

Men and Women in Christ -- A Divine Harmony -- Other Scriptures Class

Introduction

- What we have covered so far...
 - Hermeneutics & Exegesis; 1 Corinthians 11 & 14; 1 Timothy 2
 - OT & NT examples of men and women working together
- Our hope: To get a better picture of God's vision for men and women working harmoniously for His glory and the advancement of His kingdom.
- Tonight's passages: 1 Peter 3.1-7; Titus 2.1-5; Ephesians 5.21-33; Colossians 3.18-19; Galatians 3.26-29; Romans 16.1-2; Romans 16.7

1 Peter 3.1-7

- Context: **1 Peter 2.23** -- Jesus trusted God; Wives and husbands submit in same way 3.1,7.
- Wives: Conversion disturbed the family more than husband's conversion
- Submission: Aim to win over; Sarah saw promises fulfilled because she hung in there with Abraham
- Husbands: Focus on duties not privileges; wives weaker in societal position; hinder = cut off
- Overview: No competition in marriage, but mutual concern

Titus 2.1-5

- Older men: Misbehaviour causing women to struggle to respect them?
- Subject to their husbands: Aim is to honour God's word; would insisting on this kind of submission today have the opposite effect?

Ephesians 5.21-33

- Context: **Ephesians 5.1-2** follow Christ's example; revealing what 'filled with the Spirit' (5.18) looks like for married people; Artemis in the background -- women being bossy, domineering, assuming they are more important, the 'source', the 'head'?
- Submit v22: Not imply authority, but Christ-like way of relating
- As to the Lord: in love, trust, voluntarily; counter-cultural (wives ordered)

- Head: What kind? Christ-like. Western view? Source, or leadership? Both? Jesus is head as Saviour -- does this clarify? Leadership not mentioned here. Love is. His headship is expressing the love of Christ to his wife. Headship is a NT idea - we do not see it in the OT. Implies Paul is dealing with something specific to do with the churches he addresses regarding 'headship'. If human male headship is connected with leadership, it is not expressly said to be so. In the OT leadership is nowhere mandated to be male. The only areas women could not participate were as soldiers and priests. Why? Possibly to do with menstrual cycle and purity. We see many exceptions to male leadership (Deborah, Huldah, Esther and others) which are the minority because of a male-dominated culture, but illustrate God has no objections to women in leadership and teaching positions.
- Submit v24: Does submit imply obey? Old (accepted social) order does not need upsetting here because living like this will change it anyway.

Colossians 3.18-19

- Submit: No leadership mentioned. 'In the lord' - special quality different from the world (voluntary, not forced).
- love: cultural expectation would be 'rule'.
- Note: [Colossians 3.16](#) - teach and admonish one another (men and women)

Galatians 3.26-29

- Context: Salvation; rights as heirs
- 'sons': same rights as everyone else. This new covenant is not like the old. Circumcision only for men. Baptismal 'circumcision' ([Colossians 2.11-12](#)) is for men and women, slave and free, Jew and Gentile..... 'for all whom the Lord our God will call' [Acts 2.39](#)
- male and female: same as [Genesis 1.27](#), indicating the new covenant relationships between men and women are meant to look like the way men and women related *before* the fall, not after it.
- Notes: This text is not about ministry roles but identifying the changes that have taken place in access to God because of Jesus' death and resurrection. See [Acts 2.17-18](#) for example; tension between kingdom vision stated here & cultural reality, which, when Paul was writing, prevented a full implementation of this kind of vision. A similar situation pertained to slavery.

Romans 16.1-2

- Deacon: [1 Timothy 3.11](#) could imply women were deacons
- Bearer and interpreter of letter? Several house churches in Rome. She may have read and interpreted the letter several times.

Romans 16.7

- 'Junias is a man who didn't exist with a name that didn't exist in the ancient world.'
- Female until 14thC. Luther adopted the masculine
- An apostle (of whatever kind) implies leadership and teaching.

Summary

1. Male female relationships damaged by the fall
2. Consequences reversed by Christ
3. Early church did not abandon some societal consequences because would have hindered the gospel
4. Early church disturbed the status quo by men and women radically living in mutual submission to one another in imitation of the love of Christ.
5. If we are asking 'who gets the right to tell people what to do?' we are asking the wrong question and thinking like the world
6. Submission is a Jesus thing, a man thing and a woman thing. It will look different in different contexts - at work, at home, in the 1stC, in the 21stC, in Africa, in Ephesus, in China....

What is next?

- Our responsibility is to figure out what these Scriptures mean in our culture - here in Watford. It is no business of ours to tell other churches what the texts mean for them.