

THE CONTROVERSIAL CASE OF WOMEN SPEAKING IN CHURCH

WEEK 3 GOD'S WOMEN OF GRACE

(Apologetics)

This subject of women speaking / teaching in church, has to be one of the most hotly contested subjects in Christendom.

For centuries, theologians and teachers have been debating - 'Should women speak, preach or teach in the church?' So that today, there remain 100's of different opinions on this subject.

But there is a key to correctly unlock the truth of this passage which we will use today and hopefully see many women set free to serve God in Spirit and in Truth.

Let's read our text ...

1 Corinthians 14:34-40 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

*Let the women be silent in the churches. For **it is not allowed to them to speak**, but to be in submission [subordinate], as the Law also says (where does the law say this?).³⁵ But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home (what if they are single or widowed); **for it is shameful [disgraceful] for a woman to speak in the church.** **SLIDE**³⁶ Or has the word of God gone out from you? Or has it come to you only? ³⁷If anyone considers himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things I write to you are the commands of the Lord. ³⁸ But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignored ³⁹ So, my brothers [and sisters] [all of you] earnestly desire to prophesy and do not forbid to speak in tongues.⁴⁰ But let all things be done properly and with order.*

QUITE FRANKLY, I FIND THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE VERY DISTURBING

Long before I even knew what the term '**Gender Equality**' actually meant ... I believed men and women were equal.

This was made even clearer to me when I was born again and **experienced The Freedom of The Holy Spirit** ... as opposed to religious legalism.

2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV

... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Jesus said whoever (Male and Female) the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8:36)

At the time of my conversion, there were many, many young people – male and female – being swept into The Kingdom of God, all sharing His Grace and Truth. And no one dared say to the girls ... 'You can't teach because you're a female'.

*We knew we were all called to 'shine our light' into the darkness of this world - **To preach the gospel** ... in season and out of season ...*

We were all The Light of The world ... The Salt of The Earth – Men and women ... black and white ... rich and poor ...

*We were all set free to **worship and serve our God**.*

But then I read this passage of scripture and met people who believed it was right for women to be restricted and silenced.

But it just seemed wrong.

SO TODAY I SAY ...

THIS PASSAGE CANNOT BE CORRECT, BECAUSE ...

It vehemently disagrees with other Scriptures that declare God honours women who speak and teach God's Good News.

And SCRIPTURE CANNOT CONTRADICT ITSELF ...

See as follows ...

- **Anna was first to proclaim the birth of Messiah to The Temple ([Luke 2:36-38](#))**
- **The Woman at the Well first proclaimed Jesus as Messiah back in Samaria after Jesus had revealed Himself to her (John 4:28-30)**
- **Mary Magdalene was the first to proclaim The Resurrection of Jesus after Jesus first revealed Himself to her (Mark 16:9)**

SLIDE **Aquila and Priscilla (a Female)** heard Apollos [preaching the baptism of John only], **they [both]** took him aside and **[they both]** expounded to him **the way of God more perfectly**. (Acts 18:24-26)

So now, in our passage, when we read, **'Women cannot speak in church'**, it stands out like a prodigious point on the smooth surface of sound teaching.

SLIDE PRODIGIOUS POINT 1

If we find an inconsistent scripture jutting out like a prodigious point from the smooth surface of consistent Grace teaching,

We know we're either ... (1) reading it wrong, or
(2) we're believing wrong

For example:

One gay guy quoted a verse to me to try and justify his condition.

He quoted, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

(Philippians 4:13)

He was using this scripture – out of context – to try and justify his gay lifestyle.

Of course, we know he's wrongly applying this scripture because he disagrees with many other scriptures and scripture cannot contradict itself.

SO IT IS WITH OUR TEXT HERE.

IT DISAGREES WITH MANY OTHER SCRIPTURES ...

THEREFORE WE MUST BE READING THIS PRODIGIOUS POINT WRONG.

SO I WANT TO SUGGEST ... THIS IS NOT PAUL SPEAKING

- **THIS CANNOT BE PAUL SPEAKING BECAUSE PAUL HIMSELF DID NOT RESTRICT WOMEN SPEAKING -**

Romans 16:3 NLT

*Give my greetings to **Priscilla** and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus.*

- **THIS CANNOT BE PAUL SPEAKING BECAUSE THIS CONTRADICTS PAUL'S OTHER TEACHING ON LAW & GRACE**

*At our discussion group on Thursday, one guy quite rightly asked, 'If it was Paul who taught so much about Grace and Freedom, how can he now start to teach law again **by putting women back under law** in a subjective position?'*

IT'S A GREAT QUESTION & NEEDS TO BE ANSWERED.

