

1Tim 23-12-10a

Good morning, this is the 10th day of December 2023. We're continuing our study in First Timothy, very fascinating section here. It's a shame that this is not, you know, Ladies' Feminist Day or something because we're looking at one of the more disputed, controversial and unhappy passages for ladies who want to be pastors and apostles and such.

This is going to be in chapter 2, verse 9 through 12 and following. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study and we'll see what's going on here. Father, we are grateful again for the opportunity to spend this time together in fellowship and in instruction in your word.

We're grateful for the Lord Jesus who has made it possible for us to enjoy all of the many blessings that are privileges and opportunities for us. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who is able to teach us, to remind us, to lead and guide us and to shine the light of your word on our path. We pray that all of those opportunities will be ours as we look at this portion of your word together.

We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified and we will be learning and growing in grace and knowledge and fit for service both now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our passage says, after exhorting men to pray in every place, and we saw last time that when it says all men everywhere, this is specifically aimed at places of worship. And you have parallels for this in many other places, many other passages. We won't take time to look at them, but if you find this in every place phrase used in Paul's other epistles, context tells us that he is talking about churches, whether it is, and you see this in Romans chapter 16 especially, the church that is in their house, the church that is in her house or his house, these in every place are places of worship, places of instruction, and so on.

And the context here is important because what he goes on to say about men and women applies in worship. It isn't all the time everywhere. It is when believers come together for formal worship or public worship, when they are viewed as a group by those who are outside.

And the idea is that the prayers should be offered by men, and these should be offered in a specific way because it is visible. We know that we can pray in all kinds of circumstances. I think it's especially great that I can pray while I'm driving.

And the various postures of prayers, when Paul says here that I exhort first of all that prayers be offered and giving of thanks made for all men, and he picks that thought up in verse 8, I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere in every place. The men

pray, and this is a testimony. We have a lot of talk about testimony and about witness, and yet many times there's a lack of attention paid to what the scripture says about how churches should look, how they should behave as groups, what their impression is that they leave with others.

And Paul says that the men pray on air, not anthropos. This is not generic men. This is the males should pray.

Lifting up holy hands, holy hands. We saw this last time in Isaiah 115, God said to Israel, I will not hear your prayers because your hands are full of blood. So the men in the church, this is not just they need to be sure they confess their sins before they lift up in prayer, but the reputation of the church should not be that people are evading civic responsibilities, taxes that might need to be paid, or churches that have property, are they maintaining that property? Is it a good testimony? Holy hands means that the church should not have a reputation for harboring people who engage in bad behavior, that, you know, let not your good be spoken of as evil.

The church should have a good reputation in the community. And when the men in the church pray publicly, someone shouldn't be either inside or outside the church saying, I can't believe that man is there addressing God on behalf of the group when he himself is guilty of malfunctions. And Paul is going to detail this when we get to chapter three.

What are the things that these men who lift up their hands should be notable for and what should they not have as a part of their life, their witness, their testimony, their reputation? So these holy hands are going to be explained further in chapter three, and you're well familiar with that. The bishop must be blameless. And then there are details.

Holy hands. It's an interesting thing to look at the different postures of prayer that are recorded in Scripture. And the only one that is widely consistent in modern America, which is, you know, folding your hands and closing your eyes, neither one of those is anywhere in Scripture.

It never says anybody folded their hands, never says anybody shut their eyes. Of all of the postures of prayer, the two that we most frequently practice publicly, the only part of it that has a scriptural basis is bowing the head and not always that. But the standing for prayer is frequently mentioned in Scripture.

I'll just give you a few references for each of these. There are an abundance of these, but the Lord Jesus says in Mark 11, verse 25, whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. Often overlooked, people are frequently ready to, you know, do the first John 1, 9 and confess their sins without stopping to think, have I forgiven anyone that I have something against? Jesus said whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him so that your father in heaven may also forgive you your

trespasses.

