

Alright brothers and sisters. Y'all just sit back because the preacher is hot this morning. Last weekend there was a meeting of leaders and preachers of the Southern Baptist Convention. These are well respected, God honoring men. Three of them were on a panel and there was a moderator playing a word association game to generate conversation. The guest of honor was the Rev. Dr. John McArthur. Through the course of the conversation Dr. McArthur made several statements I believe to be contrary to Scripture, and the very nature of the way God works. You can find the link to everything Dr. McArthur said in the footnotes of this morning's sermon. I encourage you to watch it for yourself.

Dr. McArthur said, and I quote, "There is no case to be made for a woman preacher, period."¹

Dr. McArthur goes on to say, "Women do not want equality." "Feminists want to be senators, and the President. Feminists want power and becoming a preacher is the height of the power they can achieve in the church." McArthur goes on state, "This is not a minor issue when you literally over turn the clear teaching of Scripture to empower people who want power you have given up Biblical authority. That is no small issue." Then, just in case we were confused, Dr. McArthur again states, "Women are not allowed to preach."

Now, any of y'all who know me at all know this is a big issue for me. However, the pulpit is not the place to push my issues. So let's look at the text. Where is Dr. McArthur getting this idea? I believe the Scripture Dr. McArthur is referring to comes from 1Timothy 2:11-13.

"Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty."

That is the teaching the Apostle Paul sends to Timothy. Y'all need to understand this is really weird for Paul. Paul worked with and gave credit to A LOT of women for their service and authority in the ministry. Scripture bears out Paul acknowledged the work of the following women in Paul's letters and the book of Acts; Lydia, Dorcas, Priscilla, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, Euodia, Syntyche, and others. In terms of not permitting women to have authority over men. Priscilla and Aquilla even helped Paul to better understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So the idea that Paul did not allow women to have authority seems thin.

The acclaimed Rev. Dr. N.T. Wright recently made this observation with regard to Dr. McArthur's statements. Consider the resurrection. Jesus revealed Himself to women first. Jesus revealed himself to Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women who went with them to tend Jesus' dead body (Luke 24:10). These women were told to go and tell the disciples (Matt 28:5-7). The disciples had not gone to the tomb. It was the women. Without women the gospel might have been missed all together. In point of fact an angel gave the women permission to look into the empty tomb and told them to go and share the good news. It is not a stretch to say women were the first proclaimers of the good news of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

If there are those of you who still do not believe women should be preachers, or that a woman preaching is unbiblical let me introduce y'all to the prophetess, Deborah. There are two whole chapters devoted to Deborah in the book of Judges in the Old Testament. Deborah was in fact a woman. Deborah was the wife of Lappidoth and Deborah served as a judge over Israel. Most of the judges were might military leaders. However, Deborah was a judge more like Moses who would sit under a tree and help the people to settle their disputes – just a little like Judge Judy (Judges 4:4-5). Scripture says Deborah was more than a judge. Deborah was a prophetess (Judges 4:4). Church; what is the job of a prophet? (**pause for answers**) The job of the prophet is to deliver God's

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=455&v=NeNKHqBcgc

messages. My sisters and brothers, what is preaching if not a person doing their very best to deliver God's messages to God's people? (pause) The prophet has been chosen by God to deliver God's messages. You see a person has to be called by God, and gifted through the Holy Spirit to preach effectively or to have authority over others. Deborah had been given this authority.

Deborah summoned the man Barak and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naph'tali and the tribe of Zeb'ulun. ⁷ And I will draw out Sis'era, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand'" (Judges 4:6-7).

Barak tries to play games with Deborah. Barak tells Deborah, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go" (Judges 4:7). (pause) The Scripture does not tell us why Barak tried to play games with Deborah. Scripture does tell us in the Ancient Near East a woman was basically considered property. She was either the property of her father or the property of her husband. A woman's worth was determined by her ability to bear children. Paul's instruction to Timothy confirms it. What I find interesting in this passage is nothing is mentioned about the prominence of Deborah's husband or the number of children she has born, or their genders. Instead, Deborah has told Barak, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you." Deborah is doing what God has asked her to do. Deborah is exercising God's authority as God commanded her to, and in this instance Deborah is exercising authority over a man; Barak. Paul may not allow a woman to have authority over a man, but God will use whomever God wants, and Deborah is the proof.

When Barak plays games with Deborah she tells Barak she will go with him, but the result will be that Barak will not receive the honor and glory for winning the battle. The glory will go to a woman. Sure enough, by God's favor the Israelites whip Jabin's army being led by Sisera. Sisera escapes the battle and takes shelter in the tent of Heber the Kenite. There was peace between Jabin and Heber the Kenite. So Heber's wife Jael invites Sisera into the tent. She covers him with a rug. When he asks for water she offers him milk. When Sisera asks Jael to watch the door way of the tent and to tell any who ask that no one is there. Jael does just that until Sisera is asleep. Then Jael grabs a tent stake; and a hammer. Jael creeps back into the tent and with one swift stroke Jael drives the tent stake into Sisera's skull and into the ground. When Barak comes to the tent and asks if Jael has seen Sisera, Jael bids Barak to come inside. When Barak sees Sisera's head Barak knows to whom the glory belongs.

My sisters and brothers, you will appreciate this. How many of y'all have ever heard it said, "You shouldn't talk about somebody in Denton because you never know who is related to who"? That is the case in this story. The Kenites are the descendents of Jethro the priest of Midian who was Moses' father-in-law. The Kenites were the cousins of the Israelites. Sisera was fighting against Jael's kin, and y'all know how it is. You don't mess with family.

I think there is a bigger point. If God is speaking through someone it does not matter if they are red, yellow, black or white – male or female. God will use whomever God choses to use. So to respond to the statement, "There is no case to be made for a woman preacher, period." Let me introduce you to Deborah! God used women to deliver the good news of Jesus Christ to the disciples after the resurrection. God used women to assist and to instruct Paul in sound doctrine. Hear me brothers and sisters. God will do what God will do. God will use who God chooses to use regardless of whether we like it or not. All Baptized Christians are a part of the priesthood of believers. God can and will speak through anyone of us to deliver God's message of hope, peace, joy and love. Perhaps instead of attacking one another when God shatters our opinions we should focus on love because that is what we have been commanded to love the Lord and our neighbor (Matt 22:34-40).

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.