

Godly Worship

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[0 : 0 0] Well, let's pray as we come to God's word tonight. Lord God, you've caused all Holy Scripture to be written to make us wise for salvation in Christ, to rebuke and correct us, to teach and train us in righteousness so that we may be equipped for every good work and word.

And so we pray, Lord God, that your word will fulfill your purpose in our lives and in our church tonight. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, sometimes a preacher has to work hard to draw out and show the relevance of a Bible passage for those in the 20th or 21st century as it now is.

But that's not so today. Today, this is a passage that is contentious, one that is often debated in church circles today.

And I don't seem to need to do any work to try and make us realize that this is an important passage and one that addresses some contemporary issues. It's certainly not an easy passage.

[1 : 1 0] And it's one that is around which many Christians find themselves these days divided. As we saw last week in 1 Timothy chapter 1, Paul is writing this letter as a whole in a sense to steal Timothy to silence the wolves of the heretics that have come in to the church in Ephesus in the first century AD.

That is to steal him, to strengthen him for the task that Paul has entrusted to Timothy to look after this church in Ephesus, to silence the wolves, as I called it last week.

The wolves that Paul indeed had himself predicted a few years earlier when he addressed the elders of the Ephesian church in Acts chapter 20. You may remember then, and as I quoted indeed last week in Acts 20, Paul, as he says goodbye to the elders of the Ephesian church, said to them that wolves would come in to steal the flock.

And indeed, not only from the outside, but as the passage in Acts chapter 20 goes on to say, some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them.

Those days have now arrived. Hence, Paul writes 1 Timothy to Timothy, but it's also a letter that's clearly not just personal. So it's a letter that's addressed to Timothy, the person placed in responsibility over this church, but it's for the benefit of the church.

[2 : 4 3] And indeed, in scripture, it's also for our benefit as well. And for all those who read the scriptures ever since it was originally written. Some of the false teaching we saw last week is to do with a wrong understanding of the law, the Jewish law, and how it may or may not apply to Christians.

And because it's a wrong understanding of the law, it becomes a wrong understanding of the gospel. And we saw that argued through chapter one as well last week. So 1 Timothy is a corrective letter, a remedial letter to correct wrong teaching in the church.

And indeed, the theme of teaching that is wrong teaching and what is right teaching and so on is one that crops up all the way through 1 Timothy as a letter.

And in today's passage, that certainly comes to the fore in the second half of chapter two. But to begin with, chapter two, verses one to seven.

Instructions about praying. But what is being corrected here? One of the emphases that we ought to note in verses one to seven is the emphasis on all or everyone.

[3 : 5 6] So for example, in verse one, first of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone or all. And in verse two, for kings and all who are in high positions so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.

In verse four, talking about God, our savior, who desires everyone or all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. In verse six, speaking about Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all.

And then though the word all or everyone doesn't occur in verse seven, Paul's own commission as an apostle was to be a teacher of the Gentiles. That is the non Jews.

And that is because the issue of false teaching in chapter one implies wrong understandings of the law, the Jewish law, the Old Testament law. Perhaps what's going on here is that there is some what we might call Judaistic Christian movement that is somehow elitist or separatist or privileged that is somehow seeing themselves upholding, maintaining some aspects of Jewish law to the exclusion of others.

And so in verses one to seven, it seems to fit that Paul is emphasizing the all that is salvation is for all. God desires all to be saved. Jesus died as a ransom for all.

[5 : 23] Pray for all those who are in authority. Pray for all people. And verse one, Paul's own charge was not just to Jews, but in fact, to Gentiles, that is all people outside Jews in effect.

And that seems to be the emphasis that is being placed in verses one to seven. As I say, it may imply then that this false teaching has got some exclusive nature about it, that maybe not all are saved, that maybe some Jewish laws have to be obeyed, that it's somehow salvation is restricted in God's economy.

And Paul is stressing the opposite, that God's economy is that he desires that everybody will be saved. So pray for everybody. Indeed, Jesus died for everybody is the whole point of what he's saying there in verses one to seven.

