

# Right scriptural practices in the church (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Crowter, Harold (1923-2011)

[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord may help me, we will turn again to the epistle of Paul to the Philippians in the fourth chapter, looking at verses two and three, the second and third verses of the fourth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Philippians.

I beseech, Iodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Now, you will remember that the burden of Paul in addressing this epistle to the Philippians is the sovereignty of God.

And my friends, it seems that in writing here, he has an appreciation of a difference that exists between two women at Philippi, Iodias and Syntyche.

And as he goes on to speak in a way of commendation of the women which laboured with him in the gospel, one wouldn't appreciate from this language that these women were at great difference, the one with the other.

[ 2 : 00 ] That is, one wouldn't feel that it is a difference in doctrine to such a degree that one is holding fast to Arminianism, while the other is holding fast to Calvinism.

That is, the difference between free will and free grace. But one would appreciate that in some area, probably quite small, quite insignificant comparatively, these two women had different views.

And these differing views were contrary to the glory of Christ and the peace of the church.

And so, the apostle Paul, in writing his epistle, addresses these remarks, particularly to these two persons concerned.

He doesn't treat it, although it may be comparatively small in its nature, he doesn't treat it as of little importance.

[ 3 : 38 ] Because, my friends, every difference that exists in the church of Christ leaves, as it were, the door slightly open for the great enemy of souls.

And if, if I may use a very homely expression, if the devil sees a chink of difference, he's going to drive a wedge in to such a degree that the little beginning becomes a great dissension.

You know, in the Song of Solomon we have this, take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vine. The little foxes, not the big foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vine.

For the vines have tender grapes. But, my friends, so often it is the little things that are the commencement of great differences that finally mar the usefulness and fruitfulness, the peace and prosperity of Christ's church.

I do therefore ask you tenderly and very affectionately to watch against little differences. The devil is very, very astute at marking these and using them to his advantage.

- [ 5 : 29 ] And my friends, as one that is now in heaven, put it in a very useful way.
- He said this, the late Mr. Rose, George Rose, you know I'm very fond of his, some of his sayings in remembrance, he said this, I'd rather carry a bucket of water than a match.
- A match can soon, it's only a little thing, but it can soon kindle a great fire. Mr. Rose said, I'd rather carry a bucket of water than a match.
- I'd rather be, as it were, a messenger of peace than be employed in that striking of a match, which at length can multiply and increase until the whole community is an inferno of contention and strife.
- Now he says, I beseech you, dear, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the law. My friends, there's no excuse for difference if we bring matters to Christ.
- [ 7 : 02 ] That they be of the same mind in the law. In the law. An acknowledgement of God's absolute sovereignty is an essential of peace.
- Sometimes we may be envious of one another's gifts. We may be envious of one another's abilities. We may be envious of one another's opportunities.
- And my friends, because God in his sovereignty has disposed our lot in a variety of situations and conditions, we have no right to look over the fence, so to speak, at our neighbour and be envious of him or her in any specific whatsoever.
- Let me illustrate my point. Some people have more time than others.
- And they can use that time to an advantage for the glory of God and the cause of Christ.
- [ 8 : 33 ] Now it may be another person is captivated by duties and responsibilities lawful in their nature, such as Martha.
- And there must be Martha's as well as Mary's to keep the wheels of society turning. But my friends, we must appreciate that one has an opportunity by reason of lack of commitment which is absolutely denied to her fellow.
- Now it's not right for her fellow to look at the other one and say, well, why should she be able to do this, that and the other? And I can't.
- And to get bitter about it and envious and jealous over it and begin to insinuate wrong motives as if, so to speak, the other person is doing what they are doing for self-glory.
- Whereas their motive might be absolutely pure in serving the Lord, in humbleness of mind and as opportunity will afford. Now you see, the devil can come in and insinuate all sorts of false motives and eventually we get into such a state of mind that we can't think of good about our neighbour and everything that they say and do is wrong because envy and jealousy is as cruel as the grave and the grave is all-consuming.
- [ 10 : 26 ] So, my friends, let us remember that how much it can be to the advantage of Satan to criticise, find fault and condemn falsely those that may be possessed of an opportunity which is denied to us who seek to use that opportunity in the fear of the Lord and for the advantage of Christ's cause upon the earth.
- I beseech Iodias and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord. Let me just conclude this point with this remark that they be of the same mind in the Lord in doctrine but that they be of the same mind in the Lord in practice too.
- Appreciating that the church is as a body and every member has its function. Some members seem to have a more prominent and eminent function than others but that the body may work profitably prosperously every member has his and her part to play.
- Therefore how wrong it is for the hand to say to the eye I have no need of thee or the hand to say to the foot I have no need of thee.

