

Luke 10:38-42 - *As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."*

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Psalm 68:11- *"The LORD gives the word: the women who announce the news are a great host."*

So we're in a series called Ancestry.com. We've parked it in Matthew 1.

Every family tree tells a story. In many cases we'll be spending time this holiday season with our families. Some are full of drama. Some are distant. None our perfect. Neither was Jesus'. *What stories does Jesus' family tree tell that can change the way we have faith for our families and our stories?*

We haven't looked yet at what is perhaps the most notable part of Jesus' genealogy here: **the inclusion of women.** Matthew includes the names of 5 women in Jesus' genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary.

Why is this notable? Women weren't included in old genealogies, because descent was traced through men as the head of the family.

We've talked about the fact that we don't put a lot of value in genealogies and these lists of names. Passages like Matthew one are easily some of the most skippable portions of scripture.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy was a 20th century historian and social philosopher: *"What's in a name? This history of the human race is in names. Our objective friends do not understand that, since they move in a world of objects which can be counted and numbered. They reduce the great names of the past to dust and ashes... But the whole meaning of history is in the proof that there have lived people before the present time whom it is important to meet."*

History is in its essence our list of names and events that it's important for us to meet. History on its best day still pushes the names and contributions of women to the margins.

Harriet Tubman movie + severe lack of biographical material giving her a voice until the 21st century.

Abigail Adams, the wife of John Adams who would one day be president – wrote in a letter dated March 31, 1776, urging him and the other members of the Continental Congress who were drafting the Declaration of Independence as follows:

"I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors."

What is the fruit of this forgetting? What is the danger we need to address?

The Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen showed in an essay that **107 million** women across the globe were deemed “missing people,” due to trafficking or murder or unsolved cases. Erased from the public consciousness and record and deemed missing.
107 million living ladies we no longer remember.

In the book *“Half the Sky”* the author Nicholas Kristoff writes: *“It appears more girls have been killed in the last fifty years, precisely because they were girls, than men were killed in all the battles of the twentieth century. More girls are killed in this routine “gendercide” in any one decade than people were slaughtered in all the genocides of the twentieth century.”*

“I desire you would remember the ladies.”

This is the very reason the genealogy in Matthew 1 proves so remarkable. It remembers the ladies. Many in that time and culture didn't. But looking at the history of Jesus' family tree in Matthew 1, Matthew refuses to leave women on the margins where genealogies often left them. Why? Jesus didn't.

Recently there was a video from a Truth Matters Conference with many prominent church figures, none more prominent than the man who was hosting it.

There was a roundtable discussion where the men on stage were asked to give a quick hot take reaction to a series of words. One that was thrown out:
Beth Moore. Prominent female teacher and author.
The two word response: **“Go home.”**

Those two words Youtube clip reverberated all over the internet, social media went crazy and as usual most interactions were fruitless... but there were also many genuine conversations on the subject.

In **Discover City Life** I'm often asked the Church's stance on female preachers.

Let me say it from the pulpit – we're **Team Beth Moore.**

We believe men and women are different in gender, we aren't one and the same, and beautifully so. But men and women are equally gifted and equally anointed. Women don't form the church's JV team.

But let me throw a caveat on that. I don't say team meaning *“us vs them”* or anything of the sort. I'm friends with many pastors who would agree with MacArthur on his ideas of complementarianism. We're going to worship shoulder to shoulder in Heaven. I'm well aware John MacArthur has studied and learned the Bible on a level I may never touch. And we too will likely be worshipping shoulder to shoulder in Heaven.

But you can have all the knowledge of angels and still be a clanging cymbal. And when I heard the smug, dismissive comment followed by mocking laughter and questionable theology made in full stop statements – I heard just that. Noisy gongs and clanging cymbals.

In the dialogue it was said: **“We can’t let the culture exegete the Bible.”**

This is true: the truth doesn’t change. We can’t shape it to help it fit our culture’s progressive inclinations.

But I’d argue that recognizing the dignity, contribution, voice and place for women isn’t progressive. If anything its *regressive*.