Luke 18, 11, when Jesus was comparing the Pharisee that prayed within himself, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. And it's interesting because we so often see spoken prayer in Scripture, and yet there is private prayer in the public prayer that the Pharisee prays is fit for public consumption. But within himself, he's praying, oh Lord, I'm sure glad I'm not like that tax collector.

I'm not like these extortioners and adulterers and these unjust people. He doesn't pray that out loud because it's so blatantly self-righteous. It's his inner prayer.

But he stood and prayed. And of course, you have the following, the tax collector standing and beating his breast and saying, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. Spreading the hands is throughout Scripture.

In 1 Kings 8, 22, when Solomon is dedicating the temple, Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. This is frequent in Scripture. It's in Nehemiah 8, 6, Ezra.

When Ezra blesses the Lord, the great God, the people answered, Amen, while lifting up their hands and they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So when they bow their head, of course, their face is toward the ground, but they're lifting their hands up. Psalm 63, verse 4, I will bless you while I live, says the psalmist, I will lift up my hands in your name.

Many references in the Psalms. And in the New Testament, Luke 24, 50, when Jesus is about to ascend, He led His disciples out as far as Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Our passage, lifting up holy hands, and James 4, 8 alludes to this, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. The idea is cleansing your hands allows you to lift up holy hands, as Paul says here. Bowing the head, Abraham's servant, when he goes back and finds Rebecca at the well, says in 24, 48, I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord God of my master, Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son.

I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord. In Exodus 12, 27, in connection with the first Passover, the instruction from the Lord in observing the Passover perpetually is, you shall say, it is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord who passed over the houses of the children of Israel and Egypt, when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our household, so the people bowed their heads and worshiped. In the days of King Hezekiah, 2 Chronicles 29, 30, they sang praises with gladness, they bowed their heads and

worshiped.

And lifting heavenward of the eyes is a frequent prayer posture in the Psalms. I'll give you just a few of these. In Psalm 121, 1, you remember this one, I lift my eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help.

Psalm 123, 1, unto you I lift up my eyes, O you who dwell in the heavens. In the New Testament, you have those who looked to the Lord Jesus when they would beseech Him and ask for healing or for assistance. The idea of kneeling is, you know, sometimes there's a standing posture, sometimes there's a kneeling posture.

In Luke 22, 41, Jesus withdrew from Peter, James, and John in the garden, withdrew about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed. In Acts chapter 20, verse 36, Paul with the Ephesian elders said these things, He knelt down and prayed with them all. Acts 21, verse 5, when we had come to the end of those days, we departed, went our way, they accompanied us with wives and children until we were out of the city, and we knelt down on the shore and prayed.

So this is a group posture of kneeling for prayer. And Paul says in Ephesians 3, 14, for this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You can think of examples of falling down with the face upon the ground.

Abram does this in Genesis 17, verse 3. Jesus, again in the garden, in Matthew 26, 39, went a little further and fell on His face and prayed and said, O Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. In Revelation chapter 1, verse 17, when John sees the glorified Lord, I saw him and fell at his feet as dead, but he laid his right hand on me, saying, Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last.

Revelation 11, 16, the 24 elders before God's throne fell on their faces and worshiped God. So there are a variety of different postures. Sometimes these postures express the level of distress, the level of sorrow.

Sometimes prayer is spoken out loud. Very often in Scripture, prayer is out loud. Other times it is silent.

You think of Hannah in 1 Samuel chapter 1, where Eli can't hear her prayer. He sees her lips moving and he thinks she's drunk because her prayer is not loud enough to be heard. But sometimes these postures are combined.

So the tax collector, again in Luke 18, 13, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. In 1 Kings 8, 22, Solomon spreads out his hands toward heaven, and he also speaks out loud and, of course, is standing with his hands outstretched. So what is the point of all of this? It is one thing for private prayer.

It is something else for public prayer. And public prayer posture communicates as much as the content. And it makes a difference.