SLIDE PRODIGIOUS POINT 2

HERE IN OUR TEXT, PAUL APPEARS TO SINGLE WOMEN OUT AS DIFFERENT FROM MEN ... WHICH CONTRADICTS HIS OWN TEACHING AS FOLLOWS ...

Galatians 3:28 NIV

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, **nor is there male and female**, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

HERE IN OUR TEXT, PAUL APPEARS TO BE PUTTING WOMEN BACK UNDER LAW, WHICH CONTRADICTS HIS OWN TEACHING -

We are **no longer under The Law** [restrictions] but under Grace, as Romans 6:14 says.

PAUL INSTRUCTS **MALES & FEMALES** TO, 'STAND FAST IN THAT LIBERTY (Galatians 5:1)

PAUL CRIED, 'WE ARE **ALL** CALLED INTO LIBERTY ...' -

Galatians 5:13 NLT

*For you have been called to **live in freedom**, my brothers and sisters ...*

- **THIS CANNOT BE PAUL SPEAKING BECAUSE PAUL HAD ALREADY ADVOCATED WOMEN SPEAKING IN CHURCH -**

1 Corinthians 11:5 **SLIDE**

... Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head ...

Now if Paul is giving instruction to a woman praying and prophesying in church (whether her head is covered or not) he is acknowledging that women both pray and prophesy in church and are NOT SILENT.

SO WHY WOULD HE LATER ON SAY ... IT IS SHAMEFUL FOR A WOMAN TO SPEAK IN CHURCH ... **UNLESS IT IS NOT HIM SAYING IT!**

INDEED, HERE IN OUR TEXT PAUL APPEARS TO SAY –

'WOMEN HAVE A DIFFERENT SET OF RULES TO MEN & ARE NOT AS FREE AS MEN ...'

UNLESS WE'RE READING IT WRONG!!!!

- ***THIS CANNOT BE PAUL SPEAKING BECAUSE THIS PASSAGE MISQUOTES THE LAW & PAUL NEVER MISQUOTED SCRIPTURE ...***

1 Corinthians 14:34 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

*Let the women be silent in the churches. For it is not allowed to them to speak, but to be in subjection **as the Law also says.***

THE LAW NEVER TELLS A WOMAN TO BE IN SUBJECTION TO A MAN.

This is a reference to Genesis 3 (not the law given by Moses).

Genesis 3:16 NIV

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF THE FALL & IS NOT THE LAW.

SO HOW SHOULD WE TRANSLATE THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE?

THE CORRECT PUNCTUATION IS THE KEY TO THE CORRECT MEANING ...

IT'S ALL IN THE PUNCTUATION.

SLIDE THE POWER OF PUNCTUATION

*IF I WERE TO WRITE ... 'Ray is The Best-looking guy in this church' -
You would think I really liked Ray's looks.*

But now if I add quotation marks and a question mark we read –

SLIDE 'Ray is The Best-looking guy in this church'?

I AM CALLING RAY'S LOOKS INTO QUESTION.

By adding quotation marks and a question mark I change the whole meaning of the statement.

I AM NOW ACTUALLY DOUBTING RAY'S GOOD LOOKS!

Then if I add a question after it ... it makes it even more valid that I am doubting RAY'S GOOD LOOKS.

So it would read ...

SLIDE *'Ray is The Best-looking guy in this church'?*

Do you consider that good-looking? Have you looked at me lately?

SO BY PUNCTUATION, THIS STATEMENT ACTUALLY MEANS THE OPPOSITE.

NOW THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT PAUL IS DOING IN OUR TEXT.

HE'S NOT ADVOCATING WOMEN KEEPING SILENT ...

HE'S CRITICISING IT.

(All through 1 Corinthians Paul is quite sarcastic)

PAUL IS ACTUALLY QUOTING SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE AT THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH HAD SUGGESTED TO HIM IN ORDER TO TRY AND CREATE ORDER.

Let me show you how this text can actually mean the opposite to what has been written and taught by adding quotation marks and question marks –

Paul writes -

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

Let the women be silent in the churches? For it is not allowed to them to speak, but to be in submission, as the Law also says? ³⁵But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church?"

CAN YOU BEGIN TO SEE IT?

Unfortunately, there are no 'quotation marks' in Greek ...

So how do the scholars know Paul is actually quoting what others said here?

There is another device in Greek, that determines a sentence is a quote: THIS IS AN **'expletive of disassociation'** - **η**

SLIDE It is like the Greek letter 'Eta' and it signifies emotion rather than grammar. This tiny word η is an important indication that Paul was quoting another's opinion.