Let us appreciate that the Lord has given us in his absolute sovereignty abilities and opportunities for the furtherance of his cause and as we seek to use those abilities and opportunities in his service there is a recognition of the difference of dispensations granted to the glory and honour of his holy name.

[ 12 : 53 ] Now I beseech you dear and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord. My friends there is no schism in Christ.

Dear old Mr. Hope of Abingdon years ago said to me this he said Harold there is no schism in Christ.

He said if there is schism somebody is leaving Christ somewhere. How often I thought of that remark. Somebody is leaving Christ somewhere when schism enters therefore let us be of the same mind in the law.

Let Christ have his sovereign sway and let us appreciate his absolute freedom liberty as the sovereign to allocate as he sovereignly sees fit abilities and opportunities to his children.

Our great concern should be my friends to exercise our abilities and our opportunities in love to Christ and to his cause.

[ 14 : 17 ] One of the great needs of the church of Christ is holy zeal in the cause of Christ.

so often I feel today there is a spirit of indifference so that we neglect to appreciate our opportunities and we bury our talents in the earth that is deny our abilities as if God has not given them to us for the benefit of his cause and his interests.

sanctified abilities and sanctified opportunities strengthen the cause of Christ and glorify the precious name of Christ.

You may say to me well Mr. Crowder whatever is my opportunity and whatever is my ability well I'm not here to identify in detail your abilities and your opportunities but I do say let your conscience speak as before God what thy hand findeth to do do it with thy might that's the scripture it's so easy to say oh my neighbor will take care of that he'll get on with that she'll get on with that and kind of fold one's arms in a in a state of lethargy and indifference as if everybody's here to serve me my friends

God hasn't constituted our natural bodies in such a way every member has its function and use in harmony with the whole and to the advantage of the whole therefore if we neglect our responsibility in the body somebody's got to take that up or the body's going to suffer now let us then as God gives us grace apply ourselves prayerfully to this area of responsibility which is clearly defined in the word of God meted out by a sovereign God to every particular member of his church on earth well then he comes to another point which I want to deal with this morning as the

[ 17 : 16 ] Lord may help me and I entreat thee also true yoke fellow help those women which laboured with me in the gospel with Clement also and with other our fellow labourers whose names are in the book of life the particular person to whom the apostle Paul is addressing this exhortation is not clear some have inferred that it was his wife but I don't think so I entreat thee also true yoke fellow my friends I don't think by the teaching of scripture that Paul was ever married I don't think so he had the liberty to marry yes yes I feel that the scripture is very clear that this is honourable in all this is honourable in all that doesn't exclude the apostle

Paul but I do think this also that God in his sovereignty gave the apostle Paul a mind and spirit to serve him to the exclusion so to speak of the benefits of a partner in life and the establishment of a family circle it seemed to be more to the advantage of the cause of Christ that the apostle Paul remained single and God gave him that preeminent love for his service that made the apostle Paul not a reluctant single person but my friends a most willing single person in the service of his heavenly master now I can appreciate and admire that characteristic in the apostle but my friends

I don't feel that it is by any means binding upon all those that serve the Lord that they should remain in such a condition but if God gives a man grace and sufficient love so to pass through life I admire the grace which God gives but it is by no means binding upon the ministry generally because it is absolutely evident that Peter had a wife the apostle Peter had a wife because Christ himself wrought a miracle on his wife's mother who was sick celibacy that is exercised in the Roman

Catholic Church has no warrant of scripture it has no scriptural warrant and I make that point particularly for the benefit of our young people who may not be clear in scriptural teaching upon that point now who this yoke fellow was I don't understand because the scripture doesn't name the person but it's obviously someone who was engaged with the apostle in the work of Christ preaching of the gospel among the Philippians and he says and I entreat thee also true yoke fellow help those women which laboured with me in the gospel now this is what I want to come to the women that laboured with me in the gospel because women are so obviously in scripture denied the right and authority to speak in the public assembly in a mixed public assembly therefore some would infer that women have no active part to play in the cause of

Christ and in the benefit of his church my friends this is not supported in the word of God women have a very useful and powerful part to play in the church of Christ and I would thank the Lord for every woman in our society who labours with me in the gospel I cannot put a price on your head whoever you are I cannot assess your value to me and to the cause of Christ here at Ebenezer those of you that labour with me in the gospel your strength and labour is beyond value to us as a community and particularly to me and to the ministry of the gospel that is exercised within this

[ 23 : 50 ] Lord's house I want to come to the rightful place of women in the church it is an area that is being assailed at the present time some are bringing in arguments that seem to militate against the maintained silence of women in the house of God my friends it may be if not for our immediate defence it may be for future defence against increasing unscriptural activities that we now consider this point together in the first epistle of