It is a testimony. It is a witness to those who are outside in humility, bowing the head, kneeling. These things communicate attitude and a recognition of God's sovereignty.

And we should be conscious in public prayer of the impression that we give to others. It is one thing to raise hands in terms of supplication. It may be something else to raise your hands and wave them while you're, you know, running in place, so to speak.

There is lifted hands in prayer that doesn't seem very respectful. And it matters. Paul says here, it matters.

And the reverence and the respect that is due to the Lord God in heaven ought to be evidenced in our posture as well as in our words. And this is particularly true in public versus private. This public versus private idea is really important for what's coming up.

We tend to kind of blend the two. A lot of formality has left our public worship. I think that's not good.

I think it matters when we assemble to the extent that we're able to assemble. But even in this form of assembly, it matters. What is our demeanor? What is our posture? What is our sense of reverence, the proper awe and worship that is due for God in heaven? And when we assemble in his name to seek an understanding of his word and cultivate the ministry of his spirit, is it special? Is it unique? Is it something that defines us as believers? And this extends to our physical behavior.

And it is different in the non-assembled hours of our life. And what women do and do not do that is going to follow this is equally distinguishable by whether it is a part of a worship service or not. And that's where we pick up this morning in verse 9, in like manner also the women adorn themselves in modest apparel with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.

We looked at this last time. This is consideration to not sponsor or create an occasion for subjectivity, people looking around and saying, wow, I'm not that rich. I don't have that kind of costly adornment, to make people conscious of their financial status, their poverty or their simplicity of life, to sort of put on the dog and try to impress with excessive amounts of cosmetics and preparation and jewelry and such.

But this is in the context of assembling for worship, publicly identifying with other believers in a group setting. It doesn't mean that if you're going to a state dinner somewhere or if you are in a civilian context, let's say, not in a worship setting, that's a different thing. There's nothing intrinsically wrong or sinful about braided hair or jewelry.

But in assembly for worship, these things are to be followed in like manner also. The

adornment for women professing godliness is good works. And the group of women can be known for their consideration and their thoughtfulness, their prayer support.

You look at people who are bereaved and what a wonderful testimony in a church that women bring meals and take care of children and make arrangements and comfort and encourage and embrace and lift up and support someone who's having a hard time, whether they're having health issues, they've lost a loved one, there's some other setback. It is amazing what the women in an assembly can do. And that witness and that testimony and that blessing lives on in the memory of the people who receive it for years, for a lifetime.

And isn't it wonderful that so often it isn't the finer points of doctrinal persuasion that are the reputation of a church, it is their good works. Men who get together, I think it's such a wonderful thing. There's a group down in Dallas, the Baptist men and men of Texas.

And when there's a disaster, when there's a hurricane or a bad fire or a flood, those guys out of their own pockets and with their own money, they have trailers, they receive donations, of course, but they will go, they will be present and put a shoulder under the load. And whether it is sandbags, whether it is reconstruction, whether it is cleaning debris, but they're not just men, they're the Baptist men. And they come from Baptist churches and they affiliate, they get together.

And it's a wonderful testimony that Christians will go and do. You have many people who volunteer at soup kitchens and shelters and battered women's clinics and other places who will go and visit people in the hospital and such. And this is the adornment rather than saying, oh, she's a real clothes horse, she's a real prima donna, she's a real runway model.

People remember women from a particular church group or associated with Christ in some public and formal way for their good works. And of course, it goes without saying that the men should be as well. That which is proper for women professing godliness.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, but to be in silence. This again is in the public worship setting.

The two things to remember about this are a, it was a witness and a testimony in the day when pagan worship was characterized by women leadership, priestesses and temple prostitutes and the visible face of polytheism and dedication to Greek and Roman gods in this day was signature women. God has pronouns. The God of the Bible has pronouns and they are he and him.

He is not Aphrodite. He's not Lilith. He's not Diana of the Ephesians.