This word η, placed at the end of a sentence, is an outburst of emotion, like -

SLIDE **'WHAT?'** **'NONSENSE!'** **'ARE YOU KIDDING?'** **'NO WAY!'**

This is why it is often not translated, as the translators didn't know how to translate the emotion.

But it's in the original text; 49 times in 1 Corinthians.

So this word η appears between verse 35 & 36 which completely reverses the meaning what we have just read here -

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 **SLIDE**

"Let the women be silent in the churches? For it is not allowed to them to speak, but to be in submission, as the Law also says? ³⁵But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church?" - η - NONSENSE!

We see this clearly in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, where the translators did use quotation marks -

1 Corinthians 1:12-13 NIV **SLIDE**

What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." - η - (What?)

¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NOW NOTICE **η** IS ALSO, MOSTLY ALWAYS, FOLLOWED BY A RHETORICAL QUESTION?

AS IN THE ABOVE TEXT -

1 Corinthians 1:13 NIV

¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

NOW LOOK IN TODAY'S TEXT AT THE QUESTION WHICH I'VE WRITTEN IN RED THAT FOLLOWS -

THIS NOW MAKES SENSE.

1 Corinthians 14:34-36 **SLIDE**

*“Let the women be silent in the churches? For it is not allowed to them to speak, but to be in submission, as the Law also says? ³⁵But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church?” - **η** - NONSENSE!*

*³⁶Or has the word of God gone out from [only] you? - **η** - [REALLY!] Or has it come to you only?*

In other words: ‘Are you guys the only ones that can preach? – **η** - [Really!] Are you guys the only ones God speaks to?’

PAUL'S REBUKE IS STRONG AND CONSISTENTLY SARCASTIC

Look at Verse 37 -

1 Corinthians 14:37 **SLIDE**

... If anyone considers himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things I write to you are the commands of the Lord. ³⁸ But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignored.

Verse 37 PARAPHRASED -

ARE YOU GUYS REALLY PROPHETS? ARE YOU REALLY SPIRITUAL?

IF YOU ARE REALLY AS SPIRITUAL AS YOU CLAIM TO BE ... YOU SHOULD PERCEIVE THAT THIS IS GOD COMMANDING YOU.

IF YOU ARE NOT SEEING IT ... YOU ARE TOTALLY NAÏVE ...AND NO ONE SHOULD LISTEN TO YOU.

THE SCRIPTURES HAVE MANY VERSES ADVOCATING WOMEN ARE FREE TO SPEAK IN CHURCH ...

Acts 2:17 KJV

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and **your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.*

Romans 16:1-2 Berean Study Bible

*I commend to you **our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea.** ² Welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her with anything she may need from you. For she has been a great help to many people, **including me.***

Titus 2:3 NIV

***Teach the older women** to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but **to teach** what is good.*

Acts 21:9 KJV

*And the same man had **four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.***

Proverbs 31:26 **SLIDE**

She opens her mouth with wisdom and on her tongue is the law of kindness.

This is Truth and Grace ...

She is a preacher of The Good News.

The suppression and subjugation of women in the church has to end.

This is the robbery of God-given ministries to God's appointed people ... Many dear women have died unfulfilled and broken because they wrongly believed this evil lie which has been made into an erroneous doctrine!

Ladies, please cast aside these chains of gender prejudice – these shackles of religious law ... and embrace the freedom of your position in Christ Jesus ...

You are set free to worship and serve your master however He sees fit.

Psalm 68:11 GOD'S WORD Translation **SLIDE**

The Lord gives instructions. The women who announce the good news are a large army.

SUPPLEMENTAL

- 1 Cor. 6:2

η (What?) Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

- 1 Cor. 6:9 Berean Study Bible

η (Nonsense!) Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? ...

- 1 Cor. 6:16 NIV

η (No way!) Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? ...

- 1 Cor. 6:19 Berean Study Bible

η (What?) Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

- 1 Cor. 7:16 NIV

... Or **η** (What?) how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

- 1 Cor. 9:6

Or **η** (Nonsense!) is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

- 1 Cor. 9:7 Berean Study Bible

... **η** (No way!) Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk?

- **1 Cor. 9:8** *NIV*

... **η** (What?) Doesn't the Law say the same thing?

- **1 Cor. 9:10** *NIV*

η (No way!) Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? ...

- **1 Cor. 10:22** *NIV*

η (Nonsense!) Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? ...

- **1 Cor. 11:22** *Berean Study Bible*

... Or **η** (What?) do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? ...

- **1 Cor. 14:36a**

... **η** (Nonsense!) Did the word of God originate with you? ...

References quoted from

A MORE INDEPTH STUDY OF 1 COR 14 by [David Joel Hamilton](#) | July 31, 2003