

1 Timothy 2:8-15 (Part 1)

Introduction

Randy Berry's story regarding disputes over the color of the carpet in his church

1. Churches aren't perfect because they're made up of imperfect people
2. However, as Christians we of all people should be able to get along, especially because we share a common faith and love for God
3. In fact, we are called to unity (READ):
 - a. Ephesians 4:1-3
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:10
 - c. 2 Corinthians 13:11
4. But, that doesn't always happen because we don't always act as we should, and therefore churches don't always function as they should
5. In our passage today, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Paul addresses this issue of disruptions or disfunctions in the local church:
 - a. Based on the context of the passage, there was some disruption or inappropriate attitudes and behavior taking place in Ephesus beyond just the false teaching described earlier in chapter 1
 - b. Paul addresses three specific disruptions in chapter 2:
 - 1) The first was anger and disputes among some of the men (8)
 - 2) The second was the dress and behavior of some of the women (9-10)
 - 3) The third was the behavior of some of the women when it came to teaching during their gatherings (11-15)

A. The first disruption Paul addressed was anger and disputes among some of the men (READ 2:8)

1. This is a challenging verse because it's not clear what prompted it, except for the fact that it had something to do with the "**wrath and dissension**" Paul witnessed among some of the men:
 - a. Wrath refers to intense anger, while dissension refers to disputes—so, some of the men were quite angry and fighting with one another.
 - b. Paul doesn't identify the cause or content of the fighting, so the best we could do is speculate, but it's really not that important; we just know they were fighting
2. Paul addresses the wrath and dissension of the Ephesian men by calling on them to pray:
 - a. Look back at verse 1: "**Therefore I want the men in every place to pray...**"
 - 1) The word "**therefore**" ties this verse back to what preceded it and this is important:
 - a) Paul had just called on everyone in the church to pray for all people, especially governing authorities
 - b) He then provided the reasons and motivations for this, which was essentially that such prayer furthered God's redemptive plan (READ 2:3-7)
 - c) "**Therefore**" these men should have been praying for God's plan instead of bickering and fighting with one another and interfering with God's plan

- 2) The context suggests that Paul was referring to public prayer and that this should be the standard in all the churches (e.g. men praying publicly):
 - a) The context of the pastor epistles is the local church (e.g. teaching, behavior, organization, authority, etc.)
 - b) The phrase **“in every place”** is used elsewhere to refer to churches and believers in different cities (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:8)
- b. It wasn't enough that they pray, however; they were first to address their sin (2b)
 - 1) Look back at 1b: **“lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension”**
 - 2) A common posture when praying in the ANE was standing with one's hands lifted up and we see examples of this in the Bible (READ Psalm 28:2; 63:3-4; 141:2; 1 Kings 8:22)
 - 3) Paul's emphasis here, however, isn't on the posture but on praying with **“holy hands”**:
 - a) In the OT, before entering the tabernacle or temple the priests were required to wash their hands and feet as a sign of ritual purification and cleansing from sin
 - b) This is because dirty hands and feet were symbolic of sin while clean hands and feet symbolized innocence or righteousness (READ Psalm 24:4; Isaiah 1:15-16; 59:3)
 - c) Paul uses that same imagery here not to command that men must pray with their hands lifted up, but that when they approach God in prayer they should do so in holiness and righteousness and without sin
 - d) In other words, they were to put aside their anger and disputes and begin to pray
3. So, why did Paul call on them to pray instead of just calling on them to stop their disputes?
 - a. Praying would focus their hearts and minds on God's purpose and plan (especially if they prayed as Paul commanded in 2:1-7)
 - b. Praying would help build unity and heal division:
 - 1) When James wrote his letter, many of his readers were suffering, some from their own sin and some from the sins committed against them (rich oppressing the poor)
 - 2) Part of James' solution was to call on them to pray for one another (James 5:16): **“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”**

Praying for David Spott in college to heal our relationship

B. The second disruption Paul addressed was the immodest dress and behavior of some of the women (READ 2:9-10)

1. I am going to propose that Paul's charge that the women are to **“adorn themselves with proper clothing”** is better understood as **“adorn themselves with proper demeanor (or behavior)”**:
 - a. While **“adorn”** can mean to dress oneself, the meaning is wider than that and relates to decorating something or making it beautiful (it's used in the Gospels to refer to decorating the monuments of the OT saints and the temple with stones and gifts)
 - b. The Greek word used here for **“clothing”** is only used one time in the NT so it's hard to define it based on how it's used elsewhere in the Bible
 - 1) However, outside the Bible it refers more often to demeanor or behavior

