



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

"Feminism and the Bible"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Let's begin our classes with a word of prayer. Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee that we have the opportunity to study the Scriptures together and think on things that have to do with the Christian church that our Lord Jesus had founded in the shedding of his blood on Calvary's cross. And we ask that Thou wilt give us guidance and direction as we think concerning the relationship of men and women in our society, and in the family and in the church. And may our thoughts, Lord, be reflective of the truth that is found in the word of God. We commit our evening to Thee. We ask Thy blessing upon us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight is "Feminism and the Bible: A survey". So let me read two passages of Scripture which in a full treatment of this topic we would want to give some detailed exegesis of. But at least we should read them as a kind of text for our evening of study.

The first is Galatians chapter 3 and verse 28. A very familiar passage I'm sure to most of you. And here the apostle writes in the 28th verse, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one

in Christ Jesus." And now the second and the last is in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 8 through verse 15. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 8 through verse 15. The apostle writing to young Timothy the apostolic legit writes,

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 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, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."

You probably can tell from reading those two texts they form two sides of the discussion that obviously one would have in treating a topic like this. So our subject then is "Feminism and the Bible: A survey". Remarkable has been the growth of the feminist movement over the last forty years. Now, it did not begin forty years ago. As a matter of fact, in the 20s there was some movement toward an ERA amendment such later became very prominent and the 60s, and 70s, and even into the early 80s with the extinction of the time for the ratification of it. But over the last forty years the growth has been remarkable. From Rosie the Riveter the war town worker through Betty Friedan *Sensational and the Feminine Mystic* which was published in 1963. And many of you may have seen it. Some of you no doubt have read it. Published in 1963, sixty-five thousand hardcover copies were sold and seven hundred thousand copies of it were sold in paperback form. But through Friedan's book through women's lib groups in the 1960s to the defeat of the ERA amendment, finally in 1982 all was rosy.

Now that's not a pun on Rosie the Riveter, but all was rosy. But the goals and consequences of the movement were hazy or hidden in the euphoria which with the left in general greeted the ruling the legalization of abortion in *Roe versus Wade*. An Episcopalian Professor of Medical Ethics at the University of Virginia could hail the decision as a welcome trend away from the sanctity of life attitude toward a quality of life ethic. That will give you some idea of the thinking of some. In other words, we may abort infants because by aborting infants we'll have a better quality of life, and we won't have to have uppermost in our thinking sanctitude of life -- that is the preservation of life.

Roxanne Dunbar, a Boston militant in 1969, said, "Ultimately, we want to destroy the three pillars of class and cast society: the family, private property and the state, in order to do away with the evils of sexism. So the family, private property and the state -- the overthrow of them was the goal of many of the feminists. You who are as old as I am will remember very well the 1972 Democratic Convention in which George McGovern was nominated for President of the United States. The women there were extremely strong. I think almost half of the delegates or maybe even more were women. It was rather remarkable. But in bellbottoms, miniskirts, blue jeans and hot pants; it has been said women seemed to be all over the convention floor. At one point when the McGovern was introduced to a group of women delegates with the phrase, "We're all here because of him," he responded jokingly, "The credit should go to Adam."

Now, you may remember Mr. McGovern was a seminary graduate. And so consequently you can understand how he might come up with that comment. But when he came up with that comment and said, "We are all here because of Adam," he was hissed and booed by the women. And then he responded jokingly, "The credit should go to Adam." I started to say after being hissed and booed he said, "Can I recover by saying Adam and Eve?" A woman delegate at that point shouted, "Make it Eve and Adam."

At another point you may remember during the debate that went on Gloria Steinem had to be led from the floor in tears, and New York congressman Bella Abzug --

doesn't that bring back remarkable and touching memories for you? She stormed out after a quarrel when actress Shirley McClaine commented, "She's getting to be more theatrical than I am. I guess I'm getting into her profession so she's getting into mine."

Mr. McGovern incidentally has, I think, announced that he's thinking about running again for president. And I'm sure one of the reasons is he's been in business for a while. And he recently said because he was involved in some bankruptcy hearings, some property head had gone bankrupt that invested in him, he said he discovered that being in business was rather difficult. He'd been in politics all of his life. You can understand that I guess. But anyway, the ERA was the principle legislative goal of feminism for a long time. And the full implications of the ERA were never actually brought out for the simple reason that since it was not ratified some of the implications of that simple little amendment have not been able to be legally filled in. But some of the things that would have been easily legalized as a result of it was homosexuals would be able to obtain marriage licenses. That would certainly be vindicated those who have studied it said. And there were many other broad consequences of that particular amendment. The family issue; daycare, flextime in the workplace, divorce has become the albatross around the feminist movement as you may know. If you read in the papers you can see that because feminists have realized that there is in this country a deep appreciation for the family. And consequently their views have been contra the family and they're realizing that that is an albatross politically for them to have around their neck.

