
WOMEN HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REDEMPTION – NOT IN LEADERSHIP**Sermon for the 2nd Sunday after Pentecost, 2021
Genesis 3:8-15**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our First Reading from before, Genesis 3:8-15: ⁸ **At the time of the day when there was a breeze, the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from the presence of the LORD God among the trees in the garden.** ⁹ **Then the LORD God called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?”**

¹⁰ **The man said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked. So I hid.”**

¹¹ **He said, “Who has told you that you are naked? Have you eaten fruit from the tree from which I have commanded you not to eat?”**

¹² **Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”**

¹³ **Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The snake deceived me, and I ate.”**

¹⁴ **Then the LORD God told the snake: “Because you have done this, you are cursed, more than every domestic animal and every other wild animal. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other, and I shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will crush your head, and you will crush His heel.”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Through a woman, the human race fell into sin, and what a world of sin we live in! But it was never meant to be this way. Everything that God had created was “*very good.*” However, after seeing everything He had made, including man, God saw that man was alone, and so, He put Adam to sleep, took one of his ribs and from it made woman, who was bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh.¹ The woman was created to be a helper for the man, a complementary counterpart -

¹ Genesis 2:23

someone who would supply all those precious human qualities that man had lacked so that the two together would become one complete human unit, no longer two, but one flesh. In this relationship, God had planned that man was to be the head, and the woman would be subordinate to him. The Apostle Paul writes, “*Wives, be subordinate to your own husbands as to the Lord!*” (Eph. 5:22), and again, “*Let a woman learn in quietness, with all subordination!*” (1 Tim. 2:11).

However, the devil tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.² It was Adam’s business as head and leader to take the initiative and do what was right before God, but here Eve took the initiative and ate of the fruit, before giving some to Adam, who, even though he wasn’t deceived, accepted it from her and ate of it too. In this way, the whole human race fell into sin, and the entire creation was ruined so that everything now became subject to death and decay.

This tragedy happened when woman took the initiative and man followed her lead. That does not necessarily mean that that was the substance of the sin involved in eating the forbidden fruit. No, it was rather an act of distrust in God and a rebellion against Him. But it is nevertheless significant that this was closely connected with the exchange of roles between Adam and Eve. This does not say either that it was entirely Eve’s fault that mankind fell into sin. In fact, God’s Word always lays the blame for this on *Adam*, not Eve. Even though Eve had initiated the act of disobedience, yet the Bible says that it was by Adam’s sin that the human race fell. Paul says, “*For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive*” (1 Cor. 15:21-22). This is why the old sinful nature which we have from our first parents is called the *Old Adam*, not the Old Eve. God had made Adam the head in their relationship, and he was responsible for everything before God, even for Eve’s sin. Besides, God called out for Adam, not Eve, and made him give an account of their falling into sin. He asked, “**Where are you?**”¹⁰ **The man said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked. So I hid.”**¹¹ **He said, “Who has told you that you are naked? Have you eaten fruit from the tree from which I have commanded you not to eat?”**

Some people like to think that since woman played a leading role in the Fall into sin, she ought to play a leading role in the work of redemption. While it is true that God did indeed give woman a leading role in the work of redemption, yet He has not done so in a role of leadership. That was where Eve went

² Genesis 3:1-5

wrong in the beginning, taking a role of leadership. That can't be cured by doing it again. No, God had given the woman a critical role in the plan of redemption, but not one of leadership. He had made the promise to send a Saviour to redeem mankind, who would be the Seed of the woman. Speaking in the presence of Adam and Eve, the LORD God said to Satan, **“I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other, and I shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will crush your head, and you will crush His heel.”**

The prophecy culminates in the enmity between Satan and Christ. It was at this one Descendant of Eve that Satan directed his most vicious enmity, realising how much was at stake. We see the fulfilment of this promise early in our Saviour's life when Herod tried to kill Him.³ We see another fulfilment immediately after Christ's public inauguration into His work when Satan tempted Him to forget His Father's plan.⁴ And on that evil Friday that Christians call “Good,” Satan struck His enemy's heel with a ferocity that cost the Saviour His life.⁵

But Satan's enmity against the woman's offspring was futile. The serpent's crushed head spells defeat. As it was through the woman that Satan had brought sin and death into the world, so it was through the woman's Descendant that God would conquer sin, death, and Satan. The Apostle John writes, *“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work”* (1 John 3:8).