He is not Venus or any of these other pulchritudinous goddesses. He is one God, not

many, and he is male. He is God the Father.

He sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, not his daughter. And even the Holy Spirit is referred to with male pronouns. Jesus said, he is with you and will be in you.

He is with you and will be in you. So what does it mean now? Does this in some way diminish women or prevent them from teaching or sharing their faith? Not at all. You have the example, which is often quoted, of Priscilla in Acts 18.26. Flip back to Acts 18.26. This is often cited as an example that women can be preachers and ordained ministers and lecture or deliver sermons and exhortations in churches.

But in verse 24 of Acts 18, a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus, our same town. This is where Timothy is. This is where Paul is writing his letter.

Came to Ephesus, 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 in Ephesus when Aquila and Priscilla heard him. Now think about this.

Aquila and Priscilla go to the and Barnabas is preaching there. He is delivering the message of the hour. Are Aquila and Priscilla sitting together in a Jewish synagogue in Ephesus? No, they are not.

In all Jewish synagogues, the men congregate front and center. The women are in an ante room. So Aquila hears Barnabas from the main audience section.

Priscilla hears him from the segregated separate section where the women sit. This is not a liberal synagogue. It's not a mixed multitude sitting out there.

It's a Jewish synagogue, and this is how they always worshipped in those days. So they hear him, and when they heard him, they took him aside. They took him aside.

You will notice Priscilla didn't stand up in the synagogue and begin to say, thank you for that message, Barnabas, but I've got a few modifications and corrections, additions, some supplementary information that will help you. After the synagogue service was over, Aquila and Priscilla reunite. They come up.

They introduce themselves to Barnabas. They say, would you like to come out to the house? We really enjoyed your message. Love to discuss it with you.

They take him aside privately. This is no longer, hear me now, this is no longer a public worship setting. They have taken him aside.

This is in private. This is a personal, off-the-platform conversation, and they explained to him the way of God more accurately. Dan Wallace, wonderful, one of the foremost

scholars of New Testament Greek in the world, has written an article about this that you can find on bible.org, and the title of it is, did Priscilla, quote unquote, teach Apollos? I think I said Barnabas.

We're talking about Apollos. Did she teach him? And he goes to Acts 18.26, because the word used here that is translated, explained, is not didasco or any form of it, which means to teach or to preach. This is ek tithami.

Tithami is to put or place. This is where our arranging things in an order comes from, to put or to place, and ek is out. It almost literally means, our colloquialism is lay out, to set forth.

Set forth is a literal translation. Tithami, to set, to put or place, ek is out or forth. So it's to lay out, to set forth, to explain.

Explains a good translation. In a private setting, for a woman to explain what she has learned about the Word of God, what Priscilla and Aquila understood about the Lord Jesus, that the baptism of John has been supplanted and superseded to Apollos, is perfectly legitimate. That's not what Paul is talking about here, or in the even stronger passage in 1 Corinthians.

When you get to 1 Corinthians 14, verse 34, let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. Now, does this mean from the moment you walk into a church building, or the moment that an assembly begins, mums the word, and you can't say, hi, how are you, or good to see you? What does this mean, speak? This is again, the formal worship setting, to present, to preach, is the idea here. Let your women keep silent in the assemblies.

Once the assembly begins, things are done decently and in good order, and you do not have women coming up to the front and addressing the group for the purposes of exhortation, for preaching, for explication, for teaching the word to the group. This is an expression of submissiveness, and it is a public witness. In the same way that posture in prayer is a public witness, this is an expression.

It is metaphorical for an understanding of God's ordained structure in marriage, in family. In the same way that children are to obey their parents in the Lord, this is right. And a man, as we'll see in chapter 3 of our passage, is asked to have a well-ruled household with his children in submission.

Obedient children, submissive children, orderly, controlled children, who submit to that authority. Why would the behavior of someone's children at home make a difference for the man to function as an overseer in the church? It has to do with lifting up holy hands. It has to do with the testimony of the group.