As a matter of fact, this issue has awakened some of the feminists themselves and they have seen the light on this point. And it surely has awakened some of the evangelicals. Feminist author Susan Brown Miller who wrote a work called *Against Our Will* has characterized the power relationship between men and women throughout history as rape. But now in the light of the family issue an accused in the movement of ignoring has now accused the movement of ignoring profound biological and

psychological differences between the sexes. So she has begun to change her attitude a bit. The divorce rate may be a reflection of the feminist movement. On the other hand, it may not. I just mention this fact that after increasing for twenty years the divorce rate has stabilized at the high rate of nearly five for every one thousand people in the United States. One out of every two new marriages ends in this divorce. This phenomenon has many causes of which feminism may itself be a further effect. But feminism's ongoing diabolization of marriage is almost certainly a factor.

Well, the purpose of the study that I want to give tonight is simply to survey feminism's challenge to the Christian life and theology that we know as biblical life and theology. And I hope that in view of some of the things that I will say I will not be accused of masogony. I do not think that I hate women. And I hope I will not be accused of wishing the disenfranchisement of women. One of the men who has written a rather good book along the subject, a philosopher, has spoken along those lines and has also asked that he hoped that they would not think of him as a masogonist for the things that he has said himself.

So let me first of all then turn to the question of feminism and what it is. So feminism, what is it? If you open your dictionary and read from Webster, as I did, you will find this definition. Webster says feminism is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. Now, I imagine that most of us would not have any difficulty with that statement; the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. As far as I know Evangelicals who have thought very much about this issue have all acknowledged the equality of the sexes. And surely political equality exists in our country. Economic equality exists in our country so far as I know. And social equality as well.

Now, further things must be said about this. Feminism has largely defended the thesis that sex differences are socially rather than physiologically determined. It's a rather interesting but anthropologists and those who have studied this particular issue have

pointed out that patriarchy among the peoples of the earth is a universal thing. There has never been a society that was not patriarchal, never been a people that was not patriarchal.

Now, as we were coming over Martha asked me the question that I know that many of you might be asking and the question would be: do we not have today among the Black people matriarchies? Well, no we do not have among the Black people matriarchies, or any other people White, or Black or Brown in which women have a dominant role. The so-called matriarchy of certain Black peoples is not because the women have won the right of dominance. It's because the men have advocated the right that they should take to themselves. So far as we know there has never been anything other than a patriarchy. Well, that's very remarkable fact and is a strong testimony to the fact of the inherent nature of men and women.

Michael Levin, another philosopher who has written a large book on feminism and freedom has pointed out four specific tenants of feminism and they are these. First of all, anatomical differences apart men and women are the same. Infants and girls are born with virtually the same capacities to acquire skills and motives and raised identically will develop identically. In other words, if a little boy should be raised like a little girl, and a little girl like little boy, there would be no difference between them. That's a remarkable claim. It's very remarkable claim. But then, of course, as a rule individuals who say that go on to say, "Now, we cannot do that because we are so affected by the society in which we've grown up that we cannot even think independently or neutrally." But at any rate that's the first of the tenants: anatomical differences apart men and women are the same.

Secondly, men unfairly occupy positions of dominance because the myth that men are more aggressive than women has been perpetuated by the practice of raising boys to be oriented toward mastery and girls to be oriented toward people. So if you raised your little girl to fight other girls and if you gave your little boy a doll and raised him by associating with in his thinking other people and relationships like that then they would

be the same. If this stereotyping ceased leadership would be equally divided between the sexes. Sexist socialization harms boys as well as girls denying both the full range of possible aspirations. But on the whole boys get the better of the deal because they grow up to run everything it has been said.

Third, true human individuality and fulfillment will come about only when people view themselves as human repositories of talents and traits; not men, not women, but simply as human.

