

Titus 2:1-5; Eph. 5:22-33; The Women of the Church I. The Woman's Identity II. The Woman's Calling
 Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, today is Mother's Day, right? A day to celebrate moms- to say
 thanks to our wives and mothers for all the work they do within the home and family. But Mother's Day
 is under attack! Not just the day- but the entire position of wife and mother is under siege. For example,
 our HS catechism class studied Feminism this morning. The feminist doctrine states "Women need men
 like fish need a bike." In other words, women do not need men for anything- I can have a child and raise
 that child on my own if I want. And if you have been watching the news you will have seen in bold letters
 this past week- those who embrace the past decision of Roe v. Wade state that all women should have
 the right to self-determination. In this framework, women should have the supreme right over their
 bodies- meaning that no one can hinder their own pursuit in any field- even the presence of a child in the
 womb can be terminated if that child would hinder my personal pursuits. So concept of marriage and
 family- the roll of wife and mother- is clearly under attack today! But today we come to Titus 2- on
 Mother's Day- where the roll of the women within the church is set before us. We consider this theme:
 Jesus Christ exalts the position of women within the church as He anoints them for sacred service.

I. The Woman's Identity

In our first point, we consider the identity of the woman. Wives and mothers within the church are a
 blessing to the church and to their families. But they also have a great responsibility. As it is often said,
 the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. In many ways, wives and mothers set the framework and
 context in which growth, nurture and development take place. As we did with men a few weeks back,
 let's start at the very beginning. Where did this gender of woman come from? Well, as we find in Gen.
 2:20, it was not good for the man to be alone so the LORD caused the man to fall asleep- and from the
 man's side and rib he made woman. Woman was made to be the helper- one who was fit and suitable as
 an aid and assistant to man. So the woman being made from the side of man- sharing man's dignity and
 honor- being made in God's image as well- was created so that creation would move from good to very

good! So the woman has different gifts and areas of influence, but she remains equal to the man in dignity and honor. Equal before God- and yet distinct in service. With the woman arriving on the stage at the end of creation week, we could say that God was saving the best part for last! If mankind in general is made to be the crown of creation- then the woman is the crown and glory of mankind! Man was unable to fulfill his calling without his bride- so the need of man is perfectly filled by the appearing of woman- being the very flesh of Adam himself. So both man and woman- male and female- were made by God and called to work. The woman to support and assist her husband. But in what areas and in what manner does the woman work? Well, if you read Prov. 31 you will find a varied list of all that the excellent woman can do. The excellent wife works with her hands, providing food, clothing and shelter for her household. She makes merchandise and purchases a field. Both industry and agriculture flourish under her watchful eye. She provides for her family and the poor. And she a blessed teacher who blesses her family. That is the picture painted in Prov. 31. But this work that the woman is called to perform has now become much harder than it once was. So in Gen. 3:16 we find that now the woman will experience pain in child birth- there will be conflict and competition in the home instead of unity and peace. There will be wrong desires and battles taking place instead of peace and prosperity that once was found in the family before the fall. But that is not to say that the woman no longer has a task- rather her task is harder because of the fall into sin. Adam's rebellion bore bitter fruit in the home and family as well. So women have to fight against sinful desires to fulfill her calling.

But there is another aspect to the woman- specifically to the wife in her place within the church. Women are given the unique privilege of reflecting the church! As we read from Eph. 5, wives reflect the church in their submission to their husbands. In a unique way, the wife is elevated to an exalted position! She has the privilege of reflecting the church- the bride of Christ- while she yet lives here on the earth! As the church submits to Christ- so wives submit to their husbands. The identity of the wife is one of redemptive significance and glory! The world gets a glimpse at the invisible character of the church as

they perceive your character! The church, being the bride of Christ, has been loved, sought after and secured by Christ! Christ washes, cleanses and sanctifies His church! God's people are special to the Son- He has betrothed Himself to her! Christ's actions and pursuits are the security and safety of His bride! Jesus nourishes and cherishes His people- He provides for and protects her- getting her ready for the great wedding day that is to come! Have received so many blessings from her husband, the church cannot help but love and cherish her husband Christ! Submitting to Him as our Lord and husband is a joy and delight because of His love for us! The bride has been richly blessed- chosen and loved! So then, the character of the women of the church is first of all that they are the bride of Christ! Being engaged to Jesus- purchased by His blood- having the ring of the covenant on her finger- that is the grounds for the call to service! Truly they have been placed in an exalted position- as the bride of Christ now called to reflect the character of the church on earth.