We all pray regardless of denomination: *“your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven”* because that is how Jesus taught us to pray.

Well then by all means let’s regress to the two most clear and vivid pictures we have of God’s kingdom on Earth and his will being done: **Genesis** and **Jesus’ ministry**.

GENESIS

God creates both men and women in His image.

Throughout scripture, and even here in Genesis, the pronoun for God is translated into English

But clinging to the idea that God is a man is flawed, as God isn’t man or woman

...here’s a news flash: God isn’t human.

Yet the pronoun used in Hebrew for the Holy Spirit is feminine.

I find irony in the fact that many who say women shouldn’t preach would also say that anyone preaching does so from Holy Spirit inspired scripture. Or that preaching should be done by those filled with the Spirit... and that very HS per pronouns - is female.

But again - this isn’t to project gender or our image onto God. He’s not human.

But it reminds us that ALL of us as humans were made in HIS image.

Men and women.

And this should project dignity and honor and a voice to BOTH genders.

To reduce, demean or strip dignity from one is to devalue the image of God.

Well Eve was created as Adam’s “helper.”

Helper in our culture sounds subservient.

But this Hebrew word helper is also used for God some 16 times in the Old Testament.

God isn’t a subservient or inferior helper. Neither was Eve. Neither are women.

And in Genesis we see it was God’s intention for them to co-reign over creation.

Gender hierarchy wasn’t God’s intent, it was sin’s result.

But Paul tells us in Galatians Jesus **“redeemed us from the curse”**

Yet many would operate like women should still live under shadows of the curse, diminished in their role, their purpose, and their destiny.

It was only AFTER sin and the fall that man ‘rules over’ their wives.

And oh how we can rule poorly. Less like servants and more like tyrants.

King David wasn’t immune. Even the best of men are susceptible to treating women badly.

Right in Matthew 1 in the genealogy he provides he doesn't just mention King David, he mentions Bathsheba. In the history of Jesus' family tree is the sexual misconduct of a king.

It was King David- drunk off of his own power- who used his power to rape Bathsheba. David's practice of power walks out multiple levels of abuse. Plain and simple. God gives power so we can serve. Whether it's kings, pastors, fathers, husbands, or alike... But David uses his power to abuse instead of serve.

How do you get a king to condemn himself? Nathan gives the story of the innocent lamb stolen by a man who had plenty, and he gets David to condemn himself.

Bathsheba was the innocent lamb.

Again, for some Bathsheba's innocence is too painful to face. That a good person can suffer tragedy- especially at the hands of a godly person.

It isn't just included in the Old Testament account we get of David.

It's prominent in the family tree of Divinity. This was a branch of Jesus' own family tree.

Sexual abuse.

This story, sadly, is not uncommon. It's all too common. In the Bible. In our culture. Even in the Church.

But I highlight it because it's not commonly addressed in Church. Especially Bathsheba. Perhaps we want to preserve David's standing as a man after God's own heart. But we end up marginalizing victims of abuse struggling with shame.

To not address what God addresses is to give a false picture of His heart.

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer that said: *"Not to speak is to speak."*

Victims of abuse often walk with a shame that Jesus addressed on the cross.

But when it's not addressed from the pulpit, what does that say?

"your shame is merited."

And victims within God's own Church live in disgrace rather than grace.

Tamar. Rahab. Ruth. Bathsheba. All had some level of **disgrace** culturally.

Rahab and Ruth weren't even Jews, but were Gentiles.

Jesus clearly had a heart for anyone on the margins in the Gospels.

Lepers. Tax collectors. Gentiles. Were they marginalized? Jesus found them and loved them.

Women were no different.

JESUS

Matthew wasn't alone in his emphasis on women within Jesus' life and ministry.

He wasn't a lone author with an agenda to push.

We see in **Luke 8** that women were among his many disciples.

Just two chapters later Jesus sends these disciples, 70 of them, to share His message- dare I say, *teach* his message of repentance and salvation. Women included.

And then in **Luke 10:38-42** Jesus was in the home of Mary and Martha teaching. Martha was doing house work. She was being a hostess and housewife. Tending to the home and the kitchen. Mary was sitting in, listening to Jesus teach.