And finally, these desirable changes will require the complete transformation of society. So think about that. Anatomical differences apart men and women are the same. Men unfairly occupy positions of dominance. When people view themselves as human repositories of talents and traits then true human individuality and fulfillment will come. And finally, this will require the complete transformation of our society. It's remarkable.

Now let's think for a moment about feminism in society. Popularly the goal of feminism is expressed as equality; equal pay for equal work. And it seems also, I must confess, equal pay for work of equal value -- in other words, comparable worth doctrine. That is one of the aims of the feminist movement. Equality under the law, of course, and some have even suggested that it's equality and special protection. But now in the professing Christian world -- because we want to spend our time thinking particularly about the Christian world because it's become an issue in the Christian world.

In with professing Christian world there are two broad sections to know. There is the non-evangelical world. And of course, there is the evangelical world. I'd like to just mention some of the concerns of the non-evangelical world. First of all, goddess spirituality -- in other words in the non-evangelical religious world the feminist movement has ranged itself behind a goddess spirituality in connection with the doctrine of the trinity.

Let me give you some illustrations of this. In the inclusive language lectionary put out by the National Council of Churches a few years ago, that heightened the controversy

over the ways in which God should be addressed by deleting references to Jesus Christ as Lord and son and by calling God Father and mother. Now, you have been exposed to this in the newspapers and in the current magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* because that's been news to them. The not surprising openness of many feminists, even some evangelical feminists to goddess spirituality augments the growing polarization of the Christian church broadly over the question of feminism today.

In a conference sponsored in 1984 by the C.J. Young Center at the Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church in Denver feminist author Jean Bulling encouraged her hearers to offer prayers to such goddesses as Athena, Demeter, Artemis, and Aphrodite. Now, she discounted these as literal or anthropomorphic deities, but nonetheless accepted them as powerful symbols of creative powers within all of us, and therefore, it was proper for us to offer prayers to them.

Elizabeth Achtemeier who is a Christian and professor at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, a relatively conservative woman not in the sense in which we would think of a person as conservative, but she does accept broadly the Westminster Confession of Faith and teaches in the institution that is supposed to honor that document. She had had this to say about the National Council of Churches Lectionary. "In short, the Canon of the Christian Faith has been turned into a propaganda document for a special interest group. Faith has become subservient to ideology, scholarly honesty to current notions. The authority operative here is no longer the canon (she means the canon of the word of God) but the views of radical women's groups."

So what we have in non-evangelical professing Christianity is an attack on the doctrine of the trinity. Now, if you do not have the doctrine of trinity, as you well know, you do not have Christianity. Because if you do not have a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three persons who subsist in one essence, you do not have Christianity. That's why we do not have Christianity in Mormonism. We do not have Christianity in Unitarianism. We

do not have Christianity if we do not confess the doctrine of the trinity. You do not have redemption and all of the other things that go to makeup Christianity. So these are things that are the concerns of non-Evangelical feminists; goddess spirituality.

And a second large concern is lesbianism. A few years ago at Stoneybrook College on Long Island there was a conference of individuals and in the course of their time they spent about one-third of their time in research. And as a function of that particular society they spent about a third of it on lesbian. Michael Leven, a professor at New York University has said that that's not surprising to him at all to see them spend that much time on lesbianism. In fact, he calls that rather typical. One third of feminist research concerns lesbian.

Some of the interesting things that have happened have happened right in here in the city of Dallas as some of you know who get Vanguard Report from Probe Ministries you may remember that recently, I think it was the October issue, there is a section of it directed toward worshipping the goddess. And I'm going to read from it now. For example, at one workshop at a conference sponsored by the Unity and Diversity World Organization dealt with social transformation through education. It was led by Miral Mineta [phonetic], a public school teacher who claimed teachers have incredible potential for evolution. "She and her class," she said, "do pretty amazing things: psychic healing, shamanism, crystals, witchcraft, whole ceremonies and stuff, creative visualization, propitiation-Goth, intensive journal keeping, meditation in class -- either guided or open. (And then write about it.) We burn candles and hold a full moon ceremony once a month."

Now later on on the page, this was written by Kirby Allison, "Christian parents would naturally turn to their pastors for counsel if their children came home with stories of pagan rituals. But they might not find much help. An increasing number of clergy are sympathetic to witchcraft. It's not unusual for Christian seminaries to invite witches to lead seminars on their religion. Russ Wise, a Probe staff member, attended such a

workshop sponsored by the Perkins Women's Association, a student organization at Southern Methodist University at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. And he reported, "As I entered the crowded room I noticed the lights were turned off. Incidentally, this is not the seminary itself. This is the woman's organization of the seminary carrying on the meeting.