Through woman, Jesus would be brought into the world. His was the work of redemption, but hers would be the role of enabling Him to be born in human flesh. The Saviour would be the Son of a virgin⁶ - the Seed of the woman in a special sense, without a human father. He would be Immanuel - God with us⁷, in the sense that He is both God and man in one person. This was to be the unique role of woman in God's plan of redemption. It was a role that no man could possibly fulfil, a role that was vital and important for the salvation of mankind, and yet not a role of leadership, but simply one of making it possible for the Saviour to carry out His work effectively.

At the time of His conception, the Son of God took upon Himself human nature

³ Matthew 2:13-19

⁴ Matthew 4:1-11

⁵ Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30

⁶ Isaiah 7:14

⁷ Matthew 1:23

and became a true man with human flesh and blood, being nourished and sustained by Mary before He was born and then after His birth for some time.

This is an amazing miracle. He who is life itself; He who has given life to everything and sustains all life was actually sustained by His mother, Mary. Even after He was born, as He grew up, Jesus' life depended upon His mother, just as her life depended upon Him. This was a role and function that only woman could fulfil. Joseph simply had to look on in amazement. He could do nothing to contribute to this great function of Mary his wife, except simply to provide for and protect her and the Child. Mary had a role that was absolutely vital for the redemption of mankind. It was not a role of leadership or exercising authority but rather of humble submission. When the angel Gabriel had visited Mary to tell her she would bear the Christ-Child, she answered, "*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38). She would simply function in a passive way and let the Lord use her to accomplish His purpose.

For years Mary no doubt worked hard caring for Jesus, feeding Him, and providing a wonderful family environment for Him, but that is where her function as the mother of the Lord ceased. While Jesus always treated His mother with deep respect and love, treasuring her motherly love and devotion, her nourishing care and sympathy, it would not be her business to take any active part in His ministry. That was for those whom He would call and send out.

While Jesus accepted and treasured the help and services of many faithful women who followed Him and did a glorious work in caring for Him, yet He did not call any women as disciples or send them out as missionaries to preach His Word. It was obviously His will that this was to be the role of men. The same was true in the Early Church. All the apostles and evangelists were men. Women indeed continued to do great and wonderful service in the Church by caring for and sustaining those who proclaimed the Word, but not as leaders or teachers in the Church, taking a leading role in the worship of the congregation. Having the Fall of mankind in mind, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.* ¹³*For Adam was formed first, then Eve;* ¹⁴*and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor*" (1 Timothy 2:12-14). Paul, too accepted the services of many faithful Christian women in the Church, but it was always a supportive work rather than public preaching and teaching in the congregation.

For hundreds, in fact, thousands of years, right through the entire Old Testament and New Testament history, it was evident to virtually everyone in the Church of God, that women were to have a different role in the Church from men. Like

Mary, the mother of Jesus, theirs was a supportive role, helping and sustaining those who proclaimed the Word of God publicly. This role of women was and still is a tremendously important function and vital for the strength and growth of the Church. Women in the church have a vital and important function of supporting and sustaining the Lord's workers. Anyone who thinks that this is not an important work and looks for something where she can be in the public eye to lead the public worship or direct the teaching of the Church, will do grave damage rather than good, for that is not her role.

Many Christian churches today already have women ordained into the ministry, while others continue to campaign for women to be ordained as pastors. Such campaigns do a great deal of harm in the kingdom of God. Look at what happened when Eve assumed the role of Adam and plunged the world into sin! That was a tragedy from which the world has not yet recovered. If the Church allows women to become pastors, then be prepared to suffer grave consequences. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul said, "*As in all the churches of the saints, let the women be silent in the churches! For it is not permitted to them to speak*" and then finishes with a grave warning from the Lord Himself when he writes, "*If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or a spiritual person, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Commandment of the Lord! However, if anyone does not recognise this, he is not recognised*" (1 Cor. 14:37-38). What a horrible thought! Paul's injunction that women should be silent in the Church is no light matter. Anyone who refuses to recognise the Lord's command is in danger of hearing those words, "*I never knew you*" (Matt. 7:23).

Instead of following the lead of Eve in the Fall, women need to look to the glorious work of Mary, the mother of Jesus. While Eve, by her leadership, led the world into sin and rebellion against God, Mary, by her humility and meekness, played a most important role in the Church, that of sustaining and supporting her Lord, so that through her role as the mother of Jesus, we may be saved from destruction, and have eternal life with Jesus in heaven. Ultimately it is much more helpful and glorious for women in the Church to sustain and support those who preach and teach the Word of God, than to seek a position of leadership and prominence in the church.

