further specifies these good works by saying, if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

The focus of good works here seems, in this passage, seems to be mercy ministries. Rearing dependent children, showing hospitality to travelers, washing the feet of the saints, caring for the afflicted.

Similarly, the Greek word that is translated charity comes from the word that means mercy. and most often refers to giving to the poor. It's the same word that was used in Acts chapter 3, verses 2 to 3, to describe the lame man asking for alms from passerbys.

[21 : 24] So once again, in modern terms, we might say that Tabitha excelled in mercy ministries. Her husband is not mentioned. We might, she was surrounded by widows, so we could infer that she was likely a widow herself.

But she was not disillusioned or aimless in the waning years of her life. She was full of good works. She had made tunics and other garments to clothe the poor widows around her.

She probably also cooked for them and nursed them in their sickness. Tabitha was a pillar of the early church in Lydda, in Joppa. And her ministry was invaluable and indispensable.

It's much like the diacomia ministry that we'll be talking about, we've talked about in the past. These widows had been so well loved by Tabitha that they couldn't let her go. They got Peter and God graciously raised her from the dead as a gift to this church.

There are Tabithas in our church. There will be more Tabithas in our church in the years to come.

[22 : 39] So rise up to serve, to do ministries of mercy, to wash the feet of the saints.

Third, women along with men are called to be prayer warriors.

Now turn with me to the beginning of the book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 14. It says there, all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer and together with the woman and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

In Acts, we see Christian women who are devoted to prayer, spending much of their lives praying. 19th century Pastor Oswald Chambers says this, quote, prayer does not fit us for the greater work.

Prayer is the greater work. When we pray to God, we are having conference with the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords himself.

[23 : 48] what greater work is there than that? His authority and power infinitely exceed ours. Does it not make sense for us to ask him to intervene and act instead of taking things into our own hands and trying to do everything ourselves?

I share this with one of the women's ministry sessions, but there was a great Christian revival in the Scottish Islands called the Hebrides in the middle of the 20th century and it began with two sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith, 82 and 84 years old respectively.

Peggy was completely blind, Christine was bent over with arthritis, but they were burdened due to the depressed spiritual state of their village church. They sensed the Lord speaking to them about revival from Isaiah 44 verse 3 and so they began to pray in their small cottage two to three nights per week from 10pm to 3am.

After several weeks of praying in this way, Peggy had a vision of her church being crowded with young people who at that point didn't want anything to do with the church. And she also had a vision of an unknown preacher ministering from the pulpit.

Peggy then sent for their minister, Reverend James Murray McKay and she told him that they sensed the Lord was going to send revival and that we must get the churches around in the area to spend some dedicated time in prayer.

[25 : 28] Pastor McKay respected this sister's spiritual judgment and he made the call to pray. And then later Peggy Smith also told her pastor James McKay that he was supposed to invite someone to preach during the revival.

But she didn't know who he was. She only saw her face in the vision. And so McKay made some contacts and found Duncan Campbell and asked him to come.

Campbell was at that time already involved in an evangelistic campaign on the island of Skye and conversions were taking place there. and so when he received this letter to come to the village of Barbas he said he couldn't come.

And McKay Pastor McKay relayed this to Sister Peggy and she responded Mr. McKay that is what man is saying but God has said something else and he will be here within a fortnight.

And due to a change of events lo and behold Duncan Campbell came within 10 days within a fortnight. and as he preached the gospel and the people continued to pray for revival the spirit of God descended in power upon the Scottish islands.

[26 : 40] People became aware of the palpable presence of God. They were captured by the reality of eternal things. People were lining up to attend church services. They were standing room only and many many people were being converted for the first time.

It all began with blind and arthritic 80 year old woman who had no physical vigor who had no societal position who had no intellectual clout but who had spiritual power because they had direct access to the king of kings by prayer.

So rise up women of God prayer warriors whose voices may not be heard in the quarters of power in this world but whose voices are heard and well known in the heavenly courts.

That is the more powerful voice. That is the most important place to be heard. I think I have a picture of her up there.

Peggy and Christine Smith. If you guys have that. Fourth, women in the church may also be called to be prophetesses of God.

[28 : 09] Prophets of God. Please turn with me to chapter 2 verses 14 to 18. Sorry for making you search all over scripture. This is good practice for you. We are in the same book.