Paul to Timothy in the second chapter Paul says this in like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shame facelessness and sobriety not with broidered hair or gold or pearls or costly array but which becometh women professing godliness with good works let the woman learn in silence with all subjection but I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence for Adam was first formed then Eve and Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression now the apostle first of all says the responsibility of women in the church is to consider their spirit their spirit be more concerned about your spirit than your outward appearance the

Lord looks on the heart this is you're not here to make an impression that is not the purpose of our assembling together we know that women naturally have a weakness in the consideration of adornment of dress and so on and moderately are considered this is very agreeable and very allowable but my friends what the apostle Paul comes to is this he warns the women against undue interest in appearance and neglect of heart and spirit now if you're going to be of benefit in the church of Christ it's not your appearance that matters it's your spirit that matters the labour that the apostle Paul is speaking of in the text is a labour in the heart primarily which will find its expression in the life is true but it won't find its expression in conformity with the world and its fashion it will find its expression in the spirit of your heart and that spirit which serves serve the

Lord serves the Lord and serves his cause in a gracious humble sober quiet spirit then he says let the woman learn in silence with all subjection that is let the woman learn that is receive instruction in silence with all subjection woman is not suffered to take position of authority in the mixed assembly of the church of Christ he says I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence when I see on church notice boards Mrs.

So and So to preach next Sunday morning or Mrs. So and So to preach next Sunday evening I write Ichabod over the door my friends the Lord will never own and never bless that which is so distinctly and positively contrary to the teaching of his holy word the point that seems to be troubling our churches particularly at the moment is the exercise of women in public prayer and the distinction is attempted between teaching or preaching and praying and in some places I regret to say women are being allowed to pray in the public prayer meetings this I think to some degree stems probably from the low state of Zion that men are rare that exercise the public gift and in consequence women are being encouraged to speak in the public assembly of the church for prayer now my friends

[ 30 : 27 ] I personally having applied myself very much of late to this particular problem that seems to be increasing in the churches I cannot see scriptural warrant for this departure from our established practice I say woman's place in the church is silence as far as the mixed public assembly is concerned perhaps I ought to justify why I say and insist upon the mixed public assembly if we look into the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and appreciate the situation that obtained at Philippi when Paul arrived we may agree that women were meeting together by the riverside for prayer upon the

Sabbath morning and that the Apostle Paul was directed of the Holy Ghost to this assembly and that some infer that obviously the women at Philippi's riverside were praying among themselves and God heard those prayers and answered them in sending the Apostle Paul to them to preach and to lead them in the way of truth and righteousness well my friends if and we cannot say we have scriptural warrant absolutely for this assumption but if those women were praying publicly among themselves there was no man present therefore they were not usurping authority over the man they were not violating the scriptural teaching that woman should remain in subjection because if no man was present they couldn't be found guilty of such a charge so if we allow that women were praying at

Philippi's river we see no violation of the teaching of scripture by the holy spirit that woman's place in a public assembly a mixed assembly is subjection and silence now I want just to touch upon the points which the apostle Paul brings forward in his epistle to Timothy in the second chapter he says I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence for Adam was first formed then he Adam was first formed he was the head of creation then he she followed

Adam she was in subjection to Adam she was in subjection to Adam by reason of the fact that she was formed out of Adam God taking of Adam to create Eve Eve is in subjection to the one from whom she was taken therefore the apostle Paul says by the very fact of creation order Eve the woman remains in subjection unto the man then the next point he brings forward he says and Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression so he says look the devil overcame Eve she was first in the transgression she was the one that initially was deceived she became a sinner before

Adam became a sinner in that sense she took her wrongful place and led Adam into iniquity instead of following Adam in the path of righteousness righteousness she usurped an authority and led her husband into wickedness for that reason says the apostle Paul a woman shouldn't lead a woman shouldn't lead a man because the first time she ever led him she led him wrong therefore in acknowledgement of that initial deception she must remain subject to the man she must remain in silence as an acknowledgement that when she did lead she deceived the man and brought him into sin so the apostle says woman's place is silence in the church my friends

[ 36 : 19 ] I feel very clearly from scripture and this point is also substantiated again by the apostle in his first epistle to the Corinthians and the 14th chapter he says this verse 34 let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak but they are commanded to be under obedience as saith also the law and if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands atone for it is a shame for women to speak in the church you see the apostle Paul is very clear upon this point I appreciate that my remarks in this if wrongly applied could prove an embarrassment with regard to a practice which has my constant and prayerful support in our own assembly and that is the exercise of the women's class in the afternoons now my friends while this class is constituted of women only

I see no reason at all to consider it a violation of scripture there's no usurpation of authority over a man if there's no man present there's no question of subjection if there's no man present I would say this in affection that if it ever came to the point where the two classes the man's class and the ladies class constituting our Bible classes should amalgamate on any particular occasion I would say is the responsibility of the male Bible class leader to speak to the combined assembly but my friends as long as the women's class is wholly constituted of women

