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“From the Pastor’s Desk”

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SHOULD WOMEN BUILD WALLS

Recently another controversy concerning women has arisen, itself this time it is happening within Christian circles. Beth Moore, a popular Bible teacher, who just happens to be in a Southern Baptist denomination. Representatives of the 14.8 million member Christian organization have been debating over women’s ordination. Beth Moore has become a very popular as well as a gifted Bible Teacher which is seen both on television and various women organizations. She is also a gifted writer.

For instance a professor at the SBC’s Midwestern Baptist Seminary warned that Beth Moore has no business preaching in front of a mixed congregation. He said, *“That for a woman to teach and preach to adult men is to defy God’s Word and that elders should not allow such a sinful practice.”* Now he isn’t the first man who has attempted to silence “women preachers” or “women pastors.” Such criticism has been spouted many times throughout the years in Christian circles.

And there is no question that they use certain Scriptures to defend their belief such as when Paul in his letter to Timothy wrote; *“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”* 1Ti 2:12 Now, if all pastors believe that women should *“be in silence”* they definitely would have lost a lot of Sunday School teachers. This verse as it is written can be interpreted in many different ways depending on their understanding in Greek, culture of the times, or even in matters of dealing with a particular problem in a certain area.

Paul was known to adapt and adjust to the environment of where he was teaching and giving instructions. Most of us know what his belief was concerning circumcision in which it had nothing to do with ones’ salvation. Yet, when he came to one city he required young Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3). Now does that mean therefore all Christian young men need to be circumcised?

Paul on certain occasions found himself having to make a reversal on his personal opinion. One was in regards to John Mark. Paul and Barnabas were about to take off on their second missionary journey, and Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark (Acts 15:37). But Paul thought it best not to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work...their disagreement was so sharp that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. Later however, Paul must have changed his mind about Mark because he told Timothy, when he came to see him to *“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is useful to me in the ministry.”* (2 Tim. 4:11)

Desperate times often calls for desperate measures. This is why I raised the question in the title of this article: Should women build walls? I dare say most people would say no way should they be asked to do such a thing. And under normal circumstances I would agree. But the question that must be addressed is this: Are we living in normal times? I don’t think so. I think we live in a time like Nehemiah’s day when he was doing everything he could to muster help to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh.3) He had opposition continuously, like we do today. Apparently he got some help from some women to help repair the breaches in the wall. *“Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters.”* (Neh.3:12) Yes, desperate times often call for desperate measures.

I say if Beth Moore can reach people that we are not reaching more power to her. And who are we to stand in the way? Jesus said, *“The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”* (Luke 10:2) Jesus did not say pray the Lord send forth “men” but rather to send forth “laborers.” The qualification was not found in being male or female, but in being available to God for His service for the time of the Harvest.

I realize that there are situations which would not be fitting to send in a woman to teach a certain group of people. But I also know that this could be said, not only about ones gender but could be said about ones skin color, as well as one's age. We do need to study the audience before we choose who will be the speakers/teachers/pastor. It isn't because we are biased for or against a particular person due to their age, color or gender, but rather it must be decided by what is most fitting at the time. There is no set pattern for all situations. This is why the Lord choose to use a donkey to speak; - Balaam's Donkey, (Num. 22:21-39 NIV).

There have been times when God has been "desperate" or "anxious" or concerned enough to use men and women even when they failed to live up to the perfection that is generally required of elders, deacons, and such like; (See 1 Timothy 3:1–13) Just think about the various ones He used in the Old Testament. Abraham had a problem with lying about who his wife was. Noah must have liked wine...he got drunk after he helped save his family from the flood. (Gen. 9:21) Gideon was a very fearful man. And Samson was a great warriors but his relationship with the prostitutes created quite a problem. But those were desperate times for Israel and God used what He had to work with.

I truly believe some theologians would rather debate the pro and con of religion and theology than get in the arena and fight the battle that we have in our communities against sin, abortion, drug addiction, marriages falling apart, and young people committing suicide. Maybe there will be men who won't take counsel of the Scripture from Beth Moore or Pastor Sheri Leming, but I doubt they would take counsel from their wives either.

I have found in my 60 years of marriage that my wife's counsel...preaching...talking about having patience in dealing with people, our children, and about saving money, praying about a decision before acting has saved me from many pitfalls that the devil has set for me. I am glad that she did not **"keep silent"** and feel that she was **"usurping authority over me"** because of what I needed to hear from her. It has truly been the salvation of our ministry due to much needed input over the years.

Should women build walls? Well what does a husband, a father, a leader do when what is needed is not there? One of the leading Christian Organizations in the world was started by a woman. **Aimee Semple McPherson**, returned from a mission in China as a 20-year-old widow and single mother, but a woman of intense passion and creativity and energy. She led an incredible life that exemplified God's miraculous mercy. She sparked a revival, established a major evangelical center in Los Angeles, and changed the lives of countless individuals. What would there be today if she had disqualified herself simply because she was a woman when she felt the call of God upon her life? Someone said she made mistakes. Well if mistakes are the disqualifier than what hope do we men have?

What I am talking about is not political correctness but Biblical Correctness because the Scriptures talk about holy men of God spoke because they were being moved by the Holy Spirit and not by the **"will of men."** (2 Peter 1:21) Then I read that in the **"last days"** God would pour out his spirit upon all flesh. (Acts 2:17) **"All flesh"** would include sons and daughters that would prophecy. How can the women **"be silent"** if the Holy Spirit is speaking through them? **Who are we to silence them?**

I remember several years ago when my daughter came to me and shared with me how God was dealing with her concerning the ministry. I cautioned her to make sure, because I knew the opposition she would face if she dare to make this known. Yet, I knew also of her ambition earlier in her youth to be a successful business woman. Well she succeeded in that but it did not bring the satisfaction she thought it would accomplish. So being a woman of prayer she sought the Lord. Then the day came when she turned down a promotion and a \$10,000 raise; more, she even quit her job to enter the ministry.

I said to her, **"Honey, the standard set for you will be higher than for men. You will need to be double-good in your profession if you want to succeed because even in the church you will be scorned and reviled."** I guess I was a prophet because she has suffered that as well. But I have seen God grant her His favor, anointing, and blessing. **Because you see, there are some walls that need to be rebuilt**, souls that need to be reached, and this father has granted his daughter like **Shallum** did with his daughters. She has joined our team because these are desperate times and we need all the help we can get. May the Lord continue to grant her His favor to speak and to teach as she is moved by the Holy Spirit. Amen.