You don't have to look far. Acts chapter 2 verses 14 to 18. There quoting Joel 2, Peter explains the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in verses 17 to 18.

He says, And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my spirit, and they shall prophesy.

In the Old Testament period, the Spirit of God came upon a select group of people, temporarily to help them fulfill specific charges that God had given them. But in the New Covenant Age, the Spirit of God and the power comes upon all those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Whether they be young or old, slave or free, male or female. This great privilege that in the Old Testament was reserved for kings, prophets, priests, judges, is now yours in Jesus Christ.

[29 : 32] And in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul gives specific instructions for how women should prophesy in the context of the church worship. So clearly he thinks that there are prophetesses in the church who ought to share the revelation that God gives them just as we have earlier Jan and Lauren share the prophecies that they received from God.

Acts chapter 21 verse 9 tells us that Philip the evangelist, my role model and aspiration in raising daughters, had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

God's father. Where are the women who will rise up full of the Holy Spirit, attentive and familiar with the voice of the Lord?

Fifth, women in the church may serve as patrons of the gospel. After Peter is rescued by God from imprisonment in Acts chapter 12 it says in verse 12 that he went to the house of Mary the mother of John whose other name was Mark where many were gathered together and were praying.

Here Mary was the host and patron of the local gathering of the church. We see a similar ministry of women in Acts chapter 16 verses 11 to 15.

[30 : 58] Please turn there with me. This is when Paul is preaching the gospel in the city of Philippi in Acts 16 verses 11 to 15. It says there verses 14 and 15 one who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira a seller of purple goods who was a worshiper of God.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul and after she was baptized and her household as well she urged us saying if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come to my house and stay and she prevailed upon us.

Lydia was likely widowed or divorced since her husband is not mentioned and she seems to be making business decisions independently of her husband and as seller of purple goods she was well-to-do and she used her house and her wealth to serve the church and from that point on the church in Philippi met in Lydia's house and her home became the base for Paul's subsequent missionary work.

We saw a woman playing similar helping and supporting roles in Jesus' ministry as well. Luke 8 1-3 it says that some woman who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities Mary called Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out and Joanna the wife of Chusa Herod's household manager and Susanna and many others traveled with Jesus and the twelve apostles and provided for them out of their means. End quote. This appears to have been a common practice back in the day. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9 verses 3-6 this is my defense to those who would examine me do we not have the right to eat and drink do we not have the right to take along a believing wife as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living in the context of that passage Paul is speaking of the apostles right a traveling missionary right to have his needs furnished by the saints so that he could refrain from working for a living if you keep that context in mind it doesn't actually make sense that all of a sudden he inserts the apostles right to marry and take along a believing wife the phrase believing wife is

I believe a mistranslation the Greek phrase is literally sister woman and it refers to women who are Christian sisters just as the phrase brother man a parallel phrase a mirroring phrase which is used 14 times throughout the book of Acts invariably refers to men who are Christian brothers and not to believing husbands the Wycliffe Bible translation gets this right and fourth century pastor Augustine also understood that verse this way so then Paul is talking about an apostle's right to be accompanied by well-to-do women who provide for them out of their means just as Jesus had earlier in his ministry earlier in their ministry it seems that in the early church women of means who did not have family obligations at home often travel alongside missionaries to help them to provide for them to support them to finance their trips to take care of their lodging and food and likely also to help them with visiting and ministering to women these women served in the background so didn't get the attention and recognition that the apostles received but didn't

[34 : 45] Jesus say in Matthew 20 whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many didn't Jesus say in Matthew 6 that those who receive recognition from man for their good works have already received their reward but that those who go unrewarded on earth will be rewarded richly by their heavenly father in heaven who sees what is done in secret so rise up women of God women who support and do many good deeds for the sake of the gospel in the background content that their heavenly father who sees what is done in secret will reward them rise up women of