I see no violation of this principle of subjection authority which is at the foundation of the whole matter of women's silence in the mixed assembly of the church now I dealt with that at some length I felt that this was an appropriate occasion it's a study that has been with me of recent date at some length and because of troubles that are in the church and I think in the sequence of teaching that we're running through Philippians it's a most appropriate time to bring it forth I hope that it will clear our minds as to the scriptural teaching of woman's rightful place in the church of

Christ we don't allow a woman to teach we don't allow a woman to exercise a position of leadership or authority in the public assembly constituted of men and of women we feel that she should not usurp authority over the man in recognition of her position in creation and in the hall her becoming place is silence in the church in the matter of women giving testimony of the Lord's leadings and dealings with their souls my friends it seems clear that there's no usurpation of authority in such a practice a woman that comes before the church and gives an account of the

Lord's dealings with her soul she doesn't exercise an authority and leadership by so doing she expresses in humble language that which she believes God has wrought for her and within her but I hope that that matter is dealt with sufficiently to give us an understanding of the foundation upon which our church practice is based and I trust by God's help upon which our church practice will proceed but then he says help those women which labored with me in the gospel I've dealt with the negative side what a woman ought not to do now let me deal as the

[ 41 : 59 ] Lord helps me for a few minutes with those things which a woman can do and my friends there's much there's much public prayer is not correct but private prayer has no barrier between male and female my friends praying women are a great asset to any church and praying women are a great strength to any ministry labor in prayer labor in prayer women which labored with me in the gospel you know the apostle

Paul says labored with me in the gospel you can't preach but you can support my ministry and there is a sense in which you can direct my ministry and you can pollinate my ministry to fruit fullness through your prayers you know it's a wonderful thing when ladies in the assembly have exercises by the Holy Ghost laid upon their hearts with regard to the cause of Christ I believe Hannah in the Old Testament was such and one she was worried about the state of Israel she was worried about the low condition of spirituality that obtained in the people and my friends she went into the temple and she prayed only her lips moved but her heart was burdened with a condition that obtained in the church we don't read that

Hannah went round the corner and criticized Hophni and Phinehas and pulled the exercise of their priesthood to pieces and laid all their deficiencies bare before her fellows do we don't read that that would be destructive that would not be constructive but Hannah's constructive approach was to go into the temple and to pray before God that God would appear for Israel and that he would particularly I believe appear in the matter of the ministry or the priesthood that was being exercised in the midst at that time and my friends look what happened in consequence of that woman's spiritual travel the whole of Israel benefited spiritually considered as Samuel rose up in Eli's place and in the place of Hophni and Phinehas and took control of the spiritual welfare of

Israel and my friends what a season of prosperity ensued in the whole history of the Lord's ancient people and one of the women or the woman that is recorded as at the foundation of this turning of the captivity of Israel's history is insignificant Hannah Hannah the women that laboured with me in the gospel they laboured with me by prayer by private prayer by spiritual travel I asked the question to the ladies present how long ago is it since you asked the Lord to quicken the soul in our midst how long ago is it that you asked the Lord to be in our midst as a quickening power to bring sinners from darkness to light the bondage of Satan into the kingdom of

God's dear son and as you pray are you watching are you anxious to see answers to your prayers are you particularly perhaps anxious about our young people the children and the teenagers in our midst are you labouring for their spiritual welfare that they may be brought in their early days to know and love the Lord and to seek to serve him in his house and in his ways my friends that laboured with me in the gospel and then are you in prayer for the prosperity of the ministry as it concerns the building up of the people upon their most holy faith you know a minister in himself is a very weak man if the cause of

[ 48 : 08 ] Christ so to speak through the ministry rests holy upon my shoulders my friends it's a very they're very weak shoulders but if the cause and interest is spread out over us all and we're all labouring together that the Lord will use the ministry for our spiritual advantage then we can begin to watch and expect you know I'm comparatively I'm keenly exercised that 1972 has passed and we haven't seen one person brought forward into the fellowship of the church I've served eight years here and I would say humbly before the Lord there's only been one other year in that eight years when some movement hasn't been forthcoming by God's goodness and grace that the church has been strengthened but we've passed almost through 1972 and there's been no movement to the strengthening of the church now this is an anxiety to me is it to you are you women that labour with me in the gospel that shall I say watchfully and prayerfully mark these things and say is the

Lord's hand has the Lord's hand gone out against us are we offending him in any particular are you exercised in secret prayer regarding these solemn and necessary things women that laboured with me in the gospel I thought of bringing this matter to a close this morning but the time has run on and gone I feel I must leave it and perhaps if the Lord shall help me I will speak a little further from it this evening the Lord had his blessing Fut