

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. **3** This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, **4** who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,

6 who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. **7** For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth;^[a] I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

8 I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument, **9** also that the women should dress themselves in moderate clothing with reverence and self-control, not with their hair braided or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, **10** but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. **11** Let a woman^[b] learn in silence with full submission. **12** I do not permit a woman^[c] to teach or to have authority over a man;^[d] she is to keep silent. **13** For Adam was formed first, then Eve, **14** and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. **15** Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

I Timothy 2

TIM CLASS #2 – Sermon Series on I & II Timothy

The Bible says that Women Should do WHAT?

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St. Luke Lutheran Church, Albuquerque

Pastor Christa von Zychlin

Welcome to the second installment of our Tim Class Sermon Series on Paul's letters to Timothy! They're also called the Pastoral letters, because Paul is trying to mentor young Timothy in a city & circumstances – where crazy theology grows like weeds. Circumstances not completely different from life in America today, where everybody is their own spiritual expert.

Actual Christians, however, believe that scripture IS divinely inspired and– as Paul so famously says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *useful* for teaching, correction, training

(I think that's why we're here right?) to be fed & watered & experience AGAIN – scripture words which lead us to THE WORD, - God's love in Jesus Christ.. for EVERYBODY

as Martin Luther said in his famous table talks:

[quote]

“The Holy Scriptures require a humble reader who shows reverence and fear toward the Word of God, and constantly says, ‘Teach me. Teach me, teach me...The Spirit resists the proud.’” (*Luther's Works*, vol. 54, 379, *Table Talk*, 5017.)

Pastor Wayne & I find in contemporary American society, like in Luther's day, like in Paul & Timothy's day,

People are quick to be the expert on what scripture means, and which bits of scripture they like and which bits are out-dated rubbish –

In contrast, Luther read the whole Bible at least twice each year. – even the bits he notoriously DIDN'T like, like the book of James,

Another time in his Table Talks, Luther said,

“If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.” (*Luther's Works*, vol. 54, 165.)

Reverence for the Word

That's who we are as Christians,

Rooted in the Word – that's the first part of our mission statement here at St. Luke.

AND YETI I trust you all caught the divine joke of having [RAY /Pastor Wayne] read the first scripture today,

: I Timothy chapter 2 verse 11-12 *Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she is to keep silent.*

and then have me walk up here and begin to preach...

Maybe you also noticed I'm wearing pearls in direct contradiction to the literal words of I Timothy

And I might also point out I didn't see *either Pastor Wayne nor ANY* of you men out there lifting your hands in prayer, as a literal reading of verse 8 might suggest...

But that's the Gospel lived in the freeing power of Jesus, in whom, as Paul famously says *elsewhere*. [in his letter to the Galatians 3:28]

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

So: in Christ there's LIBERATION from stereotypes and gender norms. *Everyone* is to be a humble apprentice of Christ...

....

And YET today's scripture does say a woman is to keep silent

And I won't minimize the put down girls and women still experience of being taught that women are less than men, in *many* cultures & religions

I myself worked with strong wise women in Cambodia who had been forced in public school to memorize 14th century Khmer poetry which taught a good woman should be quiet, walk with small steps, and never laugh aloud...

in seminary classes, Dr. Wayne had to repeatedly ask these bright Cambodian women to speak up! They had so much to say. But culture had taught them to literally cover their mouths.

In Germany when my mother was growing up, people liked to quote a 19th century saying for women:

Kinder, Küche, Kirche meaning women should confine themselves to Children, Kitchen, and Church, but not to speak in church, but to serve without any authority. .

There's been a liberation, though, wherever Christians have humbled themselves with a deep reading – shaking the branches of Holy Scripture which teaches In the Ten Commandments – we are to honor father *and* mother – not just fathers...

throughout the book of Proverbs - Wisdom is depicted as a --- woman! For both men & women to receive from...

in the new age of the gospels we discover – it's a woman who brings God into this world, Mary birthed Jesus

A woman was commissioned by Jesus as apostle to the apostles, *Go and tell my brothers....* said Jesus to Mary Magdalene... I'm alive!

Throughout the scriptures, women speak to God, Women are providers, women are warriors, women are truth tellers, women are prophets, -- as are men.

And yet from this one little passage in a culturally specific letter to Timothy,

Church Fathers such as Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Jerome, Aquinas and many others [so confidently have said] v 11 means *absolute silence by women in church...*

Calvin and Luther also took Paul to be saying women should keep silent in church, yet ... they allowed women to sing in church.

(Women may have been more apt to show up for choir rehearsal!!)

Calvin ... allowed women to lead in prayer, Martin Luther did not.' ¹²

¹ <https://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/the-historic-interpretation-of-1-tim-2/>

Luckily we Lutherans aren't bound to the church fathers nor to Martin Luther but we are in a living relationship to the Word CHRIST – through words of the bible in *Context*,–
with the Holy spirit (*a feminine name in biblical Hebrew*) as our teacher...

– it's a lovely Protestant Reformation principle, that *scripture interprets scripture*, and always with Christ humbled, crucified and still loving all people at the center.

There's something to receive even from these “crazy” bible passages if we humble ourselves into Timothy's context....

(First of all, and I wish I had the monitors to show you here...
but Pastor Wayne will show those of you who come to the Zoom class on Wednesdays –)

Timothy is in the city of Ephesus!

And what's Ephesus known for in the 1st century?

The temple of Artemis, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, bringing in so much silver, it's said the temple was the largest bank of the ancient world. Statues of Artemis were sold, featuring rows of breasts a symbol of fertility, long life, sexual fulfillment, and not least in that dangerous world, protection during pregnancy and childbirth; *God knows people still long for those good things of God's good creation...*

And there was lots of money to be made
And women who showed off their wealth with expensive hair dos and gold and pearls and clothes, all done up for them by slave labor,

And it was so easy for new Christians, - slaves, and bankers and artisans and business folk and people who still might hang on to statues of Artemis in their closets,

So easy to slide into a mixed-up version of this new liberating life in Christ...

women, bursting with talent and enthusiasm - maybe took on more than authority over men

The word translated in verse 12 where Paul says I permit no woman to teach or to have authority... *Authentein* in the Greek... is better translated as “domineering control....”

And you know just like men were created after the animals in the biblical story of creation, -- and smarter?... so, some people of that time were saying that since Eve was created after Adam, **she** was smarter! (Hmmm they might have had a point with that? Ha-ha) nevertheless, says Paul, even Eve, the mother of all living, the image of Wisdom, the forerunner of the one who would bring God into the world.... She too, for all her goodness and smarts, was tricked. Failed. Sinned in Eden, brought death into the world, as we all do. Male or female we need forgiveness healing and new starts in life...

So, Paul says to Timothy, and to us... there is one mediator between God and human kind.

One Christ to whom we turn and receive new life..

So enough with these gender stereotypes already. In the last verse of the chapter, Paul writes to Timothy - Teach your people – *all of them* – to aim for faith and love and holiness with modesty & self control . So Christ may grow within us all – and we may give birth to Christ’s goodness in this world (& our Albuquerque neighborhood!), whatever our gender might be. Amen.