

Epistle 291

by George Fox

The sermon emphasizes the importance of women's meetings and the role of women in the church, highlighting their potential as helps-meet, teachers, and prophetesses.

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Genesis 3:16, Acts 9:36, Acts 18:24, 1 Corinthians 7:14, 1 Corinthians 14:34, Colossians 2:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:20, Titus 2:3, Revelation 12:17

Topics: "Women In Ministry", "Church Leadership"

Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of women in the church, highlighting their roles as disciples, prophetesses, teachers, and elders. He emphasizes that women are to be obedient to Christ, prophesy, and keep the comely order of the gospel just like men. Fox encourages women to take their possession in the gospel order, walk in Christ Jesus, and fulfill their stewardship in the Lord. He also addresses the significance of elder women, referring to them as mothers in the church who nurture, teach, and admonish others in spiritual matters.

Transcript

Friends,--Keep your women's meetings in the power of God, which the devil is out of; and take your possession of that which you are heirs of, and keep the gospel order. For man and woman were helps-meet [Gen 2:18] in the image of God [Gen 1:27], and in righteousness and holiness, in the dominion, before they fell; but after the fall in the transgression, the man was to rule over his wife [Gen 3:16]; but in the restoration by Christ, into the image of God, and his righteousness and holiness again, in that they are helps-meet, man and woman, as they were before the fall.

Sarah obeyed Abraham, and called him lord [Gen 18:12]. Abraham did also obey the voice of his wife Sarah, in casting out the bond-woman and her son [Gen 21:10-12]. Dorcas, a woman, was a disciple. So there was a woman disciple as well as men disciples; and mind the women that accompanied her [Acts 9:36-41]. And women are to take up the cross daily, and follow Christ daily [Luke 9:23], as well as the men; and so to be taught of him their prophet, and fed of him their shepherd, and counselled of him their counsellor, and sanctified by him who offered up himself once for all.

And there were elder women in the truth, as well as elder men in the truth; and these women are to be teachers of good things [Tit 2:3]; so they have an office as well as the men, for they have a stewardship, and must give an account of their stewardship to the Lord [Luke 16:2], as well as the men. Deborah was a judge [Judg 4:4]; Miriam [Exo 15:20f] and Huldah [2 Ki 22:14] were prophetesses; old Anna was a

prophetess [Luke 2:36], and a preacher of Christ, to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem [Luke 2:38].

Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, were the first preachers of Christ's resurrection to the disciples, and the disciples could not believe their message and testimony that they had from Jesus [Mat 28:1,5-8], as some now-a-days cannot; but they received the command, and being sent preached it. So is every woman and man to do, that sees him risen, and has the command and message; daughters shall prophesy as well as sons [Joel 2:28]. So they are to be obedient, that have the spirit poured upon them.

Women are to prophesy; and prophecy is not to be quenched [1 Th 5:20]. They that have the testimony of Jesus, are commanded to keep it [Rev 12:17], whether men or women. Priscilla and Aquilla were both exhorters and expounders, or instructors to Apollos [Acts 18:24-28]. So in the church there were women instructors, and prophetesses, and daughters prophetesses in the church; for Philip had four daughters, virgins, that were prophetesses [Acts 21:8f]; and there were women disciples in the church, and women elders in the church, as well as men.

So women are to keep in the government of Christ, and to be obeyers of Christ; and women are to keep the comely order of the gospel, as well as men, and to see that all that have received Christ Jesus, that they walk in Christ Jesus [Col 2:6]; and to see that all that have received the gospel, do walk in the gospel, the power of God [Rom 1:16], which they are heirs of; for this is a day for all to keep their possession in the gospel order, who are heirs with Christ [Rom 8:17], of the increase of whose government there is no end [Isa 9:7].

So the foundation of our women's meetings is Christ, to all them that be heirs of him, and of his government. And the ground of our order of the women's meetings is the gospel, the power of God, which was before the devil was; and all that be heirs of the gospel, which hath brought life and immortality to light [2 Tim 1:10] in them, which shines over him that hath darkened them, and was before he was: I say, they are heirs of the comely order of the gospel; and therefore, I say, take your possessions of it, and walk as becomes the gospel [Phil 1:27]; and keep the comely order of it, and in it keep your meetings.

And here is the ground and foundation of our women's meetings. Now mothers of families, that have the ordering of children, maids, and servants, may do a great deal of good in their families, to the making or spoiling of their children, maids, and servants; and many things women may do, and speak of amongst women, which are not men's business. So, as I said before, that you, both men and women, be helps-meet in the image of God, in the righteousness and holiness in the restoration, as man and woman were in the image of God before they fell; and not only so, but in Christ the foundation, and in his gospel that never fell, nor never will fall, whose foundation stands sure [2 Tim 2:19], for all his members and heirs to build upon. And so see that nothing be lacking amongst you [1 Th 4:12], then all will be well.

Postscript.--And the elder women in the truth were not only called elders, but mothers. Now a mother in the church of Christ, and a mother in Israel [Judg 5:7], is one that gives suck, and nourishes, and feeds, and washes, and rules, and is a teacher, in the church, and in the Israel of God, and an admonisher, an instructor, an exhorter. So all that are come to that office, growth, and stature, be diligent; for a mother in Israel, or in the church of Christ, is beyond all the mothers in Egypt, and in Sodom, and the mother of harlots, mystery Babylon [Rev 17:5], who had power over tongues, nations, and people [Rev 13:7], with the cup of her fornication [Rev 17:4]. But the mothers in spiritual Israel, and church of Christ, has the cup of salvation [Psa 116:13], and the breasts of consolation [Isa 66:11], which are full of the milk of the word

[1 Pet 2:2], to suckle all the young ones, and to nourish, and instruct, admonish, and exhort, and rebuke all the contrary; and to refresh and cherish every tender one. So the elder women and mothers are to be teachers of good things [Tit 2:3], and to be teachers of the younger, and trainers up of them in virtue, in holiness, and godliness, and righteousness, in wisdom, and in the fear of the Lord, in the church of Christ.

And if the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife [1 Cor 7:14], then who is the speaker, and who is the hearer? Surely such a woman is permitted to speak [1 Cor 14:34], and to work the works of God, and to make a member in the church; and then as an elder, to oversee that they walk according to the order of the gospel.

G. F.

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