

Sunday, March 11, 2018—I Corinthians 14:34-35 The Sound of Silence

Introduction

- Read statement from the church YouTube page.
- This morning we are going to talk about two controversial verses regarding the role of women in the local church. Before we do I would like to review the context of chapter 14.
- I Corinthians 12—Paul begins to answer the Corinthians questions regarding spiritual gifts.
 - Verses 4-11—various gifts are identified along with their source God the Holy Spirit. These gifts were given to every man “to profit withal.” They were given for the benefit of the entire body of Christ.
 - Verses 12-27—the discussion of the body of Christ is given as an illustration of how the gifts are supposed to function.
 - Verses 28-31—not every member had the same gift and the Corinthians were to covet the best gifts. Paul informs them the he is going to show unto them a more excellent way than the gifts.
- I Corinthians 13—Paul identifies and outlines “charity” as the more excellent way.
 - Verses 1-3—the gifts are meaningless without “charity.”
 - Verses 4-8—Paul explains what “charity” is and what “charity” is not.
 - Verses 8-12—the way of “charity” that never faileth is contrasted with the gifts that will fail, cease, and vanish away.
 - Verse 13—“charity” is the greatest because it never fails.
- I Corinthians 14—wile the body of Christ waited for the completion of that which is perfect i.e., the word of God, Paul order and regulates the use of the gifts in the local assembly.
 - Verse 1—the Corinthians are going to have to follow after “charity” if they are going to make Paul’s instructions regarding the gifts a reality in their midst.
 - Verses 1-22—prophecy is to be preferred over tongues because it edifies the entire church.
 - See verses: 3-5, 12, 17, 19

- Verses 23-33—Paul regulates the function of the gifts in the local assembly.
 - Verse 33—God is not the author of confusion.
 - Verse 40—Paul wants all things done decently and in order.

I Corinthians 14:34-35

- **Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35) And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**
- The verb “keep silence” is a present imperative which means Paul is commanding the Corinthians to have their women maintain silence in the church.
 - I Corinthians 14:23—recall that the context is when “the whole church be come together into one place.”
- Given the context that this statement was made within at a minimum it means that women were not supposed to prophesy and speak in tongues when the entire church was come together.
- Does this mean that women are not permitted to speak at all in church? Are women supposed to be as silent as church mice the entire time they are in church? I don’t think that is what it means. It is dealing with an authority issue.
- I Timothy 2:11—the woman learning in silence with all subjection corresponds with I Corinthians 14:34 when Paul talks about women being under obedience.
 - Genesis 3:16
- I Timothy 2:12—the issue with women speaking in church is related to not usurping the authority over the man.
 - I Timothy 3—men are given the authority in a local assembly in terms of preaching, teaching, and oversight.
- I Timothy 2:13-14
 - I Corinthians 11:1-13—we have already touched upon many of these things.
- I Timothy 2:15—how is a woman saved through childbearing? I believe that she is saved from her need to have authority. A woman has authority over her children.

Some Practical Considerations

- I Corinthians 14:35—what if a woman doesn't have a husband at home she can ask and learn from?
- Practically, the following realities complicate the spiritual lives of many women.
 - Death—widows
 - I Timothy 5:11-13
 - Divorce
 - Unsaved Spouse
 - Spiritually Disinterested Husband—who doesn't attend church or offers no spiritual leadership.
 - Unmarried
- These realities complicate the orderly functioning of the local church. How does a woman in any of these five circumstances follow I Cor. 14:35 and ask her “husband at home” when she either doesn't have one or he is not interested in the things of the Lord and therefore has no capacity to help her with her questions?
- I Timothy 2:11-12—in the local church a woman's covering is the duly appointed eldership of the assembly.
 - I Timothy 3:1-11
- I Corinthians 11:3—the issue in these passages is that the men not allow the woman to “usurp” the authority i.e. headship that God has given them.
- Does this mean that woman have no place in the local church? No! Certainly not! Paul could not have done the work of the ministry without the assistance of women who labored with him.
 - Phebe (Rom. 16:1-2)—“succourer” = one who provides help or relief.
 - Priscilla (Rom. 16:3)
 - Mary (Rom. 16:6)
 - Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Rom. 16:12)

- Julia & Nereus' Sister (Rom. 16:15)
- Chloe (I Cor. 1:11)
- Euodias & Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3)
- Titus 2:3-5—women have a ministry and play a vital role in the local church especially as it pertains to the children and other women.
- I Corinthians 11:5-6—God has charged women with a vitally important role within the local church. There is grace, latitude, and opportunity for ministry so long as a woman doesn't seek to step out from underneath the covering of her spiritual head identified in verse 3.
- Men are to be providing loving Christ-like headship and women are not to seek to usurp the authority God has placed in man.