"The lights were turned off and then an altar stood in front of the class. The glory of four white candles enhanced the image of the goddess Diana. In the center of the altar around the image lay several offerings to the goddess. The workshop was entitled "Returning to the goddess through Dianic Witchcraft." The workshop speaker rose and began to address the audience. I will never forget her opening statement. She said, "I'm a radical feminist, a lesbian and a practicing witch". So right here at Perkins Theological Seminary, in their students at least one find the kind of thing about which we are talking. So when we say that the interest of the feminist movement in professing Christian things is toward goddess spirituality and lesbianism we are saying that which is true.

Now, in Evangelicalism feminism has raised these issues. It has raised the issue of the family, and specifically the relationship between husband and wife. Now, the Scriptures as you know reading the Pauline epistles and not only Paul, but Peter as well, lay down very specifically in the word of God the principle of submission. And so as a result of that and a result of the challenge of the feminist movement there has been a great deal of discussion among Evangelicals over the question of the family and the relation of husband and wife, and parents to children, and so on.

And then secondly, another issue that has been raised has been the ordination of women. The ordination of women as elders, or as ministers, or pastors in churches have such ministers and pastors. That has become a very significant thing and a source of a great deal of discussion in most of the churches.

And then finally, a third issue has been the teaching of men by women in spiritual things in the light of the passage that we read for example in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and

also in the light of some other passage also. So among Evangelicals those are the issues that are before us. Now, that is what feminism is. Feminism in society and then feminism in the professing Christian world, and specifically in the professing Christian world, the two aspects of it; non-evangelical -- you could call it -- feminism, and then evangelical feminism and the differences of opinion that those issues raise.

Now, secondly I'd like to say a word about feminism in Christian theology. The issues gather around these things. In other words, if you were to sit down and discuss with an evangelical feminist, for example, or a man who held to feminist doctrine, these are some of the issues that you would be discussing. First of all, the doctrine of creation and feminism. And the question would be this: if there are any role distinctions -- some of course, would like to contend there are not role distinctions, that the husband has the same role as the wife. But generally speaking if there is an acknowledgement of the fact that there are role distinctions then the question that would arise is this: are role distinctions due only to the fall or are those role distinctions found in the word of God traceable to creation? That would be the fundamental issue. In other words, can we tell from Genesis 2:1 and 2 that the male is to have leadership in the family and the female is to be in biblical submission to him? He is to love her as Christ loved the church; she is to be submissive to him as the church should be submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, is that something that arose from creation or is that something that arose from the fall? And if arose by virtue of the fall then of course one might say that's not the ideal. The ideal is equality, but the fall has brought in the situation in which we have women who are submissive to men. But ideally we should get beyond that to the way things were in creation.

Now, that would be one of the questions that would arise and that would be something that you should think about. Some of you know that I'm a member of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. And we've been meeting for a couple of years and discussing a number of the questions of feminism. And a year or so ago the

Council put out a statement which they call the Danver's Statement because it was done in Danver's, Massachusetts when the Evangelical Theological Society was meeting. Now, in the Danver's statement there are some statements that have specific reference to this.

In the affirmations there are three affirmations that bear on that point. Listen to what has been written. And the men who were on the Council worked this out over a very lengthy period time, not simply in one place. We met in Dallas. Then we met in Massachusetts. And finally after discussing for several days in both places they came up with this statement. "Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons, and distinct in their manhood and womanhood." That's the first affirmation. Secondly, distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart. Third, Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the fall and was not a result of sin.

Now, it would be nice if we had a lot of time to discuss all of the reasons for this statement. But I think if you'll just remember this: in the statement that I read from 1 Timothy chapter 2 when Paul said that he did not permit a woman to teach or instruct a man he then went on to talk about the creation for Adam and Even, the relationship was set forth. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 when he talks about women wearing head covers he also links that to creation and the way in which Adam was created and the way in the Eve was created. So if we were to argue this point we'd argue it on the basis of Genesis chapter 1 and 2, and then the apostles understand of that particular section from the word of God. So that is one of the issues that would be necessary for us to discuss if we are discussing feminism theologically.

