

**NOTES FROM TIM GAMSTON'S SERMON- Sunday 7th July 2024 am**  
**TITLE: "Living out God's order" TEXT: 1 Timothy 2 v 8-15**  
**SERIES: "Guarding the deposit" Pt 6 Scripture references from the ESV**

**1 Timothy 2:8-15** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling; <sup>9</sup> likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, <sup>10</sup> but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. <sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

A secular psychologist (Martin Seligman) has defined human flourishing as: *find(ing) fulfilment in our lives, accomplishing meaningful and worthwhile tasks, and connecting with others at a deeper level – in essence, living the good life.* It is a helpful definition apart from the fact that Seligman believes that this can be done without a relationship with God. This is a good illustration of what is happening in our culture.

- We want to flourish but we want to do so without following God's order for flourishing as human beings.

God created us with the capacity to find fulfilment in life, to have a sense of accomplishing something meaningful, and to have relationships that go beyond the superficial.

- The God who created this world and who loves his creation desires that human beings will flourish in this way.

However, our hearts are so disordered by sin that we are unwilling to follow God's order for this kind of flourishing.

**In creation, God established a specific order in which we will flourish**

That order begins with God ruling over humanity and is followed by humanity living under his rule and at the same time ruling over his creation. Under this God-ordained order, humans would flourish.

In the fall of humanity, God's order was turned upside down, with the result that:

- Disunity came into human relationships
- We sought to bring glory to ourselves

- Men and women began to strive for authority over each other

Yet God's love for humanity did not cease because of our sin. Through the death of his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, God has redeemed people from their sin and death and has promised that he will redeem the whole of creation and restore his order. He has already started this work, by bringing those who believe in Christ under his rule, thus restoring our relationship with him. Through that restored relationship with God:

- relationships among his people are restored
- he places a desire in our hearts to bring glory to him through living Christ-like lives
- proper submission and headship within marriage and church are restored

In the verses above, Paul shows us that

**God's work to redeem creation and restore order needs to be seen in the church when it gathers**

- The rise of feminism in the 1960s has made these verses seem controversial. Previously no one questioned that this was God's order, but now questions are asked about whether Paul meant this quite how it sounds.

We have turned away from God's created order for men and women because, particularly in the last 60 years, we have allowed culture to determine the meaning of scripture, rather than allowing scripture to shape our church culture.

**If we do not live out the truth of these verses, not only will we fail to flourish as God intends**

**but we will also undermine the preaching of the gospel.**

**The church is to show the world what people redeemed by Christ look like.**

If we claim that God is restoring creation order through the gospel of Christ, then when the physical and spiritual world look at the church, they are to see what people redeemed by Christ look like. Three things are highlighted by Paul.

1. **Unity in prayer (v8).** When the church gathers, Paul expects men to take the lead in praying, though women can pray. The Bible describes any number of postures for our bodies as people pray, but

**What matters is the posture of our hearts.**

**The emphasis is on holiness**

This is holiness that is marked by an absence of anger and quarrelling amongst the believers. In the Ephesian church, fruitless discussions and endless genealogies were leading to disunity, and men were at war with one another. Paul says this about such a man: **he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup> and constant friction among people** (1 Tim 6:4-5).

- True prayer that reaches heaven and brings about change on earth will not happen where there is disunity.
- The prayers of any of us are hindered when we harbour sin and bitterness towards others in our hearts.

Paul says the men are not to give up praying but they are to pray without anger and quarrelling.

**The men are to be united around Jesus Christ and the gospel.**

**With hearts made holy and united they are to lift their hands in united prayer to God.** People will believe the gospel is real when they see this unity in prayer. That is why:

- Jesus urged us to be reconciled with one another before we come to worship him
- Peter tells husbands to live in an understanding way with their wives so that their prayer life together will not be hindered.
- Psalm 133 tells us that God commands his blessing when his people dwell together in unity.

Adam's sin resulted in anger that led to disunity and even murder, but through the Gospel of Christ

**God is uniting people under the rule of Christ.**

**That unity is to be seen in all of us, but especially the men, as we meet together to pray to God with ONE VOICE**

**2. Modesty in appearance. (vv9-10).** In the culture Paul was writing to, women in the Roman upper classes were having their hair done in elaborate ways and wearing extravagant clothing to draw attention to themselves.

They wanted to be seen to be attractive, and particularly sexually attractive, in what was a very promiscuous culture. Paul says to Christian women:

**Do not copy the promiscuous culture**

One commentator says: *Today, it is the equivalent of warning Christians away from the imitation of styles set by promiscuous singers, performers and actresses.* Clothing styles that are sexually suggestive are NOT to be part of a Christian's wardrobe. With summer approaching, there is a real danger that clothing styles will expose more flesh than is appropriate for **women who profess godliness**. The Bible does not dictate fashion but does tell us to dress modestly. What we wear is meant to cover our nakedness, not expose it.

To get people to notice and praise us, we may dress in ways that draw attention to ourselves or even in ways that are sexually shocking. Christ came to redeem us from this desire for self-glory, so that we are set free to seek his glory.

