

Everyone Is Special **(January 5, 2020 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)**

I felt strongly in my spirit to share today a message entitled “Everyone Is Special”...

I would like to save a copy of the video of today’s message because it includes an important message on the role of women in the church...

Scripture 1: Galatians 3:26-29

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

There is no one who is better than anyone else...

We may occasionally have different roles...

For example, in the family...

Scripture 2: Ephesians 5:22-33

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might [g]sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, [h]of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.

Scripture 3: Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Something was brought up on the prayer line that birthed this message...

Scripture 4: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and ^[e]moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

There are passages that indicate that women should take a secondary role in the ministry...

That the most that women can do is minister to children or to other women, but that they should never be senior pastors or that they should never be in any role where they have authority over men...

This is also one of the passages that is used to say that women should not wear make-up or jewelry or fancy clothes...

However, there is a principle of interpreting the Bible that is very important that we as Christians must apply...

Scripture 5: Acts 20:25-31

²⁵ “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent^[e] of the blood of all *men*. ²⁷ For I have not ^[f]shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Therefore take

heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church ^[g]of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking ^[h]perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

We cannot base our beliefs on just one passage of Scripture, especially when there are other passages that contradict the belief that we extract from that passage.

For example, the passage in **1 Timothy 2** should be interpreted in the context of the family...

The passage mentions childbearing...

How could this apply to all women when there are women who are sterile or who do not marry?

Likewise, does this passage indicate that women cannot dress nicely or put on make-up or do their hair?

No...

What it does indicate is that women's primary focus should be on serving the Lord Jesus, not on their outward appearance...

Scripture 6: Genesis 24:15-28

And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah,^[c] who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. ¹⁶ Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. ¹⁷ And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher."

¹⁸ So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw *water* for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." ²⁰ Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels. ²¹ And the

man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

²² So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten *shekels* of gold, ²³ and said, “Whose daughter *are* you? Tell me, please, is there room *in* your father’s house for us ^[d]to lodge?”

²⁴ So she said to him, “I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.” ²⁵ Moreover she said to him, “We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.”

²⁶ Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. ²⁷ And he said, “Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.” ²⁸ So the young woman ran and told her mother’s household these things.

Scripture 7: Matthew 6:28-30

²⁸ “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not ^[l]arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

With respect to women in leadership...

Scripture 8: Romans 16:1-5

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, ² that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Greeting Roman Saints

³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

“Servant” in verse 1 is “deaconess” in the standard translation used by most Spanish-speaking churches...

In addition, Phoebe is described as having helped the Apostle Paul...

If she helped Paul, she could not have been silent...

There is no indication that a deaconess has a role that is different than a deacon...

So what are some of the requirements of a deacon?

Scripture 9: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, ⁹ holding the **l**mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. ¹¹ Likewise, *their wives must be* reverent, not **l**slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Since there is no differentiation between deacons and deaconesses, this passage teaches me that passages can be interpreted as being for both genders, even if they appear to be related to only one...

A deacon or deaconess is the equivalent of a leader...

Our church does not use this biblical term in its leadership because we distinguish between different types of deacons in order to better prepare people for the ministry...

A Coordinator is someone who has been tested but is not seeking further leadership training...

An assistant leader is in the process of finishing their leadership training...

A leader, in my opinion, would be a full-blown deacon or deaconess...

Interestingly enough, if a deacon is the husband of one wife, the expectation is that a deaconess would be the wife of one husband...

Their husbands should also be reverent, not slanderers; they should also be temperate, faithful in all things...

Since children are under the purview of both parents, a deaconess should also rule her children well...

On certain occasions, I have had people as leaders who have personally met the leadership requirements, but their spouses do not...

Perhaps that has been a mistake...

Regardless, we see that Phoebe was a leader...

Priscila and her husband also led a church...

Another person in the Bible who shows that passages like **1 Timothy 2** are used only out of context to exclude women from ministry is Deborah...

Scripture 10: Judges 4:4-10

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, ‘Go and ^[a]deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; ⁷ and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will ^[b]deliver him into your hand?’”

⁸ And Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!”

⁹ So she said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under ^[c]his command, and Deborah went up with him.

Deborah was a prophetess...

It does not say that she only prophesied to women and children...

In fact, this passage shows her prophesying to Israel’s top military commander, who was a man...

Moreover, as Israel’s judge, she was the political leader of the country, meaning that she had authority over the nation...

She was so well respected by everyone that she also became the military leader of the country...

I believe that one of the reasons that God chose Deborah to be the main leader of God’s people in so many ways is to show us forever that women are to be respected and that they can be leaders just like men...

There are differences between the roles of men and women in the family, to be sure...

There are certain jobs that are more likely to be filled by one gender than another...

However, these differences do not preclude women from leadership, including leadership in the church...

Scripture 11: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

³⁴ Let **u**your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Passages like **1 Timothy 2** and **1 Corinthians 14:34-35** are obviously referring to women speaking during church gatherings in such a way that interrupts the service...

If women are not permitted to share testimonies or to preach, then why would Deborah be in the Bible as a spiritual, political, and military leader? Why would the Lord Jesus Himself have sent women to be the first people to share the gospel, namely the good news of His resurrection?

Scripture 12: Matthew 28:9-10

⁹ And **u**as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

If we look at **1 Corinthians 14** closely, we see that these passages are to be interpreted in the context of family situations...

If it were speaking to women's role in general and not about the husband-wife relationship specifically, how could this passage apply to unmarried women, including widows, divorcees, and women who have never been married?

Thus, we see God's order: Women can and should be leaders, according to the calling that God has placed on their lives...

However, in the home, husbands, as long as they are godly, have the final say on things. Husbands also have the final responsibility to make sure that the household is managed well...

With regards to women being more easily deceived than men, as mentioned in **1 Timothy 2**, we have to remember that this is true, but the impact is not on women's leadership in general but on their leadership in the home...

Judges 4 shows that married women can be leaders because Deborah was a married woman...

I believe that God permitted that detail to be included in the Bible to make sure that no one could put women in the bondage of saying that only single women can be attain certain levels of leadership...

Marriage can be a distraction from spiritual things; however, it is not an obstacle to someone being a leader...

Scripture 13: 1 Corinthians 7:25-35

²⁵ Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. ²⁶ I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that *it is good* for a man to remain as he is: ²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸ But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, ³⁰ those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, ³¹ and those who use this world as not misusing *it*. For the form of this world is passing away.

³² But I want you to be without ^[b]care. He who is unmarried ^[c]cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. ³³ But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please *his* wife. ³⁴ There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please *her* husband. ³⁵ And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

Scripture 14: 1 Corinthians 9:3-6

³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we have no [b]right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along [c]a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? ⁷ Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

If many of the early apostles were married, we certainly can be married as leaders in the church today...

Regarding women's greater tendency to be deceived, which impacted their leadership role within the family...

We need to remember that anyone can be deceived...

Think about Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Mohammad from Islam, Charles Taze Russell of the Jehovah's Witnesses...

All of these people were males...

How do we avoid being deceived?

One of the main ways is always studying the Word of God...

Scripture 15: Acts 17:10-12

¹⁰ Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more [d]fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

God willing, next week we will finish the testimonies from the 2019 Prayer Basket...

However, this week I felt it was really important that the issue of everyone being equally important, including the role of women in ministry, be addressed...

If anyone has questions about today's sermon or any other scripture passage you may have difficulty, please feel free to contact me via text or phone...

As we go today, I want to leave us with the passage we started with...

Scripture 1: Galatians 3:26-29

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We are all heirs of Christ's promises...

We are all princes and princesses...

We are all children of the King...