Now, that's an important doctrine in itself, not just the fact that Paul's correcting wrong teaching. But it's important that we actually grasp that the gospel is for all, that Jesus did die for all of us, whoever we are in whatever age we live, whatever ethnic background we come from.

Jesus died as a ransom for all to liberate us. That's the idea behind ransom in verse six, probably language that Paul is taking from Mark's gospel. And Jesus has died to liberate us to pay the price for our freedom from sin.

[6 : 44] And that's for all people is the case. Indeed, the implication of that gave himself a ransom for all is in the place of all. There's an element of substitution implied in that language, that when Jesus dies on the cross, he dies in our place so that we don't need to die an eternal death so that our sins can be forgiven.

It's the heart of the gospel is actually what Paul is summarizing in these verses. And it may well be that for some here tonight, you've never quite grasped the heart of the Christian gospel, that Jesus has died in our place, taking our sins so that we may be ransomed, set free, liberated from our sins and from their penalty so that we may have a relationship with God.

And that is open to all, to anyone of any background. It's freely given. It's received through faith. And that's what I think Paul is implying at the end of verse seven. It's not by our works or obedience to particular laws, certainly not to Jewish laws, but received through faith that we trust with empty hands that liberating, ransoming death of Jesus.

And if it's the case for you tonight, that you've never grasped that or understood that, then please let me urge you to talk to one of us, to clarify in your head so that you know where you stand with God, because Jesus has died for all.

[8 : 16] So Paul is praying that all kings and rulers indeed may even be converted. I think that's the implication of verse two onwards. He says, pray for kings or emperors, for rulers, all those in high positions, local governors or magistrates, local leaders of towns and communities as well.

Pray for them. And I think the implication is that they too might be saved. That's why Paul says in verse four, God desires that everyone should be saved.

Now, again, I think that Paul may be implying here something that perhaps needs correction. Why is he urging prayer for these kings and rulers, apart from the fact that he wants them to become Christians?

There seems to be, if you read through 1 Timothy, a few hints that one of the problems in this church is that it's sort of perhaps an element of bringing God's name into disrepute.

It may be slightly controversialist and maybe even something slightly separatist, as though they're despising the society or the rulers of society.

[9 : 26] The purpose of this prayer for kings and rulers in verse two is so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.

Now, at first sight, that may mean that we think, oh, I can imagine sitting in my armchair in front of a log fire having a peaceful, quiet life and nobody rings me. But that's not quite what is in mind here.

There's an element in which, so that we're praying for rulers, so that the Christian church is not hindered or thwarted by persecution, in effect, I think is the implication of that.

Later on in chapter three, and we'll see this next week in verse seven, speaking about the leaders of the Christian church, they must be well thought of by outsiders, chapter three, verse seven says, so that they may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

So there's a theme or it ties in with the issue of how does the outside world view the church and those who are Christians. In chapter five, verse 14, speaking about younger widows, that they marry, bear children, manage their households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us.

[10:42] That is so that the outside world will not in some way revile Christians and the Christian church. And in chapter six, verse one, speaking of slaves and masters, those who are slaves must regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed.

The slave who's a Christian may indeed be serving a non-Christian master. Those little themes or hints seem to suggest that some in the Christian church may be slightly troublemakers, controversialists, or creating contention.

We saw a hint of that last week as well. And so Paul is saying, hang on, how the church is viewed by society is important. You don't want to create a sort of ruckus that will bring disgrace on the church from outside or actually set up opposition in a sense unnecessarily.

Pray for the leaders, the secular leaders of your world, so that the church may, and you as Christians may, live quiet, peaceable lives. That is, so you can get on with the business of being a Christian, unhindered, unthwarted, unrestricted, unpersecuted, and so that the church will grow, so that people will be Christians.

That's the other thrust of verses one to seven. The danger is that if this church is rent in two by wrong teaching, by those who are contentious and divisive, that the church will actually be reviled by the outside, mocked or even persecuted, and so that the growth of the church and the salvation of others will perhaps then not happen.

[12:21] Well, moving on in verse eight, from what to pray in a sense to how to pray. The theme continues. There's an element of continuity on the theme of prayer here, but there's a subtle shift now from, in a sense, whom to pray for.