But some are quick to say, "*That is not fair! Men can have positions of leadership in the church and win the praise of others, why can't women?*" Apart from the fact that no one dares work for his own glory in the Church, it is just not true that those who serve Christ properly, in a position of leadership, will have the praise of men. If anyone wants to be popular and have the glory of men, he had better work for Satan's kingdom. That is the sort of reward he promises. But Jesus

promises the very opposite. He tells all those who serve Him faithfully that the world will persecute them and seek to kill them. They will be hated of all men for His name's sake.⁸ What glory is there in that? Positions of leadership in the Church carry with them fearful responsibility, and according to Jesus, faithful leaders must be ready to suffer and die for Him. All the apostles except John were finally put to death for their witness - they weren't popular in the world.

May God continue to use women in His Church, supporting and sustaining the preaching of His Word, so that many more may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Yes, through woman sin entered the world, but through woman, our Saviour also has come and crushed the head of the serpent Satan. The result of this is that eternal life awaits all those who place their trust in Christ alone. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, our strength and our stay, we praise You for creating all things by Your power, and for sustaining the earth and all who live on it. Help us to hear the witness of Your creation and to see the wonder of Your glory.

Father, we praise You for revealing Yourself to us in Your Word, and for showing us Your holy will. We thank You for the inspired writers of Your wise and true Word, for through them You have shown us Your forgiving love and given us rich promises of hope. We praise You for Your grace in Christ Jesus, by which You have provided us our escape from Your judgment on all disobedience. Pour out Your Spirit on us so that we may grow in knowing You.

We praise You for leading us from death to life through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Your Son. We praise You for our freedom from the condemnation of Your Law, and for delivering us from the ceremonial shadows of the Old Testament Law. By Your love for us, move us to the love and mercy that is the concern of Your moral Law, so that we may not love in mere words but in deed and truth. Give us sympathetic hearts for those in need, that we may share with them the things You have given us. Grant that through our love they may learn to know Your love, and praise You.

We thank You that You have prepared for all people the rest of eternal salvation, and that through the Gospel You invite all to it. Enable us faithfully to spread the good news of this great relief to all whom we meet in our lives, that they also may respond

⁸ Matthew 10:22

to Your mercy with happy and thankful hearts. Grant that the spiritually poor may taste and see that You are merciful and good.

Almighty Lord, rule over our nation, and guide all to whom You have given authority. Bless our society with pure motives, noble goals, and moral strength. Give all Australians the desire to live before You in loving trust and obedience.

Bless our homes, and make them places of true learning and love, that all who live in them may find peace and joy in harmony with You and with one another.

We pray for Your special protection and help for the sick, the sorrowful, the aged, and the lonely. Meet their needs with Your mercy, and show them the wonderful things You have prepared for all Your children. Father, hear our prayers, and if there is anything else we should have asked for, grant it for the sake of Jesus Christ who has saved us and pleads for us. Amen.

The 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 3:8-15

⁸ At the time of the day when there was a breeze, the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden and hid from the presence of the LORD God among the trees in the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?”

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2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

¹³ Furthermore, since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what Scripture has said, “I have believed and therefore I have spoken,” we also believe and therefore we speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the One who has raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and will make us stand before Him with

you.¹⁵ For all things are for your benefit, that God's grace may spread to more and more people and may cause thanksgiving to increase greatly, to the glory of God.¹⁶ That is why we are not discouraged. Rather, even though our outward person is wasting away, our inward person is being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For our light and momentary trouble is producing for us an utterly extraordinary and eternal weight of glory.¹⁸ We do not look at the things that are seen but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal.^{5:1} For we know that, if the earthly tent in which we live is demolished, we have a house from God, not made by human hands, eternal in heaven.

Mark 3:20-35

²⁰ Then Jesus came into the house. The crowd gathered again, so that Jesus and those who were with Him were not even able to eat bread.²¹ When His family heard about it, they came out to take charge of Him. For they were saying, "He has gone out of His mind!"²² The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem began to say, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "It is by the ruler of the demons that He is driving out the demons."

²³ Jesus called them to come to Him and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan?²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that

kingdom cannot stand.²⁵ If a family is divided against itself, that family will not be able to stand.²⁶ If Satan has risen up against himself and has been divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come.²⁷ Rather, no one can go into the strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he will plunder his house.²⁸ Truly, I tell you, all the sins that the sons of men commit will be forgiven and all the blasphemies that they utter.²⁹ However, anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven but is guilty of an eternal sin."

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

³¹ Just then His mother and His brothers came. They stood outside and sent someone to Him to ask Him to come out.³² A crowd was sitting around Jesus and they told Him, "Look! Your mother, Your brothers and Your sisters are out-side, looking for You."

³³ He answered them, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"³⁴ He looked around at those who sat in a circle around Him and said, "Look! Here are My mother and My brothers.³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother."