

3-5-23 – Can We Talk About This: Women’s Role in the Church
Jesus on Hierarchy & How We Read Scripture

Jesus’ prayer was that God’s will (“the Kingdom”) would be done here “on Earth as it is Heaven.”

- Worthy questions:
 - What will the role of the different genders be in Heaven?
 - What teachings of Jesus speaks to this, and therefore, to the role of women in His church?

HIERARCHY - What does Jesus teach concerning hierarchy (Chain of Command; Power Differential; Pecking Order; Authority)?

Matthew 20:20-28

Matthew 18:1-4

Mark 10:35-45

Luke 14:7-11

Luke 22:24-27

Matthew 23:8-12

John 13:1-17

Matthew 12: 47-50

It is human tendency/nature to think in terms of hierarchy. But Jesus says, “*not so with you*”, “*unless you change*” & “*you are not to be like that.*”

Paul (and all New Testament writers) carries this teaching of Jesus with him as he applies it to specific issues that relevant to the now Spirit-filled Jesus followers (marriage/household/church relationships)

Paul proves his grasp of this when he writes in Galatians 3:26-29 – “*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*”

- Old Jewish Morning Prayer: “*Bless you, Lord our God, who has created me a man and not a woman, an Israelite and not a gentile, free and not slave.*”
- Consider these three groups mentioned though the lens of hierarchy and church history.
 - Jew/Gentile – Major movement on this in first 100 years. Much of the New Testament addressing this. Peter struggled embracing it. But the church has been in agreement on the erasure of the power differential between these groups for centuries.
 - Master/Slave – It took until about 100 years ago for the church to decide theologically that in Christ, there is no place for this power differential.
 - Male/Female – Could it be that like Peter, we are still working out how to embrace the erasure of the power differential between these groups in the church? And could it be, that just like we were slow to embrace that the Kingdom does not endorse slavery despite scripture that seems to indicate otherwise, we are doing the same with gender?

IMPORTANT: Our slowness concerning our beliefs about God’s will concerning Gentiles, slavery, and women is NOT primarily because we don’t want God’s will in these areas, but because of HOW WE’VE READ SCRIPTURE to glean God’s will in these areas.

HOW YOU READ SCRIPTURE DETERMINES WHAT YOU BELIEVE AND PRACTICE CONCERNING WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH.

Option 1: Read Scripture "As Rules to Follow"

- Command/Example/Inference
- Speak where the Bible speaks, Silent where the Bible is silent.
- "It says what it means, means what it says."
- Imitating the 1st Century Church

Result: Restrictions on Women's Role in the Church

Option 2: "As Story to Fulfill"

- Story, Wisdom, Love
- Matt 5:17 - *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*

Result: Restoring of Women's Role in the Church

HOW DO WE DECIDE?

- We do not look at the desired result and then choose the way we want to read it.
- We must ask: How does scripture itself tell us to read and interpret scripture?