Paul naturally leads into aspects of how prayer should be conducted. In verse eight, he says, I desire then, and the then shows a continuity with the preceding paragraph, as indeed verse one, the word then, the same word, shows a continuity with what precedes that as well.

That is, Timothy stopping the wolves or silencing the wrong teaching, that leads, therefore, into instruction about what to pray for, and now it also leads into instruction about how to pray.

There's a connection between all these points. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument.

Well, the posture of lifting your hands in prayer is something that's found a few times in the Old Testament. That's not the emphasis in the verse. Again, the verse is corrective, not because the men may not be praying with their arms uplifted, but rather that they're praying without holy hands, and they're praying in anger or in argument.

[13:41] That is, within the context of some contention or division within the church, in particular because of the wrong teaching that's being infiltrated, as we saw last week in chapter one.

So the issue is that the men, when they pray, the emphasis is that they must be holy men, that they must be praying without anger and without argument.

That is, they are praying, in a sense, in fellowship with each other and with God, in unity with each other and unity with God as well.

In a sense, it points us back to what we saw also in chapter one. The end of chapter one, verse four, these, in contrast to the myths and the godless, endless genealogies and the speculations that the false teachers are bringing, is the divine training, that is, Bible teaching in effect, that is known by faith, and the aim of it is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. So when Paul says, pray with holy hands, and without anger and without argument, the implication is you are praying, in a sense, as believers in truth.

[14:59] That is, with love that comes from a sincere heart. That is, you are following the true teaching of the gospel, and that's what gives you a right and holy standing with God.

And it's in those grounds that you will have unity, you'll have sins forgiven, you won't be in an argumentative situation, you'll be praying holy prayers as holy people.

So it's flowing, again, from the right teaching, not the wrong teaching of the heretics that are there teaching in the church. Verse nine, in our translation also, or in other translations likewise, in the same way, it's putting the two together.

So Paul says, I desire then, that in every place the men should pray, and he may well have said then, I desire then, and then he goes on in verse nine. That is, there are parallel instructions, if you like, verses eight and nine.

And the instruction here, or desire here, is that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes.

[16:10] So it's Paul's desire, it's probably stronger than a slight wish, it's not just his personal preference, it's a bit stronger than that, but it's in the same parallel with how the men should pray.

We might think, well, this looks a little bit superficial. I mean, are clothes really that important? But the issue is in a sense the same between the men and the women here.

It's, Paul is addressing the lack of godliness actually in behaviour. And for the men, that has been demonstrated by their argumentative and angry relationships with each other, their lack of holiness. And for the women, it's lack of good works. As verse 10 goes on, you are to be dressed with, literally, good works, not with this outer, exorbitant adornment.

Now, some comments about these good works, these clothes that are mentioned in verse 9. All the items that are mentioned there are mentioned in roughly contemporary Roman sources of the first century AD.

[17:28] And it's clear that in this first century, there was quite a movement of the wealthy Roman secular woman to flaunt themselves, in a way, to somehow show disrespect to their husbands, to be basically women who are career women, not wanting children, not looking after their household, and they were dressing in rather showy ways, expensively adorned ways, to flaunt their wealth, to flaunt their position, to flaunt their control, in a way.

Let me give you just one comment by the Roman writer, Juvenal. He wrote, There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears.

So important is the business of beautification. So numerous are the tears and stories piled one upon another on her head. Meantime, she pays no attention to her husband.

Now that's just one comment from a secular source, but it fits the pattern of what is found in various inscriptions, various writings, and indeed also in sculptures.

Some of the sculptures of women of this first century show their hair sort of stacked high and bejeweled in different layers. And that's what Juvenal's referring to, and that's what the braided hair that Paul's referring to in verse 9 is on about as well.

[19:04] Elaborate hairdos that are showing off their power and their wealth and somehow a demonstration of a sort of over-authority and a disrespect of their husbands and a sort of bossy women type of new Roman woman, some have called it.

And some argue that in Ephesus, to which this letter is addressed, where Timothy has been placed, Ephesus was a place where one of the seven wonders of the world was, the Grand Temple of Artemis.

These days there's just three or four pillars left standing, or one pillar, I think, left standing, almost completely gone. But some of its statuary is found in the museum nearby at Selçuk these days.

But this Temple of Artemis was quite a cult. You read about that in Acts when Paul's in Ephesus and the outcries because of so many people becoming Christians. And the Temple of Artemis had quite a female high priest type cult about it.

And some say that this new Roman woman in the Roman Empire of the first century and her sort of flaunting her wealth and position and power was perhaps even more exacerbated in a place like Ephesus where this Temple of Artemis was.

[20:19] Now, to understand the background and to give a couple of other clues, I think, in this letter, in chapter 5, verse 13, and we'll get to this in three weeks' time in its context more, but speaking again of some of the women, Paul writes, besides that, they learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house.

They are not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies saying what they should not say. What's happening here, it seems, is that some Christian women, whether they're new converts and they've brought it in from their background, or whether they've been converted as Christians and they're beginning to adopt secular ways.

It's unclear which order, in a sense, that's happened. But they're drawing in cultures excess and extreme in their positions within the church in Ephesus.

In contrast, Paul says, rather than all these jewels and so on, which shows this power and wealth and indeed, some would say even boasting in promiscuity or hinting in promiscuity, Paul says they should be clothed with or adorned with where it says in verse 8, they should dress themselves.

The same verb carries over into verse 10. They should dress themselves with good works. That's what matters. Godliness, in effect, that leads into acts of good works.

[21 : 48] That's what they should be clothed with. That's what matters. As is proper, he says in verse 10, for women who profess reverence for God. What these verses, 8 and 9, are doing then is challenging well-to-do Christian women not to be led astray by their culture and society and not to be led astray by wrong teachers who may be encouraging them in that direction but rather to be people of good works as indeed the gospel commands not just for women but for men as well.

In effect, as I say, these verses parallel the instructions of verse 8 for men. The language here reflects the language that's found in the secular society.

That's the background. The cultural trends were clearly diverting women away from true godliness as indeed one might well argue from today's culture as well.

And so modesty and decency and good works were being abandoned. These women were being misled or perhaps they were even misleading others into saying, well, these cultural values we should uphold and boast in or parade within our church context.

And in effect, it's no different from the men of verse 8 who are abandoning the godly traits of no anger or argument. Well, the same background of course continues in the verses that follow as well.

[23 : 18] Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. Verse 11. Well, here's a contentious verse these days if ever there is one. Notice that verse 11 is permissive as much as it is prohibitive.

Let a woman learn. That is, it's actually an encouragement to a woman to learn. it's not fundamentally a prohibition. But the learning has got qualification in our translation in silence and with full submission.

The point is though the emphasis is on the learning. Let a woman learn. And indeed that ties in with what we've seen in chapter 1 last week.

If you go back to chapter 1 verse 7 speaking of those who are teaching wrong things they are desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they're saying or the things about which they make assertions.

That is, these people in general in chapter 1 verse 7 are teaching but they haven't actually learned. They don't have instruction. They don't have understanding. They're teaching with ignorance rather than with learning.

[24 : 29] Notice too that the woman is to learn in silence with full submission. And sometimes the implication or sometimes the inference rather is drawn full submission to men.

But that's not what's said. The full submission most likely is to God's truth or God's word or to the gospel. That is, it's not actually instructing a woman to be in full submission to a man rather to learn in full submission to God's word.

That is, you learn God's word and obey God's word. That is, you don't disobey it. You learn it and obey it. But also notice, in our translation it has the word silence.

It's the same word that is used in verse 2 above where it says about the prayer so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.

There it's translated quiet and verse 11 translated silence. The thrust of the word is not silence so much as in attentiveness.

[25 : 39] That is, a quietness so that you are learning and listening. It doesn't forbid a word to be spoken but rather it's actually saying you're to learn.

Don't just sort of jump in. You know the people I lecture in a Bible college and periodically there are people like this in my lectures who almost as soon as you open your mouth want to actually object or say something or correct something or add their own point of view.

They're not actually listening and learning. Paul is saying here that these women are to learn and so by saying in silence as this translation is or rather better I think in quietness or in attentiveness he is emphasizing their need to shut up for a while and pay attention and learn from God's word and submit to God's word.

Well the thrust of 1 Timothy 2 continues in the next verse the remedial or corrective thrust when Paul says in verse 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man.

She is to keep silence. Now again this is a contentious verse and it's contentious on almost every word that's in the verse. Literally Paul at the beginning of the verse says I am not permitting.

[27 : 08] That's a slightly odd way to say it. That is if it was a blanket prohibition we would more likely expect Paul to say I do not permit.

He says I am not permitting. Now whilst that has got a slightly broader sense of possibility because Paul hasn't used what might be normally expected I am not permitting opens itself more readily to be a sort of a temporary or circumstantial prohibition that is now for this circumstance for these people I am not permitting them to teach rather than a universal prohibition that is what's driving Paul in verse 12 is that these women these wealthy well-to-do women who are infiltrating the sort of excesses of their culture into the church they are trying it seems probably to teach but they're not learning they're teaching in ignorance and they're not submitting to God's word he's saying to them you can't teach I'm not allowing you to teach that group those well-to-do women who it seems are being misled and misleading others in this church in Ephesus he says to teach

I am not permitting a woman to teach that's because they're teaching in ignorance perhaps they're teaching of the wrong things about the law in chapter one maybe more general than that their teaching is wrong that's why Paul is not permitting them to teach here in Ephesus and remember that the issue of teaching is actually a crucial issue through 1 Timothy we saw it last week we'll see it next week we'll see it in the weeks that follow that is the problem in the church is wrong teaching and wrong teachers the message of 1 Timothy fundamentally to Timothy is silence the wolves stop them teaching things that are untrue that are ignorant that are not submissive to God's word they're actually in contradiction to the gospel so this is the main theme of the whole letter not to teach wrong things that's what Paul is on about the word for have authority

I should also say that the issue of wrong teaching the fundamental thing in 1 Timothy is to get the content right that's the main issue of the whole letter that what is taught is right it's a secondary issue in a sense of who teaches the person who is apt to teach as we'll see next week is someone who's got the content right that's the fundamental thing the other word that's contentious in verse 12 is the word to have authority over it's the only time this verb is used I think in the New Testament and usually when it's found in sources that are contemporary to this outside the New Testament it has a negative connotation that is there is a right use of an authority a right use of a boss over a slave or a person who's the head of a church over people in the church or whatever but this word's got a negative connotation it's a sort of authoritarianism rather than being authoritative if I can use a sort of distinction like that but the word is actually used to domineer and indeed in one external source it's actually used to murder

I'm not quite sure how the etymology works towards that extreme but usually the word has got a negative connotation and therefore I think that we have to be careful about what we think this verb is actually saying is it saying that a woman should not have in a sense any authority over a man or is it that the word carries its more usual negative connotation in the sense of being overbearing or domineering over a man well that's certainly what these women in Roman society were like they were overbearing and domineering in their sort of early feminism we might even say of the first century AD and given that background that cultural context and given that the word most usually has a negative connotation it seems to me much more likely that what Paul is actually saying is that these women are not to have that domineering overbearing nature over men that is it's a prohibition of something that is negative and wrong it's not simply an issue of authority that prohibition as I say fits the picture of the woman of the

[31 : 55] Roman society these well-to-do women when they're associated with the sort of clothes they wear and picking up that juvenile quote that I mentioned they have no interest in right relations with their husbands they're not interested in family life they are interested in parading their own power they're career women in a sense they're over emancipated we might say indeed they're wanting control like they're trying to get in society and they're wanting to exert that control in the church but they're ignorant of the gospel it's as though they're new converts or people who've just

come in and said well we're going to take over this place we've got money we've got wealth they can't have it in the church and Paul's saying stop them they're ignorant they don't know or understand or submit to the gospel they need to learn before they can ever teach and again in verse 12 at the end it uses the word silence but again it's the same word quietness she must keep silent the end of verse 12 says it's the same word of verse 11 and the same word of verse 2 that is attentive to learning we might say quietly learning before ever there will be permission to teach remember that 1 Timothy is addressing a particular problem in the church of Ephesus in the middle of the first century AD it's a corrective and remedial letter these well-to-do women are usurping a teaching authority that is not by right theirs they are ignorant and they're driven by culture and they're disrespectfully emancipative that's the picture that we also get later in the letter in chapter 5 as well in chapter 5 verse 6 the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives again they may be picking up this same sort of group of women who are basically living for pleasure they're hedonists and indulgent and in chapter 5 verse 13 we read there that I mentioned before they learn to be idle gadding about from house to house they've overturned the traditional values and roles in chapter 4 verse 3 they forbid marriage perhaps speaking about this same group of women or people associated with them and in chapter 5 verse 14 it seems that they have no consideration for bearing children as well and in 2

Timothy a letter written to Timothy again in Ephesus a bit later on after 1 Timothy the women there are weak-willed and they haven't grasped the gospel and they're being misled by others as well so it seems to me that for these women in this circumstance Paul is prohibiting them from teaching well for some the sense that these verses are not for that particular context but are universal for Christians and women of all places of all times some of that argument comes from the verses that follow that is the point is there are those who would say where Paul says I do not permit a woman to teach they mean in any place of any time at least over men well verse 13 and 14 say for Adam was formed first then Eve and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor now again

Paul may actually be trying to correct some heresy here remember that in chapter one there was wrong understanding of Jewish law and Old Testament and it may well be that because these women are in a sense ignoring or even trying to overturn the sort of traditional male female husband wife type roles that he's actually trying to correct them by going back to Adam and to Eve the main issue it seems though in verse 13 and 14 is not the order of creation yes Adam was formed first and to Adam was given instruction what to eat in the garden and what not to eat in the garden then Eve was formed the instruction to her didn't come from God directly presumably came from Adam who had heard it from God the issue is that Eve was deceived not Adam now a slight side statement here remember that in other places it's clear that through Adam all sin Romans 5 argues that Paul's not being in a sense sexist in what he's saying here but he's actually drawing a parallel between Adam and Eve and the women of Ephesus verse 14 says Adam was not deceived but of course Adam did sin he ate the fruit too at the wife's invitation and encouragement he's not guiltless in this but the point is that the woman was deceived and notice how it's Adam was not deceived but the woman not not by name Eve here I think Paul is becoming generic here in order to make the parallel with the women that he's addressing in Ephesus Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor you see Eve's deception showed her lack of learning when she responds to the serpent's invitation to eat the forbidden fruit she doesn't quote Adam directly she gets it wrong she hasn't learned and thus she is deceived because she hasn't submitted to God's word relayed to her through Adam and Paul is saying in effect here it seems to me these women are exactly doing what happened to Eve they have not learned properly they've been deceived just as had happened to the woman in the garden of Eden well that's the problem in Ephesus the women are not learning they're not interested in learning they're too busy speaking to pay attention to any teaching that they ought to receive they're not submissive to God's word and they're easily deceived by heresy if you look over again to chapter 5 verse 15 speaking again of some women going astray who are not managing their households or bearing children etc some have already turned away to follow Satan I suspect in that comment there's again an allusion back to the garden of Eden where Eve in a sense has followed the serpent or at least the serpent's invitation and instruction and so it seems that some women like Eve in the garden or the woman in the garden have followed indeed Satan or the serpent as well now Paul doesn't want to end with a note of condemnation here as though