God who store up treasures not on earth but in heaven as pastor jonathan lehman puts it european art galleries are filled with paintings of the great men of christendom but heaven's art galleries could look a little different sixth God calls women to be mothers of the church please turn with me now to acts chapter 16 verses 1 to 3 it says paul came also to derby and to lystra a disciple was there named timothy the son of a jewish woman who was a believer but his father was a greek he was well spoken of by the brothers at lystra and iconium and paul wanted timothy to accompany him and he took him and circumcised him because of the jews who were in those places where they all knew that his father was a greek timothy was paul's son in the faith he accompanied paul on many of his missionary journeys and became an indispensable and trusted minister of the gospel paul heaps high praises on timothy in philippians 2 19 to 20 saying i hope in the lord jesus to send timothy to you soon so that i too may be cheered by news of you for i have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare that's high praise from the apostle paul and who raised a faithful christian man like timothy one of the pillars of the early church we know that his father didn't bring him up that way because his father was a greek he was a gentile an unbeliever it was his mother a jewish woman who was a believer in his letter to timothy paul says in 2 timothy chapter 1 verse 5 i am reminded of your sincere faith a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother lois and your mother eunice and now i am sure dwells in you as well there's a legacy of faith that has been passed on to timothy through the woman in his family mothering is a form of discipling a most intensive and immersive form of it in 1 timothy 2 11 15 paul writes that a woman will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control meaning if she gives evidence of her faith in the lord jesus christ by her obedience to her god-given creational mandate she will be saved bible scholar stephen dempster argues that one of the major themes of the old testament is quote woman against the beast he says eve versus the serpent sarah and rebecca versus barrenness tamar versus judah jockabed and miriam versus the pharaoh Deborah and jael versus sisera ruth and naomi versus death hannah versus barrenness jehoshabba versus ataliah and in all these examples of struggle these women of faith are engaged in a battle to save the people of god the victory of esther over haman dramatically continues that theme throughout the old testament the seed of abraham the line of david from which the promised messiah would come is beset with threats on every side and is always seemingly one tenuous generation away from extinction and that struggle continues into the new testament after

jesus is born as mary battles herod who massacres the innocent male babies in his futile attempt to wipe out jesus from the planet but the promise of god prevails and jesus the promised one of genesis 3:15 the seed of the woman who will crush the satan's head the serpent's head comes survives redeems god's people by dying for them on the cross and being raised from the dead mothering is one of the most selfless things that any human being can do a woman sacrifices her own body dedicates her own life to carry bear nurse and rear someone else she gives herself for the sake of another where are the loises and eunuses of our generation rise up a woman of god and give rise to and pass on the gospel to the future generations there's a call here for unmarried women as well because god created marriage to be a picture of this relationship between christ and the church now that christ has come the spiritual family tree is not traced by biological descent from abraham but rather it is traced by the spiritual heritage of faith as it says in romans 9 it's not jews who are saved but christians who are born again of the spirit of god for that reason it's not childbearing that is ultimate but disciple making that is ultimate the creational and cultural mandate continues so there is still the work of procreation to do however now the work of new creation is ultimate so what jesus when jesus is told that his biological family is looking for him what does he say in mark chapter 3 verses 31 to 36 who are my mother and my brothers here are my mother and my brothers for whoever does the will of god he is my brother and sister and my mother and so paul in first timothy chapter 5 verses 1 to 2 commands timothy to treat an older man as a father younger men as brothers older women as mothers younger women as sisters this is why singleness which was viewed as abnormal and undesirable in the old testament is viewed as a special gift in the new testament because then you can have undivided devotion to the lord you can live as a bride of christ as solely a bride of christ as we will be in heaven this means every woman married or unmarried must do the work of spiritual mothering by making disciples of jesus christ and discipling by its very nature entails teaching this is my second point when we are called seventh point sorry when we are called to be teachers of the word god calls women it says in jesus because the great commission applies to us all matthew 28:19 to 20 go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit teaching them to observe all that i have commanded you to be a disciple is to be a learner and to be to disciple another person involves teaching that person all that jesus has commanded them because of