And the testimony of the group is we do what we do because God has ordained it. That's

why in 1 Corinthians, Paul says, let your women keep silent in the assemblies and the churches for they are not permitted to speak, but to be submissive. Very same word as you have the submission in 3.4 of 1 Timothy.

They are to be submissive as the law also says. This was a hallmark in Israel that women were to be submissive. This was a testimony to the nations internally and externally.

When we get to chapter 5, Paul is going to say, 1 Timothy 5.14, I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. Being out of line, being unsubmissive, not properly addressing assigned duties and responsibilities from the Lord himself is a cause for reproach. It is a distraction.

It deflects and confuses people. This is not any mark of inferiority or lesser quality, but insubordination and free thinking and making up your own rules is a problem. This is what Paul goes on to say in verse 13.

Women teaching or having authority over a man in the public assembly, rather than being in silence. Adam was formed first, then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression.

Why does he bring up Adam and Eve? Because God formed Adam first. Why didn't he make Eve first and do the divine pregnancy thing as with the Lord Jesus, so that the first man comes forth from the womb of a woman? Adam was formed first, then Eve. This was intentional on God's part, and God declared that Eve's role was to be a help suitable for Adam.

She is a help. She is dependent on him. Her very body is taken from the body of Adam.

God could have made her out of the dust of the ground in the same way they made Adam, but he did not. He took parts of Adam and formed Eve, and God did it on purpose. Why? These physical actions are a public testimony.

This is a witness. It is a metaphor that God formed Eve from Adam. Adam is formed from the dust of the ground.

It speaks of an order. It speaks of a role, an assigned role, and it is divinely ordained. If there's nothing else we remember, we should remember that things are right and things are proper because God defines them as such.

When God says, this is right, this is proper, this is what I ordain, that is our rule to second-guess God, to say, I've got a better idea. I'm going to modify the divine order. This is how transgression entered the world.

How did transgression come into the world? Eve violated the divine order. She took the

lead. She initiated.

She began thinking for herself and reasoning for herself that what she heard from the serpent made sense, and she did not submit to Adam's husband authority. She listened to an outside authority. Somebody else planted the idea in her mind that it would be a great idea to eat this fruit.

Today, when you have women ordained and leading churches, it is contrary to the clear guidance of Scripture. And people say, well, but if you're submissive, if you're silent in the church, you're speaking of inferiority. That's the snake talking in the tree.

It is right to be submissive, and when we come back from the break, we're going to see that this goes beyond just men and women and the church or the home. Understanding this idea that things are right and following an order is proper because God said so, that's the reason children can be submissive to their parents. That's the reason that slaves can be submissive to their masters.

That's the reason that we submit ourselves to authorities that are ordained by God, even when we disagree with their policies, and we can find plenty wrong with what they do. The Lord Jesus and the apostles, the entire witness of the New Testament Scripture tells Jewish believers and Christians to submit to the Romans, Romans who are guilty of all kinds of heinous crimes, and yet there is never an exhortation to do anything but submit. If women cannot submit themselves in a church assembly, how are the people of God going to submit themselves and pray for kings and all those who have authority? It begins in the home.

It begins with children. It begins with women. It begins with the men.

The head of the woman is the man, and the head of every man is Christ, Paul says in another letter. And if women are not going to recognize the husband as the head of the house, why is the husband then going to recognize Christ as the head of his operation? And our understanding and our practice and our fruitfulness in the plan and purpose of God diminishes, wilts, rots away. It is essential that we understand these things.

It's not a license for men to be domineering and overbearing. Is Christ domineering and overbearing to men who are under his leadership? Are parents overbearing and domineering on their children? They should not be. When they are, it breeds strife.

It causes division. It interrupts the divine order. Authority is an assignment that is to be borne very carefully.

Are officers to be domineering and overbearing to enlisted people, cruel and insensitive? That does not work in the long term. It always ends badly. Well, we have more to see about this when we come back.