II. The Woman's Calling

But as we move forward, we find this exalted position gives way to sacred service. In other words, their character makes itself evident in their calling. So as we begin our second point, we consider what character traits are pleasing to God? What does God call women to do? What makes for a good wife and mother? Have you ever considered that? What makes a good- an honorable and blessed wife and mother? Most men never think about this- but perhaps some of our self-reflecting women have! Am I a good wife- and I a good mother? Well, what does Paul write to Titus. Concerning older woman in v. 3- they are to be reverent in behavior. Again, I will refrain from giving a specific age- but older women are no longer the younger women. These are akin to the elders that we looked at a few weeks back- the female members who are wise and experienced. They will be reverent- of they have a holy demeanor. They are sacred to God- honoring God in their lives! Consistent in their holiness and piety. Next, these are called not to slander. Now this one is not a surprise- as Paul often speaks of the danger of gossip within the church. To be busy bodies and to have loose lips- who travel from house to house spreading

slander. But here Paul says that they must not slander- or to be false accuses. The same word used to describe the devil- the accuser of men- this is the kind of speech that must be avoided! Telling lies about others- spreading gossip. Reveling in the juicy morsels of privileged information. No, the older women will have learned to control their tongues. But also, as v. 3 continues, they will have learned to control their appetites! Older women must not be slaves to wine- to be drunkards. So presumably they have learned self-control over their bodies. And finally, these older women are called to teach what is good as v. 3 concludes. They are teachers of goodness. By their lives they model godliness- and by their words they teach in accordance with the truth. But who are they to teach? Now remember- as we learn in Timothy- that women are not to have authority over men. But we do find that older women here are called to teach- and they are to teach younger women. So that the younger wives and sons may be trained. So they older women admonish, encourage and disciple the younger. Wisdom that has been gained is passed on. Now this can take various forms. By example, the older women are observed in how they treat their husband and their older children. Perhaps in the context of a Bible study, the older women can share what they have learned from the Word and the principles of wise living. So in this way, the wisdom gained by years is passed on to others. It is a common thing for young mothers to call their own mothers to ask questions. But faithful teaching is something that all of our older, mature women are called to do. Offering to help and assist the young moms in their work. Moving on, we consider the calling of the younger women. Perhaps this would those who have young children in the home or are newly married. These younger women are called to be trained in the pursuit of love. To love their husbands and their children. Now you might be thinking- that this is a strange command. That young mothers must love their husbands and their children. Obviously- right? Don't all wives and moms love their husbands and children? Remember after the fall- it was these two relationships that we directly affected by the fall. As a wife with her husbands and a mother with children. Conflict and pain! Now- there is a call to restore this love for both! Remember, also, that when Titus was written, marriage was

often arranged. We also note that love is something that is commanded- true love is not built on fleeting feelings but on a heart posture that is fixed- a dedication towards service and support. That is true, Biblical love. Notice that Paul commands these women to love their husbands- first. Of all human relationships- the love between a husband and wife must always come first. They are one- joined together- and love is the bond that holds them. This is not always easy, is it! To love your husbands- men who are sometimes insensitive or distracted. Nor is it always easy to love your children- sometimes they act out or misbehave. Sometimes even in church- they don't act like they should! But mothers are called to love their children. So young ladies are to be husband loving and child loving. The word used for love here is Phileo- which is normally the kind of love expressed between two people that is kind and supportive- generous and beneficial love. Family love. So love the members of your house- even if they forgot that it was Mother's Day today- love them still. Next, young women are to be self-controlled. Now this familiar word is common to both genders at all ages- to keep your body and desires in check. Temperate- and not given to excess. Curb your desires for excess and extremes. They are to be pure- chaste and modest. Above reproach and scandal. Working in the home. Now to be clear, this is not to say that young woman must stay at home and never leave. No, to work at home means that they are keepers of the home- managers of the household. As we saw in Prov. 31, this managing may lead them to work outside of the house. But the home remains the primary focus of their work as they care for the family and the needs of the household. They are to be kind as v. 5 continues. Kindness in their behavior and demeanor. To be kind is to be good, joyful and pleasing to those with whom you have contact. This word for "kind" also describes God the Father in Mt. 5:45 where the Father is good or kind to both the just and the unjust as He blesses them with rain. So young women are to kind or good- their lives full of good fruit. And finally, these young women are to be submissive to their own husbands. As we read in Eph. 5- submitting to their husbands as part of their submission to the Lord. They are to place themselves under the authority of their husbands- to align themselves with their husband's leadership-

and to use their gifts to support and encourage their husbands in their work as well. In many ways, the job of a mother is a thankless job. They work tirelessly and often without recognition. But you can be sure that He who sees the work done in secret will reward you! And v. 5 concludes that a gospel regulated life- the life of a fruitful, kind and pure wife and mother- is a life that adorns the gospel as we saw last week. Or as v. 5 says- live this way so that the word of God may not be reviled. Positively, the life of these sanctified women is attractive- spreading the pleasing aroma of Christ. Negatively, a consistent and obedient life robs those who would be enemies of a reason to profane the name of Jesus. Consistent lives blunt the accusations of the wicked. Obeying these commands means that the gospel and the church will not be blasphemed. Others cannot speak evil of the Bible nor of the people who attend your church when your life is governed by these principles. In fact, the gospel and Christ's church looks more attractive when the women of the church live sanctified lives!

To conclude, the contrast between the loud, promiscuous and rebellious woman of Proverbs and the woman of noble character cannot be any starker! The woman of the world today who put themselves first and their families last are rebuked by the godly character of the women within the church! Others before myself- as Jesus did- as we are commanded in Phil. 2- considering the needs of others before my own. In this way, the women of the church not only give us a glimpse of the church but they give us a glimpse of Jesus Himself! Jesus who took on the form of a servant in order to minister to His people- who died in order to make us His bride! Jesus Christ exalts the position of women within the church as He anoints them for sacred service. So may we all give thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus- and may we even give thanks for godly women in His church!