- 2) Some lexicons and commentators suggest that's the way it should be understood here, and that seems to fit the context better than simply clothes
 - 3) So, that is the way I am treating it here
2. Paul writes that their demeanor should be **“proper”** which means respectable and in accordance with certain standards (it's used of the behavior of elders in 3:2); Paul tells them what these standards are:
- a. The first standard is that they are to adorn themselves with **“modesty and self-restraint”** (9b):
 - 1) Modesty has a variety of meanings:
 - a) However, at the root of modesty is a sense of shame, meaning that one knows how to conduct him or herself without shame
 - b) Modesty is reflected in how one thinks about him or herself, how one acts or speaks, even how one dresses
 - 2) The word translated as **“self-restraint”** here refers to having good sense or sound judgment rather than being driven by passion and impulse
 - b. The second standard is that they are NOT to adorn themselves **“with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly clothing”** (9c):
 - 1) Peter says something similar to Paul in 1 Peter 3:3: **“Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on garments;”**
 - 2) Some take these passages as a prohibition against braiding the hair, or wearing gold, pearls, or expensive clothes
 - 3) However, Paul and Peter likely had something else in mind:
 - a) Hairstyles among Greek and Roman women were pretty simple; most parted their hair in the middle and either pinned it back or held it in place with a scarf or headband
 - b) However, royal women often came up with elaborate and expensive hair styles that included elaborate curls, braids, high wigs, decorative pins, and ornaments woven into the hair
 - c) One ancient scholar described these hairstyles as tall edifices that rise up upon their heads in rows of tiers and stories
 - d) Much like our own society today that likes to copy the hair styles and dress of the rich and famous, some Greek and Roman women (generally the more well off) did the same and it appears so did some women within the church
 - e) As we can imagine, this was neither modest nor showed sound judgment, especially since such extravagant hairstyles and dress were often associated with immorality.
 - f) This is what Paul, and Peter, warned against (not simply doing one's hair and wearing pretty outfits)
 - c. This takes us to the third standard which is that they were to adorn themselves **“by means of good works, as is proper for women professing godliness”** (10):
 - 1) Rather than focus on such extravagant external things, they were to focus on that which is proper for women who profess to be godly: **“good works”**

- 2) Peter says it this way (1 Peter 3:4): **“but let it (adornment) be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible quality of a lowly and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God”**
3. Takeaway:
 - a. Women—it’s okay to dress up and look nice, but do it properly and modestly; but more than that, focus on good works and the inner qualities of godliness which is precious to God
 - b. Men—encourage your wives and daughters to dress in ways that garner respect and dignity, and help them grow into the Christlike women God wants them to be

C. The third disruption Paul addressed was the behavior of some of the women during the teaching time at their gatherings (READ 2:11-15)

1. For many, this is a controversial Bible verse:
 - a. Some claim it denigrates and devalues women
 - b. Others claim it not only prohibits women from teaching in the church, but requires them to stay silent
 - c. Others claim the passage doesn’t apply to us today because Paul only prohibited women from teaching because they were uneducated in his day, or they were involved with false teaching
2. I want to do justice to these verses and help us understand exactly what God is instructing here, but there’s not enough time left today to do that, so we’re going to come back to these verses next week and do a much deeper dive
3. However, today I will just point out that whatever the women were doing it was causing disruption in the church at Ephesus so Paul provides some instructions for dealing with the issue

Conclusion: one more overarching takeaway

1. Paul’s main concern in all three of these situations was the disruption happening in the Ephesian church—the arguing and disputes by some of the men, the extravagant dress and immodest behavior of some of the women, and behavior during the teaching time
2. The local church is supposed to be a place of unity, where we come together to worship God, fellowship with one another, learn, encourage and build one another up
3. When it’s filled with the sorts of things Paul describes, it can’t do any of those things which means we cannot fully carryout our mission as a church
4. I am going to end on Paul’s charge to the Ephesian church from Ephesians 4:1-16 (READ)