The second would be the doctrine of the fall and feminism. In other words, what has the fall brought about in the relationship between husband and wife, or men and women? The Danver Statement has another affirmation that deals with that. The fourth of the affirmations reads this way. "The fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women. In the home the husband's loving, humble headship tends to

be replaced by domination or passivity." That's a very important statement because domination here is used in a negative sense. Dominance is different from domination in their thinking. Domination is unscriptural domination by a husband or a man of a woman. So in the home husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity. That's the result of the fall.

"The wife's intelligent willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation, or servility. In the church sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries. So that's another issue that would be worthy of discussion. Just exactly what has the fall done to the proper role relationships that should exist in the Christian family and between men and women? And thirdly, just what affect has the doctrine of redemption on feminism? And again, the Danver Statement has a number of things to say. I'll read some of them because I know we spent a long time on these to get these just right and I think they're well worth our hearing and thinking about. "Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. In the family husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives. Wives should forsake resistance to their husband's authority and grow in willing joyful submission to their husband's leadership. In the church redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation. Nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women so that no earthly submission, domestic, religious or civil, ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.

In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelicalism, with countless other lost

people in those societies that have heard the Gospel, with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion for God to make his grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world. We are convinced that a denial or a neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large."

That incidentally was one of the great things that we wanted to attack by the society itself. Is what we are seeing through feminism, and the principle that govern feminism -- and there are people who hold these who are not feminists necessarily -- that is part of the movement. But we are seeing something that touches the makeup of society. It touches the makeup of the Church of Jesus Christ and its functioning. And it particular has relationship to the families of Christians. So we are not talking about something that does not have significant influence.

I could speak of some of the things that have risen within feminism that reflects failure to understand Christian theology, but I would like to finish what I have to see and give you a few moments to ask a question or two. So let me go on to the third part which is disputed biblical texts and feminism. And what I'd like to do is just simply note the principle disputed texts that you should be acquainted with and say just a word about the issue that is raised by them. Obviously we don't have time in something like this, a survey, to deal with these texts. In fact, each of them really demands at least one night. On one of these I have written a chapter in new book that is being published next month on Feminism by the Society. It's going to be a rather large book with twenty to twenty-five articles in it. But the article that I wrote in it is on Galatians 3:28. And that's the text that we looked at a moment ago, and I'll read it again. In Galatians 3:28 the apostle has said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

As you can see, the question that arises from reading this text is: if in Christ there is neither male nor female and we're all one in Christ Jesus, how can we possibly then say that the wife should be submissive to her husband and the husband should have the special love of Christ for the church for her? Now, this is a text that speaks concerning equality. It does not speak to the issue of submission. But is it possible that submission and equality cannot exist together? That's one of the planks of feminism, that submission must mean inequality. And it is the contention of those who are not feminists and Evangelicals that submission does not mean inequality, that there can be submission within equality.

Now, the greatest illustration is found right in the word of God because in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3 the apostle writes these words, and they have to do with the relationship of our Lord to the Father. He says, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." He refers, of course, to God the Father. Now, we as Christians know that our Lord is the eternal son possessed as the Father with full deity. So how can we say the head of Christ is God the Father? Well, for the simple reason that within the trinity there are roles. Particularly during the time of redemption the son, who is the eternal son and has the same being of deity that the father has, for a time to carry out the father's work is submissive to him in his mediatorial work.

He says, for example, "I do all the things that I see that my father wishes me to do. What he tells me to do I follow out." In this very epistle in the fifteen chapter the apostle expands upon that point a bit when he says near the end, "He has put all things under his feet and when he says all things are put under him it's evident that he who put all things under him is accepted. Now, when all things are made subject to him then the son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God may be all-in-all. In other words, there is a time of the carrying out the purposes of God. But there comes a time when the work is done and which God will be all-in-all.

So a contention of biblical students historically has been submission and equality are not polar opposites. That submission may exist within equality and the ministry of the Lord Jesus as the mediator under the direction of God the Father is the conclusive illustration of that point. So when Paul says that in Christ they are one and there is neither male nor female, looking at the context he's talking about justification by faith. And consequently when a man believes in Christ he has righteousness. When a woman believes in Christ she has righteousness. They have the same righteousness. They have the same standing before God. And in that standing before God as justified in Christ there is neither male nor female.