somehow these women are not at all Christian and he ends verse 14 with and became a transgressor but he actually offers a word of encouragement which itself is a corrective word yet she will be saved through childbearing now again this is a highly contentious verse [39 : 20] Paul everywhere says people are saved through faith does he now somehow want to say that women or these women in particular will be saved through childbearing or does he mean they'll be kept safe when they have children that doesn't work in history there are Christian women one of whom I knew who died in childbirth so it seems somehow to clash with the gospel that you're saved by faith to say these women will be saved through childbearing now what Paul is saying is indeed consistent with his gospel he says in verse 15 notice there the necessity for faith which is the reception of the gospel Paul is saying that faith issues in good works something he's exhorted earlier in this same chapter indeed that the women will be people who are practicing good works just as the men would practice good works that is being without anger or argument and being holy the women would practice good works with love and holiness the sorts of things that the gospel will bring as chapter 1 verses 4 and 5 said and for these women that will include childbearing that's something that they are refusing it seems consistent with the Roman society woman that we know from the secular sources and from later on in chapter 5 seems to be the case with these women as well they are rejecting one of their fundamental roles and responsibilities as women made by God and in God's image that is childbearing I don't think necessarily every woman must have a child as though somehow if a woman is childless for whatever reason they are sort of grossly negligent or transgressing or sinning I don't think we should in a sense draw from the generalization to every specific case but in general it is one of the roles of women to be childbearers and that's clear in Genesis 1 and 2 so Paul's appeal back to Genesis 1 and 2 is again corrective of their ignorance and wrong understanding of some basic chapters in the scriptures and indeed we know also from the secular sources that women of these days especially the well-to-do ones who had access were practicing forms of abortion and contraception as well and maybe that is also what is lying behind Paul's in a sense rebuke in verse 15 well much is said in 1 Timothy that is critical of these women

Paul is addressing remember a particular problem we know from the sources that the language fits the scenario of the first century AD which I think lends weight to the view that we are dealing with a particular circumstance rather than a universal command for women never to teach and remember too that it's not unusual in the New Testament to find letters in particular that are written for particular situations for example when we read 1 Corinthians 13 the great poem or statement of love love is kind and patient it's actually a rebuke to the Corinthians who are lacking love and the very things that love is in 1 Corinthians 13 are the very things that 1 Corinthians 13 says that they are not so that when we read what said in the New Testament as indeed the whole scriptures understanding as much as we can of the particular background will help us glean in a sense the right interpretation and application of the words the women of these days who were well to do who were dressing up as described in verse 9 of chapter 2 often implied a wantonness or promiscuity apparently in secular society there was a well-known quote apparently a wife who likes adornment is not faithful in Roman society this new emancipated woman was seductive leading others astray and ignorant of the gospel these women perhaps like the women who ran the Artemis cult in Ephesus were lusting after control but they are ignorant not learning and not submissive to God's word and therefore like Eve deceived elsewhere in the

New Testament there are women who have leadership and teaching roles Priscilla who's usually named first over her husband which is probably significant teaches Apollos in Acts there's Euodia and Syntyche who labour for the gospel which is most likely not just somebody who's sort of supporting in the background but probably a more significant role than that and maybe including teaching female apostle in Romans 16 there are women prophets and so on and though few there are some there who are involved in that sort of ministry of preaching and teaching and I think though few the fact that there are some is significant and the fact that no prohibition is found in say Ephesus which lists various responsibilities of leadership and teaching that's not gender specific there for example suggests to me that we're dealing with a specific prohibition not a universal one in the end the issue in 1

Timothy is not whether a woman can teach so much as to whether any man or any woman is apt to teach we'll see that next week and not so much just for the women but for the men also you see the prohibition is against teaching that is ignorant heretical teaching that is deceived and in this

passage is a prohibition against women who are not actually wanting to learn and are certainly ignorant of the truths of the gospel we stand back just to finish off to see the bigger picture the key point in 1 Timothy is that teaching matters we're not dealing with a secondary issue here in the sense of the fact is teaching important it is important if teaching is wrong in its content then people are led astray and possibly ultimately to hell the ministry of teaching must not be undertaken lightly it is a heavy responsibility for whoever teaches in a Christian congregation or church and whoever teaches must be a person who is apt to teach as we'll see next week and that will imply at least somebody who has learned and is submissive to God's word because

[46 : 03] God's gospel goal is godliness gospel teaching is prized that's why Paul said in chapter 1 verse 4 and 5 the divine training that is known by faith is what matters and the aim of that instruction is love that comes from a pure heart a good conscience and sincere faith where teaching is ignorant and heretical you do not find life but death you do not find love but anger and argument and that's why Timothy's command in this letter to silence the wolves is so important and so critical may God's word live in us and bear much fruit to his glory amen