We can't miss the cultural context of what's happening. In this culture girls and women weren't allowed to sit at a rabbi's feet to be taught. This was in a culture where Jewish girls couldn't go to school to learn to read and write, and where some rabbis said it was evil to teach girls. Women were seen more as property than people and pushed to the margins in an all but invisible role.

But Jesus taught them. He intentionally taught in the outer court where women would be present. And here he teaching in Mary and Martha's home.

Martha is assuming the place she'd been given by culture. Mary was breaking rules! She was crossing boundaries placed on women in that culture, breaking into the boy's club.

She was taking on the posture of a disciple sitting at the feet of a rabbi. Does Jesus tell Mary the equivalent of "go home?" What does Jesus say? "*Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*"

The disciple-rabbi relationship was one of emulating the rabbi in everything. Including mastering God's Word so that you could handle and *teach* it's truth with love and compassion.

People who point to passages in Timothy and Corinthians that speak against women teaching as **normative** for the church would point to anything that contradicts it as **exceptions**. So we have to ask the question carefully considering the content and context of Scripture- what's actually the norm, and what's truly the exception?

The norm within the clearest pictures of God's kingdom and Jesus' ministry is that women were given a prominent place alongside the men and role to play.

40 authors wrote the Bible over **1500 years** in several countries and cultures, and only **one** man and **one** voice seems to restrict women from leadership – Paul. So let's look at Paul. What was the norm for him?

And key to me in all of this is Romans 16 where he's shouting out people in the church. Amongst them, the deaconess Phoebe, his "co-worker" Priscilla, and finally the apostle Junia. **Junia** –not just an apostle, but in Paul's words: "*outstanding among the apostles*"

Apostles are among the highest level of leadership. Pioneers of the faith. Church planters. Beginners of new works. (*Apparently this was so unbelievable to some translators that some changed her name to the male form!*)

We have a pronoun problem.

Consider **Psalm 68:11** – in my NLT I often preach from it says:

The Lord gives the word, and a great army brings the good news.

Other translations speak to a great crowd or host of people. Because the Hebrew says **“they.”**

We don’t distinguish gender when we say things in the third person plural - “they.”

But not so in the Hebrew. This participle in the Hebrew is clearly a feminine suffix taking the place of a feminine pronoun.

The most accurate correct translation is **“Those women who announce the good news”**

The ESV: **“The LORD gives the word: the women who announce the news are a great host.”**

There’s no contingencies on their announcement. It doesn’t say it is only to other women. It isn’t contained to bible studies in their home. And this isn’t some select exception to the rule. It’s a great host, a mighty throng, an army of women rising up.

And the inspired word of God doesn’t call for these women to **“go home.”**

It doesn’t call for them to keep their mouths shut. It doesn’t tell them to know their place.

Jesus would say of the Beth Moore’s of the world declaring the good news, and the women using their voice to build the kingdom and save the lost:

“She has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

She will not be pushed back to the margins. She will not be told to go home.

Call it progressive. Call it regressive. Let’s regress to the Bible. Genesis. Jesus. Psalm 68:11.

Feminism gets painted as progressive and the word has become political. Even triggering.

Feminism started connected to the Church in a world where women weren’t allowed to vote, were seen often as less than human and more like property. It’s why it was also tied up in the movement to abolish slavery. Both campaigns were tied up in a humans right to dignity, a voice, and a life regardless of gender or race.

It wasn’t until the 70’s that the Women’s Liberation Movement tied the word feminism to abortion or promiscuity. So NOW – in the Church – feminism is a dirty word.

But don’t forget – when it comes to the voice & dignity of women – *Jesus was a feminist.*

I listened to many a podcast with women sharing on this subject before I preached on women and ministry earlier this year.

*“I was confident in my calling. I didn’t question that. My Q: **“Where is there a place for me?”**”*

“Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Feel you have to work twice as hard to be recognized? Or change who you are? Jesus says none of that. He says I’ve done the work. Come rest and find your identity in me, and be who I created you to be.