



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 2:11-15

"Evangelical Feminism and the Bible – Part III"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well, it's 7:30 according to our clock in the back, let's open our class with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are again extremely thankful that we have the opportunity to come together and study the Scriptures. We ask again for guidance from the Holy Spirit and enable us to understand the things that our Lord and the apostles and prophets have written. Give us, Lord, diligence in the study of the Scriptures. Help us to remember if we are not willing to give ourselves to the reading and pondering of them there's little likelihood that we will come to understand them in a way that will be helpful to us in our Christian life, and in a way that will glorify the name of our great God in heaven.

We ask for each one present, we pray Lord that Thou wilt minister to them in their lives, that Thou wilt give them the instruction and blessing and support and strength that we each need. We particularly for Believers Chapel, we ask Thy blessing upon the ministry of the word that goes on here. And thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast blessed and we look forward to blessing in the future. We pray for the ministry of the

word of God this coming weekend, and now Lord be with us as we study this evening.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, we're studying evangelical feminism and the Bible, and this is our third study and we're turning to 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 8 through verse 15 for our study tonight, spending our attention primarily upon the last four or five verses of the section. But I'm going to begin reading at verse 8, where the apostle in a section that has to do with life in the church says,

"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."

Well, the subject of feminism has been called the Battle of the Sexes. It's been called the suicide of the sexes characterized by angry rhetoric, marches, ritual roastings of the male chauvinist pigs, and now characterized by the use of the term rights. It has all spilled over into equal rights and functions in the church. Just yesterday there was an article on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* by Evan Crystal who happens to be one of my more favorite authors in the *Journal*. It's entitled "Men, Women, and Sex." And the statement that's derived from the article and made as a kind of defining quote is

"Casual sex is likely to be demeaning to women, at least to most women most of the time. The dating game as it is now played in our society is rigged in favor of men."

There are a couple of paragraphs in it that I thought might be interesting to you. He starts out by speaking about the way in which this country changes and liberal certitudes often change as well. The certitudes begin with the general opinion of the populous that probably they will be good. But then as they develop in the life of the country and in the life of society things turn out to be quite a bit different. He writes in one of his paragraphs, "Who would have thought back in 1950 that we would today be handing out condoms to high school students in a desperate and surely doomed attempt to stem the astounding increase in teenage pregnancies. Pregnancies, is that what sex education has come to? Who would have thought we would be witnessing an alarming increase in venereal disease including a fatal venereal disease AIDS? Who would have anticipated an incredible upsurge in male homosexuality and lesbianism? Who would have imagined that our sexually liberated popular culture would be featuring movies of sexual aggression with men engaged in serial murders of women, and women killing men to protest sexual oppression?"

And then he says, "This is entertainment?" Mr. Crystal is a Jewish man. He is an American Enterprise Institute Fellow; he co-edits the *Public Interest* and publishes the *National Interest* as well. Later on he says over here in the article, "But what has replaced the ladies/gentlemen relationship as a norm for relations between the sexes?" He talks about how in the Victorian period men were gentlemen and ladies were ladies. "Freedom, confusion, and disorientation all embellished with a veneer of equality. Sex is indeed natural, as our progressives keep telling our young. But the equation, natural equals innocent is a modern fantasy. In reality sex is the least innocent of human transactions. That's why it needs to be guided by rules that circumscribe this relationship in a civilized way."

At the end of the article he talks about Freud and how Freud generally traced problems in our society to repression. And the last paragraph is, "Freud reversed himself as he came to the realization that a degree of sexual repression was the very source of civilization itself. He still distinguished, to be sure, between neurotic repression and rational social repression. But our culture seems to have lost the intellectual and moral capacity to make and live with such fine distinctions." There's an interesting paragraph on rights, too, but I don't have time to read that.

What we're seeing in the church of Jesus Christ, as we've been mentioning, is the fact that we have the ordination of Episcopal priestesses. We have the ordination of Presbyterian lesbians. And I know that you might not have thought that it would have happened for a little while yet, but now actually ordination of Baptist homosexuals and lesbians, too. So things are on the downgrade, and continuing that way. In discussing the role of women in the church we must mention the guidelines, because often they get lost in reading the newspapers and reflecting upon them. We think in general of what Scripture may be saying, but it's helpful to go back in our minds and to think of what the Bible sets forth as our guidelines when we're thinking of things like this. The guidelines include these.

First of all, and significantly, the authority of holy Scripture; the Bible sets forth Scripture as authoritative in such matters as we are discussing. It's important to keep that in mind. So when you have discussions over these things, or when we're thinking about them, in the back our mind should always be the authority of the word of God. What does it say? Here we are in the 20th century and the Bible is still a valid up to date relevant volume in spite of what it has been claimed to be by many who have now faded into the mists of the past.

The second thing that is important is something that I mentioned last time. I hope I did not confuse some of you, but I haven't had time to speak of all of the details of it. But it's simply this, the tradition of the church. Now, that of course is of secondary value,

but if we remember that the Lord Jesus promised the body of believers, the church, that he would give them the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit would guide them in the truth, then we can expect that the church down through the centuries will be guided by the Holy Spirit into the truth. And so what the church as a whole, and we're talking particularly about the believing church, what the believing church believes, we can generally count upon being close to what the Scriptures teach. If we have questions, the church is usually right. If you'll go back and study the way in which the church came to understand the doctrine of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the trinity, and other aspects of the Christian truth, the clarification of the doctrine of justification by faith, which had faded from general acceptance. But the Holy Spirit brought the church back in the Reformation to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, it's important to keep those things in mind. It's also a help when we are faced with all of the strange things that people would like to foist upon us as being scriptural.

I mentioned the charismatics because they have, while in many cases may be believing individuals; they have many things that are 20th century actions and positions that did not exist previously in the sense in which it is claimed that they exist today. The modern charismatic movement began in 1906, and so you can see that so far as that movement is concerned it is relatively involved in new fangled things, except I must say that in many things they have followed the believing church. For many of them are believing people. But in my opinion are in error in charismatic teaching. So let us keep in mind these fundamental guidelines, the authority of Scripture, and the tradition of the church, but give to the second a secondary value.

We remember also that the creeds of the church which were thought out by careful theological reasoning in many cases, most cases as a matter of fact, at least the Anglican creeds, Episcopalian creeds, Presbyterian creeds, and the Baptists creeds also were the result of a great deal of earnest thinking by Godly individuals. The creeds, the teaching of the church with reference to feminism have been solidly behind this essential

truth, that equal worth does not demand similar function. Equal worth does not demand similar function. When a person says, for example, or a church should say that the elders of a local church should be males, he in no way means that males are superior to females. The functions are different. That is, the function of an elder, something reserved for the males, but the equality of the individuals is not at issue at all. Equal worth does not demand similar function.

This was true in the Old Testament, because if you'll remember the Old Testament priesthood belonged to the males. It belonged to the tribe of Levi. It did not belong to the tribe of Judah. Even our Lord Jesus could not be a priest in the Levitical priesthood. He was ruled out, and in fact the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions that specifically, that he was not a priest, could not be a priest, because he was of the tribe of Judah. There's nothing inherently in the word of God that denies equality when differing functions are reserved for differing peoples. Let us keep that in mind. Now in the debate at the present time there has come to appear such phrases as, "These truths that the Bible apparently teaches are time conditioned." That is they relate to a particular time but not to other times. These things are sometimes it is stated representative of rabbinical views. At other times it is stated that these things that the Scriptures set forth are culturally conditioned, and of course when cultures changed then these truths or these statements, these prescriptions that the Bible sets forth may be changed as well. And sometimes it's even said that the epistles of the New Testament are ad-hoc documents that is, they are documents for this, that is they are limited to a particular situation and a particular time. They are ad-hoc documents. And of course, in one sense that's true, they are ad-hoc documents. They are related to a particular time to deal with particular situations that exist in particular places. But at the same time that does not necessarily mean that they therefore have no reference to us in our day.

In fact, I read this afternoon, re-read, I had forgotten about it; I read a statement by a well known professor in an evangelical seminary whose views have changed in the

past twenty years. And this is what he said, and I thought it was rather interesting, because I think a lot of people have gone down this same path. He said, "There are many Christians who seem to think that the women's issue can be disposed of quite easily. The whole question has arisen, they argue, because of secular cultural development called Women's Liberation without which no one would have thought to ask the reformed community to reexamine its position on the admission of women to Ecclesiastical offices. The real question on this view is whether the Christian community will allow itself to be intimidated by the world." Then he goes on to say this, now I have many friends who are like that, that is they think the whole question is settled by taking a stand and not letting the world influence us in our decisions. Then he goes on to say, because he comes from that background, "Those of you who support the ordination of women would do well to admit that much of this analysis is correct. We cannot honestly argue that we came to our position by reading Saint Paul's Epistles to Timothy and to the Church at Corinth." That's an amazing statement a Professor of Divinity at one of our evangelical institutions on the Pacific Coast. "We cannot honestly argue that we came to our position by reading Paul's epistles to Timothy and to the Church at Corinth. It seems very unlikely that we would be calling for a change in the church's traditional position if the women's liberation phenomenon had not appeared?" Isn't that interesting? In other words, it's almost as if he has said if we had been reading our Bibles we may not have followed this. And we followed this because we've been listening to the women's liberation movement; a highly regarded man in many circles.

So what are we going to say then about the texts such as the text we have here tonight? Is it a culturally conditioned text? Is it a text that has to do simply with an ad-hoc situation? Is it time conditioned? Is the apostle talking about the fact that women are not permitted to teach in the church because that is something he derived from the rabbis? Is that essentially the way in which we are to approach this? Well, I'd like to briefly go

through the first part of the section we've read, and then deal with some of the questions in the latter part of it.

And first of all, in verse 8 the apostle writes about the men and prayer. "I desire therefore that the men," and incidentally he uses the term for man that's generally speaking, not always, but generally speaking is a term for males. And so we could render this, "I desire therefore that the males pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." He does not use the term that much more frequently is man, mankind. Notice he says, "Therefore" this therefore is presumptive and retrospective. It expands the exhortation of verse 1. Notice verse 1, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men." In other words, the apostle would like for us to pray for all men and every where, at every place. Every place is an opportunity for prayer so far as location is concerned. Here, he lets us know that it is the men who may pray and also how they may pray. "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

Now, after having said that he turns to the women and the apparel that they wear; this, I'm sure, is interesting to all of you. And listen to the apostle's words, "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel." It would be a natural question, of course, for people to ask, do not women have some responsibilities in public worship. Men pray, what about the women who are present. Yes, the apostle says, they have some responsibilities. They are to learn in quiet submission adorned in unostentatious modesty and good works. Listen, "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," I declare in animation while I look out over the audience. [Laughter] I don't see much gold, so I guess this is all right. We can go on.

Verse 10, "But, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." So they apostle says they are to learn in quiet submission, adorned in unostentatious modesty, and good works. What kind of good works are desirable? Well,

there are many ways in which woman may perform good works. Any one who's been in Believers Chapel knows the many ways in which woman may perform good works, because in this building and proceeding out from this congregation constantly and always, like Wal-mart, always women are performing these good works. If you don't realize that you've not been down here during the week. The people who are in our office and the things that they have to carry on are just what the Bible says, good works performed by Emily Ray and those that help there in the office. If you go in the tape ministry and see the many people who come in over a period of time in that tape ministry and carry on that ministry seeing that those things are sent out all over the world, as a matter of fact, so that people can hear the word of God. I don't think I hear from someone every day, but I frequently get calls from Massachusetts, Alabama, Canada asking about particular problems that have to do with certain texts, because they're listening to the tapes that are sent out by the women here.

That's not to mention the things that happen here on Wednesday night, the Sunday School on Sunday, the mercy ministry and the various other types of things and the many of you who work in the nursery. [Laughter] What a marvelous way to do a good work, work in the nursery. I wasn't here Sunday. I was in Charleston, South Carolina. And I don't know whether there was an announcement made, but that's an opportunity for a good work. The apostle talks about women professing godliness with good works. And I want to add one other thing, too, teaching; teaching also by the women, a good work, not teaching men but teaching. We have such teaching. We have that kind of teaching, that teaching is open, the teaching of women by women. Evidently in Titus chapter 2, verses 1 through 10 in the section there he talks about things like this, and in private teaching how fruitful that might be for those of you who study the word of God and gain a knowledge of the word of God. All you have to do is to turn to the word of God in the New Testament and see how you might perform a good work. Think of

this one for example, in Acts chapter 18 and verse 6, I believe it is. I thought I looked this up, here it is, and it's verse 26,

"Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."

We read in verse 28, "For he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." It's a well known fact that in probably the better Greek manuscripts at this point the names are reversed it's Priscilla and Aquila, which may suggest that she took something of the lead in that. But if it is true and whether it is true or not the truth is there. She is involved in the teaching of Apollos and the fruit that resulted from that engagement with Apollos was marvelous fruit and it resulted for their benefit as well; so the teaching of women.

But now, let's go on to the women and the teaching in verses 11 through 15 that the apostle speaks about. And you'll notice again this point that I'm trying to be sure that we reach, that the role, not the superiority of the men is the apostle's point. We used the illustrations of flying Air Force One. Some things are things that are grounded in the equality of all of us as citizens, but not all of us can get on Air Force One. The same thing is true in athletics. Anyone who knows anything about a team knows that. A football team has a coach. He has a line. He has an offensive line. He has a defensive line. He has offensive backs. He has defensive backs. All of those men make up the team, but they each have separate responsibilities. There's no question of equality. We're

not talking about that, but talking about function. So we all ought to understand that thing.

Listen now to the apostle's instructions in verses 11 and 12, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission." Now, the fact that the apostle writes it this way, "to learn in silence" indicates that he's talking not so much about the fact of learning as the manner in which the learning should take place. That's the point. Some evidently, in Ephesus for Timothy was probably in Ephesus at this time; some were apparently not learning in quietness. There is indication in the pastoral epistles that there were difficulties with some of the women in the churches. And evidently this was part of the difficulty. And so the apostle exhorts them to learn in silence with all submission, to learn in quietness. Now, he's talking about the public assembly because he speaks of them learning in quietness with all submission. So the manner in which the learning is to take place is his point.

Some of the individuals who are so anxious to find support for modern feminism have affirmed that learning is always done in order that there may be teaching, is it not? And therefore, Paul's instruction to the women that they should learn in silence with all submission means that therefore they are expected to teach. Well, that is not a necessary conclusion at all. And furthermore it might be a conclusion and still would not mean that we should have women teaching in the public assembly, because as I mentioned, women have open them other means of teaching; teaching privately and teaching other women in the Bible classes. In the 12th verse, Paul goes on to say, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." And I think it's very important to note that to teach or have authority over a man, because that I believe is probably what the apostle has in mind. He's not saying the apostle should not teach at all, but that she should not teach and have authority over the man, because teaching is a work that involved authority. When I stand up here, you may not recognize my authority, but actually when I stand up here and teach I'm setting forth for you some of the things

that I think the word of God teaches. And I am trying to do that as one who is at least studied the word of God for some period of time.

The word teaches in that verse is in the emphatic position, "And I do not permit a woman to teach," it's something like "and to teach I do not permit a woman." So being in the emphatic position I think the apostle's making the point that teaching involves authority and authority over men, and so therefore that is something that is reserved for the males by the Lord God; if you think of that as a privilege but also think of it as a responsibility. The apostle says something that bears on this in 1 Corinthians 14. I would like to turn over there for just a moment, 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 34. The apostle again, in one of the sections that has to do with feminism states, verse 34, "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 so the apostle is suggesting that this is in harmony with the teaching of the word of God. It is, of course, in harmony with the way in which the synagogue carried on their ministries as well. The women were not permitted to speak in the synagogue, that is, to argue the points that the men often argued. It is true the apostle's thoughts are very similar to the synagogue, but that doesn't necessarily mean that things that the synagogue did are necessarily wrong, as we know from our Lord's own experience.

Now, coming to verse 13 to verse 15 some of the things that are more debatable, verse 13 through verse 15. The apostle gives his reasons for what he has just said. The woman is not to teach or have authority over the man, but in the meetings of the church when the teaching takes place she is to learn in silence with all submission. Why Paul? We might want to say, why Paul is this necessary in your opinion? Well, fortunately the apostle gives us some of his reasons here for he states, verse 13, three reasons actually he gives. And I'll mention them to you. But first of all, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve." So we can say first of all the reason that the apostle would have this arrangement to be true in the church is the priority in creation that man has over the women and also that

Genesis chapter 2 and 3 sets the man forth as the fountain of the woman's existence, which suggests dependence.

Now, I think it would be good for us to turn over to 1 Corinthians 14 again, because here the apostle says something of the same thing. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse, well let's see, verse 7 through; I'm sorry I'm in the wrong chapter. I turned to chapter 14 a minute ago. It's chapter 11 verse 7 through verse 10, the apostle writes, 1 Corinthians 11:7-10, "For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels." Later on we may talk about those verses, but just notice verse 8, "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." As we pointed out the woman is derived from the man and is derived from the man in order to be his helper. The apostle thinks that that is very significant and he finds the truth in Genesis chapter 2 and 3.

William Barclay who has written some very interesting books and actually has some things that are very worthwhile in his books, has also written some very strange things, because Mr. Barclay was a liberal. In fact, I sat in on his classes on one of my occasions living in Scotland, sat in on his classes, and got to know him a bit personally. We met him afterwards and talked with him for a little while. But I've read a number of his books and as many of you, if you've ever read Barclay's little commentaries know they're very helpful in many ways. He has lots excellent illustrations for Bible teachers to use. He actually grew up in an evangelical Scottish home, and so all of those things are a part of the baggage that went along with him. But he became a liberal. In fact, he said to the group of men who came from New College in Edinburgh, and we were talking to him, he said, "If you fellows had come over here, we would make good liberals out of you." So he is a liberal, a confessed liberal.

This is what he says about some of these things. "All of the things in this chapter are mere temporary regulations laid down to meet a given situation. If we want Paul's real and permanent view on this matter, we get it in Galatians 3:28. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Ah, not one in the church, one in Christ Jesus. Remember our study just a week or so ago, one in Christ Jesus, not one in the church. There are different functions in the church, but no difference in status in the church. He says, "In Christ the differences in place of honor and prestige and function within the church were all wiped out." Mr. Barclay obviously did not think of Galatians as the first of the epistles of the New Testament as many of the New Testament scholars now affirm. It is true that he wrote those things, "In Christ there's neither male nor female." But then later on as he wrote other epistles like 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy he set forth the restrictions that he had in mind when he said, "We are all one in Christ Jesus," but not one in the church.

Now, after having mentioned the woman's origin as a ground for the arrangements within the church, he mentions the woman's deception in verse 14. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." Again, the argument is not cultural. You'll notice he doesn't say "Our cultures are different." But he goes back to the Book of Genesis. All of these arguments are arguments that are grounded in creation. They're not grounded in redemption. They're grounded in creation. So what happened in the fall of man, and what happens in redemption is not changed at all by what happened in creation. That's very important because I would say most of the feminists today have overlooked that important point. They have said, "Men are fallen, but Christ has died and redeemed men," usually the Universalists, redeemed all men. And so all of those things might be regarded as restrictions by creation have not been removed because Christ has died for sin." The apostles don't argue that way. They go all the way back to creation to argue.

Now, later on the apostle will make an argument based on redemption, but it does not cancel this out at all. It's creation in which the distinction between man and woman was made. And those responsibilities that each have were set up. Let us remember that. So the woman's deception, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." This is a kind of an argument from silence. There are three ways of taking it. You may say Eve is deceived more than Adam. But why does he say "for Adam was formed first then Eve? That wouldn't seem to fit into that, so the idea of Eve being deceived more than Adam is not clearly in the context. Some have suggested Eve was deceived directly, Adam indirectly. And that is represented, so they have said, in the order of the judgments that are set forth in the Book of Genesis in chapter 3. But the plain statement says otherwise, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into the transgression." It says that Adam was not deceived. So it doesn't say he was deceived indirectly, but he was not deceived. So I rather think that what the apostle is saying is that Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. He knew that what he was doing was wrong. Eve persuaded him, tried to rule him, as a matter of fact she tried to rule him, have influence upon him, and now she must serve him as a result of the judgment. Remember we said these distinctions go all the way back beyond that to creation itself.

Adam, as the covenant head was more culpable.

You notice something about Genesis? This has always interested me. I must confess, I read the Bible for years before I actually saw this. It was in the study of reformed theology that I discovered this, and it's made a good bit of difference in my thinking, because it has under-girded my view that the Bible is covenantally structured. But anyway, listen to what he says in Genesis chapter 3,

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of

the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. (This is kind of like a theological conference you know, and Satan comes along and says, "Let's have a discussion, a little discussion about theology. So this is the discussion.) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. (Nothing happened; she took of the fruit of the tree and ate. But then we read,) She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."

Why? Because Adam is the covenantal head; he's the covenantal head of the race. That's why the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 5 and verse 12 talks about Adam and not about Eve. But Paul says in 5:12 of the epistle to the Romans, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." So Adam is the covenantal head, the covenantal head of the redeemed is the Lord Jesus Christ. His one act is the ground of our salvation. Adam's one act, the Apostle Paul argues the whole thing in Romans 5:12-21, 1 Corinthians 15; Adam's one act is the downfall of the race. So Adam was more culpable, yet less likely to be led astray as the covenantal head. But nevertheless he fell. In fact, God gave him every reason not to fall. He not only put them in a garden, not only gave them that beautiful garden to which they had almost total access, just said, "There's one little thing that will keep from you, that one little thing," so as to make it almost as if he gives everything but keeps back just one thing, and Adam and Eve fell in spite of that.

Think of what responsibility must have rested upon Adam. I'm assuming I'm not sure; I don't have a text of Scripture for this. But I'm assuming that in the giving of those

commandments "And the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," that it was fully understood by Adam that what Adam did was that upon which the race stood. And so he had the responsibility that should have kept him from the sin of eating of the fruit more than Eve for that matter. At any rate, she was doubly deceived because Satan deceived her with regard to the fruit, and then also she persuaded her husband so that in effect she has been doubly deceived. As a matter of fact the text says she was greatly deceived, an intensive word is used for Eve's deception.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking, well that agrees with the facts of man and woman, does it not? Women more easily deceive than men. Well, I'm not going to actually say that. I don't really know that that is necessarily true. There are some people who really think that that's what this verse means, that women are more susceptible than men. I can at least say this, that women are susceptible of being the means of temptation for their husbands by seeking to persuade them to follow their lead and their guide. And that, of course, is what is referred to in Genesis chapter 3 later on, that Eve is to bare the judgment that relates to that. At any rate, I don't think the woman lies under permanent divine displeasure. And I have serious doubts about whether women are more easily deceived than man. They may be deceived more than men in theological things, but in other things not necessarily so. And if you look at the history of the church you will find that while many women have been the source of much false doctrine, there have been a long string of men, and are today who are also the causes of much wrong doctrine today. We just mentioned William Barclay as one, for example.

Now, the preceding might leave the impression that the woman lies under permanent divine displeasure and so Paul says in verse 15, "Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." And the softening correction is suggested by the opening words of verse 15. "Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing." Now, that's a rather interesting translation of the Greek particle, but I think it's rather true to the force here. So what is represented by the

softening correction? Well, it's simply this, that it is not by preaching, not by teaching in the public assembly that the woman is to find the path of salvation. It's rather in accepting her God-given role as the female. That represents the means by which she shall find the salvation that Paul refers to here.

Now, this last verse has been given several different interpretations. We have about ten minutes and I think I have time to just run briefly over them. In fact, there are three primary interpretations that have been put upon them; nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. First of all it has been said that this text speaks of spiritual salvation. That is, not bodily salvation, spiritual salvation, not bodily safety; spiritual salvation through the childbearing, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true, nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing, in the original text at that point you will find a definite article before the word childbearing, *deotas teknogonios*, through the childbearing. And so according to this interpretation the childbearing is the great childbearing when Mary gave birth to our Lord Jesus Christ by the conception in her of the Holy Spirit.

Now, one of the advantages of that interpretation is that it maintains a close connection with Genesis 3:15 where the promise is given of the seed of the woman that will crush the serpent's head. But one could hardly think of a more obscure way of talking about the incarnation than to say, "She shall be saved through the childbearing," because in the context the childbearing is not definitely and directly related to the Lord Jesus Christ. So generally speaking, commentators, while they have looked at this, they have rather tended to turn to other interpretations thinking that it was so obscure that it would be missed by many people to whom Paul was writing. You may like, and if you hold to that interpretation it's probably impossible for anyone to prove you wrong.

A second interpretation is that the text has to do with physical preservation amid the danger of childbirth. Now, that too seems to be related to Genesis chapter 3, because remember the judgment is to the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow in

your conception. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you." We all know the pain of childbirth. I mean, we've all heard about the pain of childbirth. [Laughter] But the prophets often speak about that, you know. They talk about the difficult times coming and they liken them to the figure of childbearing. And so it has been the interpretation of some that this text has to do with God's promise of physical preservation through the experience of childbearing. The difficulty with this interpretation is that the term saved is ordinarily in Paul not used of this physical preservation. There is a case or two in which it is used, but particularly in these epistles it doesn't seem to have that meaning. We just had saved in verse 4, "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," and that's not that kind of salvation, physical preservation, that's salvation of soul from the guilt and penalty of sin.

A third interpretation is this, that the text has to do with spiritual salvation through the acceptance of her appointed role of motherhood in faith. Nevertheless she will be saved, that is she will experience salvation, spiritual salvation in childbearing as she continues in faith, love, and holiness with self-control. In other words, the truth moves in the realm of Ephesians 2: 8-10, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast." And then in verse 10 the apostle writes, "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." It's in the truth of other passages that she will be spiritually saved by the acceptance of her appointed role of motherhood, in faith. That is that she believes in Christ and that in faith she walks in the role appointed for her by the Lord God in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 3. That may be the best interpretation. It probably is followed by evangelical than the other interpretations. But at any rate, I'm sure that you've probably gained the general idea of the passage.

The apostle then, as the entire Bible, teaches that men and women are equal as image bearers, yet different in their role. The sexual differences are created by God and are equally important and significant for church life. That essentially is what the apostle is saying. I think I'd like to close by just reading a comment that fits in well with that. This comment, I'm not sure who wrote it, but it's basically, I think you'll agree, a true comment. "The admitted place of women in the Bible should not be bypassed." What the author means by that is we should remember that the Bible in the Old Testament and the New Testament is filled with references of women who served the Lord. Let us never forget that. We are not talking about service reserved for men; service is reserved for men and women. The Bible is filled with that fact.

Often feminists make the point that since the Bible is filled with references to women and filled with references to the service of women, therefore we should ordain women. That does not necessarily follow. The author writes, "The admitted place of women in the Bible should not be bypassed, but the references to Sarah, Rebecca, Muriel, Deborah, Hannah, Hilda, etcetera only highlight the fact that God assigned to none of them the roles that he assigned to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and the Prophets. The priesthood was given to the males, too. Many reasons may be suggested for this, but the only reason the Bible gives for the absence of the women is this," he means the absence of these women in the place of these men, "the Lord assigned the office only to men."

Now, it's often said, as I mentioned earlier, that culture demands a change. We talked, we mentioned that in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul made reference to some things that had to do with the woman's place and he says, "As also saith the Law." Sometimes it's said the reason the Law did not choose an apostle from the female sex is because of the culture, they would not have accepted a female. Now, what does that say about the character and honesty of the Lord God, that he'd permit wrongs for the sake of culture? As a matter of fact, if you look at the story of the Lord Jesus that's set forth in the gospels,

you'll find that he frequently acted contrary to the culture. In fact, he spoke with a woman, and the woman was so shocked that he talked with her because the Jews didn't do that. In other ways he also broke with the culture of his day. The argument does not hold.

As a matter of fact, why then were the cultural patterns from the creation still valid in the time of Paul after thousands of years. Sometimes feminists say, "If we are not ordained as elders in the church that makes us second class citizens." What of the elder who is mentioned in 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 17, who rules and teaches and the rest of us who are not elders do not rule and teach, are we therefore second class citizens in the church. I have never thought of myself as a second class citizen. I once was an elder in Believers Chapel, I never thought of myself as moving from first class membership in Believers Chapel to second class when I resigned from the office of elder. I never thought of that, and I do not think that that holds. "The differences between men and women," says the author of this most thought provoking essay, "are the single most important fact of human society. The drive to deny them in the name of women's liberation, marital openness, sexual equality, erotic consumption threatens the society as never before."

So mothers and fathers, when your child comes to you and says, "Dad, what does it mean to be a man and not a woman?" Or a mother, "What does it mean to be a woman and not a man?" The Bible sets it forth for us, those differences, just precisely what it means to be a man, not a woman, to be a woman and not a man. And in both of these roles God's approval rests upon as we seek under him, by the Holy Spirit to be submissive to the teaching of holy Scripture. May God help us to do that, and particularly in Believers Chapel. Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the teaching of the word of God, and we realize, Lord, that we live in days in which so many of the things that are in holy

Scripture are under attack, not simply questions of sexual identity and sexual significance, but other things as well. And we ask Lord, by Thy grace Thou will keep us faithful to holy Scripture, for we surely need the ministry of the Holy Spirit to strengthen...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]