A second important text is 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and the question of head coverings. And again, the apostle there appeals to the created order and makes the point that the head covers have been suggested by creation, by the fact that angels are there, and also by the conditions that exist in the world of his time. Now, there are some other issues regarding that that I don't have time to talk about. But that's one of the texts that is one of the debated texts. A third of the debated texts is 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 34 and verse 35 because this text would seem to say that women should keep silent in the churches. The apostle says in verse 34 and verse 35, "Let your women keep silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak. But they are to be submissive as the law also says. And if they want to learn something let them ask their own husbands at home for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

The question that one would ask about this text is, first of all did Paul write these verses? An Evangelical commentator writing a very significant commentary on 1 Corinthians has contended without any documents to support it that Paul did not write that, and consequently it does not have to be followed. Other Evangelicals debate the point with him very much in detail. So the question that arises: is that a genuine text of the Apostle Paul? What's the reference of it? And then further, what's the relationship of this to 1 Corinthians chapter 11?

And the final passage that I mentioned -- there are some others, but these are the major ones I think. The final passage is the passage in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 8 through verse 15, and specifically in verse 12. 1 Timothy 2, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Well, that would seem to be very clear except that some Evangelicals, we're talking about Evangelicals, some Evangelicals have said now what Paul says here has local Ephesian reference. That is, Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus and he wrote in light of the situation in Ephesus. And in the light of the situation there they were having certain difficulties with false teaching and the women there. And so his statement, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence," is something that is to be applied to Ephesus and to Ephesus only. And so that's the question that we would have to discuss. Is this a local reference that has relationship only to that particular situation or is, what Paul says, of a universal application? Let me sum up.

The importance of the issue should be obvious. As I mentioned, it touches our families. It touches our churches, and it touches the culture at large. Because the way in which the Christian church carries out the word of God has tremendous significance for the society in which God has placed us, and it's something for us to remember. We are placed in this particular society, we here in Dallas, for a particular purpose. Believers Chapel has a testimony. You have a testimony. And you are to represent, as you well know, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And if in your representation of the truth of God you are not faithful to the word of God then the testimony of God suffers. And so consequently the teaching concerning the church, the teaching concerning families, the teaching concerning the church and society is of great importance.

Now when you think about feminism and the things that can be said about it, when one adds to all of the natural, theological and exegetical reasons for rejecting feminism's teaching concerning the biblical truth, when we add to the natural reasons, the theological reasons, the exegetical reasons, when we add to them the voice of the church

traditions as reflecting the spirit's teaching ministry through the centuries -- I think you can appreciate the failure of modern feminism. It is contrary to the natural makeup of men and women as reflected in some of the things that I've eluded. It's contrary to the theological under girding of the word of God. It is contrary to the exegetical treatment of the texts of Scripture. But when you add to that the fact that for two thousand years approximately the church has existed and feminism has arisen only in the relatively recent future, and remember the Christian church has been taught the whole time by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be given to us and he would guide us into all truth. And here we are in almost 1991 now. Almost nineteen hundred years since our Lord, the spirit has come and we have been taught. And are we now to yield to the viewpoint in the light of all of this that suddenly there has arisen something contrary to that which has been the teaching of the Holy Spirit for nineteen hundred years? This has been tradition of the Christian church.

Maybe some of you reading the paper the other day in reference to the Anglican bishop of Sheffield, England -- they are having controversy in the Anglican Church over the ordination of women. And so he has said that if the Church of England in the next five years approves the ordination of women he is resigning his bishop ring. But he made an interesting statement and one in which I would fully agree. He said, "It's bizarre that a doctrine and practice unknown in the church for two thousand years, unsupported by Scripture or tradition and still overwhelmingly unacceptable to the majority of Christians should become mandatory in the Church of England after debate of only a few years."

That is a very succinct and to my mind an accurate statement. It is bizarre that a doctrine, the ordination of women, and the ordination to the office of bishop, unknown in the church for nineteen hundred years should suddenly become acceptable now after a relatively short time of debate.

Well, I imagine some of you have some questions and I'd glad to try to answer them if you'll speak loud enough so I can hear them. Yes.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Give me some paper and I can speak to the elders on that point. It's precisely for these reasons the apostle is saying you should not allow a woman to teach a man. And so we have to start with the beginning of permitting only men to teach men at Sunday School meetings such as that that involves men, women, and children. We don't want to do that and that's precisely that point. They're trying to follow that teaching. The only ways in which they have modified, and I wouldn't call it modification, I think they can spell it out in some details. Mind you there are some details about this question and [inaudible]. We do have women teaching our Sunday school