**We are meant to be drawing attention to Christ not to ourselves.**

We do not need to dress (or undress) to impress because we now have the life of Christ in us and that is far more impressive than anything external. If people notice us then

**they are to notice us for our godliness.**

We are to put on Christ as our clothing so that he is seen in us and is glorified.

**Putting on Christ will commend the gospel of Christ.**

**3. Proper submission in teaching (vv11-14).** These verses need to be set in the context of God's big story. The Bible clearly teaches that men and women are created in the image of God and so have equal dignity and worth.

**Both men and women have the same value as image bearers of God.**

No man in the church has authority over a woman just because he is a man and it is certainly not the case that women are forbidden from saying anything in church.

**Being silent does not mean saying nothing.**

We read in the New Testament that women gathered to pray with men, shared encouragement, testimony and words of knowledge when the church gathered. Some even prophesied! Women are also free to have leadership and teaching roles in the secular world.

- Paul is speaking about the order of authority in the gathered church when God's word is preached.

We are to see v11 in the context of v12. In the letters to Timothy and Titus, the word **teach** refers to the public preaching of the word of God to the gathered congregation or to authoritative public doctrinal preaching.

- The authority to teach is given to the elders of the church.

Paul's expectation is that elders (men) will hear from God what he says in his word, and then teach what God authoritatively says to the church. Paul takes this expectation from the order God established in creation.

- God created Adam first, and then instructed Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (**Genesis 2:15-17**)
- God created Eve from Adam's side to be a helper suited to him, and Adam was to teach Eve what God required.
- Together, they were to rule over creation, have children and subdue the earth.

### **That was God's order of creation**

Paul applies this creation order to the gathering of the church and says:

- The public preaching of God's word and the role of elders are reserved for men only

Women are prohibited from public preaching when the church is gathered, and the role of elder – an authoritative role. However, it is perfectly permissible for women and men to instruct one another in other settings such as regular conversations that we have in church. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** (Col 3:16).

Conversations with godly woman can give insight into scripture, or help us apply the word of God to our lives. Home groups work well because everyone contributes.

Women, as well as men, write books that help us in our walk with the Lord. Most of our Sunday School teachers are women!

- It is in the context of the public preaching of God's word when the church gathers and the role of the teaching elder that women are to remain silent. These carry the authority of Christ and are therefore to be submitted to.

### **This is God's creation order**

What happened at the very beginning has made this a struggle for us (v13-14). God created man as the firstborn of humanity to exercise leadership and headship, and then he created woman. Paul directs us to look at the fall of humanity into sin.

- Adam failed in his task of leading Eve. When she was tempted, he should have helped her by saying NO.

Instead of God speaking to man, then man speaking to woman, the woman listened to, and obeyed, the voice of creation. The man listened to, and obeyed, the voice of the woman and the two of them trampled over God's rule and authority, resulting in the curse of sin and death.

**Creation order was turned upside down, and all that makes humanity flourish was lost.**

- Our sinful hearts now desire glory for ourselves, so we worship ourselves and creation rather than God.
- Our sin broke our relationship with God, so that we do not know him and delight in him as we should.

As a result, our human relationships are broken. Husbands and wives, rather than using their different but complementary roles, now fight for mastery over each other, resulting in broken marriages. We do all this under the curse of God so that our work, which should be a delight, is now filled with frustration, and we live our days in fear that creation will either fail us or overpower us. Eventually we die. All this came about because Adam failed to take the lead.

- God in his mercy and grace sent Jesus Christ, born of a woman, to take the curse of sin and death upon himself.

Because of Christ's death on the cross, we, along with the created order, are redeemed. The relationship between God and us is restored so that we now know and love God through Jesus Christ so we are able to submit to his commands.

Our human relationships are restored, and within the household of God (the church), though we may not have much in common with one another, we are united in Christ. Now we live in hope that Christ will return and renew this creation, and thus everything takes on an eternal significance.

**We are working to bring eternal glory to God**

**In Christ we have discovered what it is to truly flourish**

- We are set free to live out this redeemed life of unity, modesty and proper submission.

Paul is setting these instructions in the context of holding up the Gospel of God's grace. **..you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 1 Tim 3:15**

- Paul believed that if the church joyfully lived out the creation order in God's household, the gospel would go out with power.

God is in the process of redeeming creation, and that is to be on view in the local church as we live out God's order.

This is so counter-cultural, but if we truly displayed the beauty of God's order, what a testimony that would be to anyone coming in to the church. We would also discover that we will truly flourish as God's people.

In the light of this, there may be areas to confess:

- Men may need to confess to having been chauvinistic, not having understood the roles of men and women
- Women may need confess that they have usurped the authority of their husbands
- As a church, we may need to confess that we have got things wrong.

When we confess these things, we experience change and transformation, by the Spirit, because of the gospel of grace.

**God's creation order will show itself in the men being united in prayer,**

**and the women being modest in appearance**

**and quietly submitting to the public teaching and the authority of the elders.**

**Living in the beauty of God's created order means that we will truly flourish as God's people**

**and commend the Gospel of God's grace to others.**