the creational order in which god creates adam before eve and because god intends the relationship between man and woman and man and wife in particular to be to reflect the relationship within the godhead where it says in first corinthians 11 3 the head of every man is christ and the head of a wife is her husband and the head of christ is god men are to be heads of their households to lead their households and this creational order is reflected in the church as well where god calls certain men to be elders to serve as leaders within the household of god this is why first timothy chapter 2 11 to 12 says 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 this is to preserve god's good design in creation which in turn reveals who god is his character but this does not mean that woman may never teach the prohibition is specifically about teaching or exercising authority over a man because of the creation order i mentioned earlier so then women may freely use their teaching gifts to teach other women as well as children titus chapter 2 in fact commands it when he says in verses 3 to 5 older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior not slanderers or a slave to much wine they are to teach what is good and so train the young woman to love their husbands and children to be self-controlled pure working at home kind and submissive to their own husbands that the word of god may not be reviled women ought to use their teaching gifts to train up and disciple other women moreover first timothy 2 12 doesn't mean that women may not teach in any sense of the word men in any context there is a general exhortation to both men and women given in colossians 3 16 that the word of christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom so then there is a general exhorting and teaching that we all ought to do men and women to one another when a woman makes an insightful comment about a passage of scripture in community group and people including men learn from that she's doing some teaching but that's not the kind of teaching in view in first timothy 2 verse 12 what paul is prohibiting is formal public teaching in the corporate gathering of the church because that undermines the creation order between man and a woman please turn with me to acts chapter 18 that's the final passage i'm going to turn your attention to chapter 18 we're introduced here to priscilla and aquila jews who had converted to christianity even before paul priscilla is sometimes referred to as prisca for short throughout the new testament and this husband and wife duo accompanied paul on his missionary journeys they were also traveling missionaries and they became indispensable fellow workers of paul in romans chapter 16 verses 3 to 4 paul says that these two risk their necks for his life and that for that reason not only he but all the churches of the gentiles give thanks to priscilla and aquila and acts 18 to 20 verses 24 to 28 tell us an interesting story about this couple it says now a jew named apollos a native of alexandria came to ephesus he was an eloquent man competent in the scriptures he had been instructed in the way of the lord and being fervent in spirit he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning jesus though he knew only the baptism of john he began to

speak boldly in the synagogue but when priscilla and aquila heard him they took him aside and explained to him the way of god more accurately this is a fascinating passage that we'll explain further when we actually get to it in the book of acts but for now it suffices to say that apollo had an accurate but still deficient understanding of jesus he said that he only knew the baptism of john which no one knows exactly what that means in this specific context but most likely it means that he wasn't aware of the spirit baptism that had come upon the jews at pentecost and upon the samaritans in the city of samaria in acts chapter 8 so when priscilla and aquila heard him they took him aside and explained to him the way of god more accurately here we see a woman priscilla in partnership with her husband aquila teaching a man and not just a man but a prominent teacher in the church but note well the way they do it they take him aside in order to teach him meaning they talk to him privately not publicly priscilla and aquila do not grandstand in the public gathering of the church to teach apollo and increase their standing in the church by correcting him no they do it discreetly privately in the informal context of the home rather than in the context of the gathered church so rise up woman woman of god who know rightly to handle the word of god who can teach others to proclaim it more accurately all of that to say there are rich and varied responsibilities to which christian women are called to and carrying out these responsibilities is a challenge even to the most gifted and prolific of women the women are commanded not to teach or exercise authority over men in the formal public context of the gathered church it is simply not true that women are therefore unfulfilled without doing those things that is an unbiblical assertion if you see god's law as a straitjacket intended to restrain you you're going to want to wear it as loosely as possible to sneak out of it as much as possible to push the boundaries as far as you possibly can but if you see god's law as a life jacket intended to save you you're going to want to fit snugly into that make sure that it's strapped on properly because you see it as a conduit of blessing we need to make sure that our perspective is aligned with god's and that we see god's word the way he sees it and not the way the world sees it and when the teaching of god's word like this is counter cultural and counter intuitive when the teaching of god's word offends our pride and offends the world's sensibilities the only way we can trust god is by taking a long hard look by faith at the cross of jesus christ at the cross we see the humility of the son of god who though equal with god just as women are equal with men but jesus

[51 : 53] did not demand the equal treatment that he was entitled to but was divested of his heavenly glory and took on human flesh at the cross we see the righteous son of god submitting to his father and being obedient unto death the death that he does not deserve dying on behalf of sinful man and woman people of this world could look at jesus who died in his prime at the age of 33 and lament what wasted potential what tragedy think of all that jesus could have done if he had kept his heavenly glory while he was here on earth think of all that he could have accomplished if he instead of dying on the cross continued to heal and to live and to preach for another 40 years but they don't understand that only the son of man can bear the sins of men and women they don't understand that only jesus death can bring atonement for sins they would have never foreseen that jesus humiliation and death would lead to his resurrection and eternal glory at the right hand of the father and so it is for us every cross we bear for the sake of jesus christ is a prelude to resurrection every death we die to ourselves to our selfish pride is a prelude to growth and new life so let us gladly submit to our lord and savior in every station trusting that the god who gave his only son for us will withhold no good thing from us to oh you didn't