

A MOTHERS DAY SERMON
October 18, 2015 Philippians 4: 1-7
The Church of the Covenant

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First, it is clear that women were early and ardent followers of Jesus from the beginning. The women who came with Jesus from Galilee, followed his broken body to the tomb and then returned three days later; according to Luke they were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James, *and "the other women."* (Luke 24: 1, 9, 10) According to the gospel writer John it was Mary Magdalene who went first to the Garden on that first Easter morn. And it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first revealed Himself as being raised from the dead, there by the Garden Tomb. (John 20: 1, 16) It is interesting to note that while Jesus noted that when the shepherd is struck down the sheep will scatter, that these women disciples followed Jesus throughout his earthly ministry and even to the Garden Tomb. Having served with wonderful women disciples over some 35 years of ministry this observation does not shock me in the least. Women have always been faithful witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

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Third, there are the Apostle Paul's statements regarding women being "*silent in church*". (1 Corinthians 14: 34) When I meet Paul in heaven I want to ask him, "So Paul, how'd that work out for you?" I can only imagine how unsuccessful it must have been to tell women, or anyone for that matter, to be silent in church. Or that in his opinion women should not teach. (1 Timothy 2: 12) And these arguments over the years are those which then also are used to say why women should not be ordained. But I think these need to be contrasted with Paul's statements elsewhere, say, in Galatians, where he writes: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (Galatians 3: 28) (emphasis added) God and Christ show no partiality of men over women because the point is the LIVING SAVIOR within, whom we follow as His disciples. And there is Paul's wonderful section in Ephesians where he uses the metaphor of marriage, of women being subject to men and men being subject to women, being "*subject to one another out of reverence for Christ*", as he writes (Ephesians 5: 21). This mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ then becomes the basis for the church. Paul concludes this section by stating: "*This (mutual subjection and mutual*

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Lastly, it is clear from the beginning that women were key disciples following Jesus. Paul in the book of Romans says to *"Greet Prisca (a woman disciple) and Aquila (a male disciple), my fellow workers in Christ, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks."* (Romans 16: 3, 4) It is clear that Prisca is a key disciple in the early church in Rome; indeed, that the early church in Rome met in her home. Followers of the Lord Jesus "risk their neck" and stand at the foot of the cross and stand in the power of the resurrection. Disciples follow Jesus. Our scripture for today has Paul commending Euodia and Syntyche, true yokefollows, the church is to help these women because *"they have labored side by side with me in the gospel...whose names are in the book of life."* (Philippians 4: 22, 3) These women not only were clearly early disciples but they worked side by side with the Apostle, and not only did they work side by side with him but clearly they also proclaimed the gospel as they did so. Disciples follow Jesus. Disciples have Christ alive in their heart through faith. Disciples labor side by side with others in the Kingdom to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. From beginning to end, women have followed Jesus as faithful disciples.

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reverence) I take to mean Christ and the church". (Ephesians 5: 32) He says –this is the essence of the church. From the beginning, both men and women are the church together, subject to one another, and following the lead of their Master, who lives in their heart by faith. Whom do we follow? The Lord Jesus Christ. Who is our leader? Our head and cornerstone? Jesus. The rest of us are all disciples, together following in the steps of the Master.

Lastly, it is clear from the beginning that women were key disciples following Jesus. Paul in the book of Romans says to *"Greet Prisca (a woman disciple) and Aquila (a male disciple), my fellow workers in Christ, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks."* (Romans 16: 3, 4) It is clear that Prisca is a key disciple in the early church in Rome; indeed, that the early church in Rome met in her home. Followers of the Lord Jesus "risk their neck" and stand at the foot of the cross and stand in the power of the resurrection. Disciples follow Jesus. Our scripture for today has Paul commending Euodia and Syntyche, true yokefollows, the church is to help these women because *"they have labored side by side with me in the gospel...whose names are in the book of life."* (Philippians 4: 22, 3) These women not only were clearly early disciples but they worked side by side with the Apostle, and not only did they work side by side with him but clearly they also proclaimed the gospel as they did so. Disciples follow Jesus. Disciples have Christ alive in their heart through faith. Disciples labor side by side with others in the Kingdom to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. From beginning to end, women have followed Jesus as faithful disciples.

Now, my dear, sweet Mother, I have tried to pile up every argument I can to convince you that indeed it was right and correct when you were ordained as an elder some 45 years ago. I know, I know, I have never won even one argument with you over the years. But this next argument I hope you will be able to accept.

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*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*

A MOTHERS DAY SERMON
October 18, 2015 Philippians 4: 1-7
The Church of the Covenant

My dear, sweet Mother periodically brings up the point about whether she should have been ordained as an elder back in the 1960's. Should women be ordained as elders or not? My Mother and I have entered into "debate" over this over the years –I have, obviously, argued **in favor** of women being ordained, and my dear sweet Mother, ordained elder that she is, will take the contrary position. And since I have never ever won a debate with my Mother in my life, it is why I am dusting off the arguments I have made to her over the years in favor of women's ordination and sharing them with you today. I shall hear about this one over lunch at home following worship, to be sure!

First, it is clear that women were early and ardent followers of Jesus from the beginning. The women who came with Jesus from Galilee, followed his broken body to the tomb and then returned three days later; according to Luke they were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James, *and "the other women."* (Luke 24: 1, 9, 10) According to the gospel writer John it was Mary Magdalene who went first to the Garden on that first Easter morn. And it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first revealed Himself as being raised from the dead, there by the Garden Tomb. (John 20: 1, 16) It is interesting to note that while Jesus noted that when the shepherd is struck down the sheep will scatter, that these women disciples followed Jesus throughout his earthly ministry and even to the Garden Tomb. Having served with wonderful women disciples over some 35 years of ministry this observation does not shock me in the least. Women have always been faithful witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

Second, it is clear that women followed Jesus even to the cross that dark day on Calvary when their Master was crucified, dead and buried. The gospel writer Matthew notes that "*among the women*", those who had as it says "*who had followed Jesus from Galilee*" was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. (Matthew 27: 55, 56) The gospel writer John notes that "*standing by the cross of Jesus*" were His mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (John 19: 25) Only in John's gospel is there any mention of a male disciple at the foot of the cross and that is here in the gospel of John noting "*the disciple whom (Jesus) loved*" was also there (John 19: 26). The rest of the male disciples had fled and the foot of the cross was largely peopled by female disciples. Again, it is my observation from 35 years of being a pastor, that when the going gets tough in the church, indeed it is often the women disciples who hang in there. Women have always been faithful followers and disciples of Jesus, even when it is costly to do so.

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