

“Empowered” Weekend

May 19-20th, 2018

(Women in Leadership Weekend)

Intro:

Our Vision Statement: “We exist to Lead people to become Fully Engaged Followers of Jesus Christ.”

- We serve an Empowering God.

- There is a job to be done & it’s called the “Great Commission!!!”

Matthew 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- God has called us not to just form a social club, but to reach people who are living & lost in darkness & bring them into the Light of His Love!!!

- We do that by empowering God’s people.

2 Corinthians 5:20 “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

- We are going to be an empowering church!!!

3 Groups of People we are going to Empower:

1. The Next Generation.

I Timothy 4:12 “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

A. There’s a lot of negative talk around “the Millennials” & even around “Generation Z” the generation coming after them!

B. We are NOT going to be one of those churches!!!

- This church was planted by 2 “young people!”**
- Once upon a time I was “Young once...”**

C. We believe we, in the Church, have a window of opportunity to get the gospel to the whole world & the young generation is Paramount to getting that done!

4 Generation Cycle stuff:(Maybe???)

1) Builder. “Anything we can do, we will do.”

- 1 job, 1 story house, 1 car, 1 spouse, 1 family.**

2) Boomer. “Anything you can do, we can do better.”

- 2 jobs, 2 story house, 2 houses, 2 cars, 2 spouses, etc.**

3) Gen X. “Anything you can do, we want no part of.”

- This is historically a rebellious generation that pushes away from anything.**
 - Historically a “dark” generation.**

4) Millennials. “All the things you didn’t do, we look forward to.”

- This is the expander generation.**

- ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, 12 TRIBES ILL.

- We are standing on the edge of a “Fully Empowered” Gen 4 & in the next 20 years, we will cycle back to Gen 1 where they are going to have to fight to defend & protect the Word of God as the Absolute Authority & Absolute Truth in our World!!!
- This will naturally require their focus to shift from Expansion to Protection.
- So... that means we have to be the kind of church that empowers young people like crazy!!!
- Young People: We are going to call you up to the I Timothy 4:12 standard!!!
- We believe you are called & empowered to “Set the Example!” for the believers & for the unbelievers in our world today!!!

2. Women.

- The church has long debated the issue of whether Women can hold positions of Leadership within the church.

- A Few Groups of People:

1) Those who grew up in a church where women were NOT empowered or allowed to lead.

2) Those where women WERE allowed to lead.

3) Those who didn't even know that this was an issue!

- My goal for the next few minutes is to talk about this in order to:
- Educate all of us on what WE BELIEVE the Bible says about the role that women can play in Leadership in THE Church, but specifically here at NLC!

- **Start with this:** This is a Biblical Interpretation Issue, not a Biblical Authority Issue.

- There's a reason this has been a deeply debated issue for 600 years!
- There are great churches on both sides of the issue.

- We, as a Leadership Team, have spent no small amount of time digging into the scriptures & praying & seeking wisdom from the Holy Spirit about what we believe the Bible says!

- When it comes to forming a doctrine, we can't just look at 1 or 2 scriptures, we have to look at the Whole of Scripture & ask, "What does the whole of Scripture conclude about this subject?"

- **Why this matters:** Because there is a great big world out there that desperately needs the Love of Jesus & essentially 50% of the Workforce for God is at stake!!!

- So... when you consider the whole of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, & look at God's inclusion & value that He places on women, it's astounding & beautiful!!!

- **Genesis:** God created them both, male & female in His image!

- He purposed them both to be "co-rulers" & "co-regents" or stewards of the earth.

- "Helper" – Same word as Holy Spirit in the NT, so this is not a lesser term!

- In fact, it's a great term: "One who has expertise in an area where you don't."

- MATH TUTOR ILL.

- You don't want to choose someone who is less capable than you, you want someone who is MORE capable to "help" you!

- **Throughout the OT**, God raised up both Prophets & Prophetess's...

- **Prophet: "A Mouthpiece or Spokesperson for God!"**

- "One who proclaims God's Message & speaks the Authoritative Word of God."

- These women were mightily used by God to Lead & speak the Word of God to God's people!

- Miriam – Moses' sister was a Prophetess.

- Deborah – Judge – Not just judicial / political but spiritual leadership to ALL of God's people!

- She was married btw, & God didn't choose her husband... just her!

- There are some who want to blur the lines between the "wives submit to your husbands" thing in the family structure & apply that to the church & say that a woman cannot be in a position of Influence over a man in the church, but we just don't believe that is true.

- The church is structured around Giftings & Callings on individuals, regardless of their gender!

- More on that in a minute...

- In the NT, Jesus empowered women in a culture that was oppressing them like crazy!

- He allowed them to travel with his disciples & God used them in powerful ways!

- He commended Mary for sitting at his feet & learning!

- Over & over again, Jesus raised up women, elevated their status & pushed back against a culture that wanted to treat & degrade them and devalue them to mere property or possessions!!!

- In the book of Acts, Lydia was the first convert in Europe and opened the door for the Gospel to eventually come to America!!!

- In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost when the Church was born, the Holy Spirit fell on the 120 which was made up of Men & Women!
- And all of them spilled into the streets proclaiming the Word of God & preaching to the people there!
- When Peter stands up, he quotes the Prophet Joel who said, “your sons & your daughters will prophecy!”

Joel 2:28: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

- Of all the scriptures, God could have had Peter quote, He chose the one where women are included with men in the preaching of the word!

- Now... there are 2 specific passages of scripture in Paul’s writings that have caused debate & issue throughout the last 600 years of English translation.

- 1 Corinthians 14:33-35

- 1 Timothy 2:8-15

- So I want to spend a few minutes looking at both of these... b/c in order to understand what Paul was writing, you have to read them in the context in which they were written...

The 1st Passage:

1 Corinthians 14:34 “Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.”

A. The 1st Question we have to ask is: “Is this Absolute Truth or Situational Instruction?”

- Remember, Paul is not writing in a vacuum, he's writing to a specific church & into a specific situation.

B. So... if he's speaking in absolute truth, then as we've already seen, he is contradicting the whole of Scripture where God calls, equips & empowers women to preach & teach & instruct with the Word of God.

- Remember the Joel verse!

C. And... he would be contradicting himself...

- He told women to pray and prophesy.

I Cor. 11:5 "But every woman who prays or prophesies..."

D. If Paul was giving an Absolute Truth. "Remain Silent... Not allowed to speak..."

- We must apply this to ALL SOUND coming from women in church.

- No singing, no praying aloud, not giving a praise report, or testimony, not giving announcements.

- Be silent!

E. ? So... Why would Paul say this?

- He was restoring order to a disorderly congregation.

- A DAD TELLING THE BABYSITTER TO MAKE SURE THE LITTLE GIRL DOESN'T GET OUT OF BED & WAKE UP HER BROTHERS.

- ? Does dad believe that's she's "less than" her brothers?

- Nope. He just needed to restore order in the house.

The 2nd Passage:

I Timothy 2:11-12 "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man, she must be quiet."

- We can't quote this 1 verse as authority, we have to put it in context.

- A Few thoughts on the Context:

1) Timothy was pastoring in Ephesus which was ruled by a giant statue of Diana (Artemis) who was credited as the creator of all things.

- She had 12 nipples & all sorts of lude & disgusting things were done to women at her temple.

- Orgies, drunkenness & awful degrading things.

2) People were getting saved like crazy there & were being assimilated into the church.

- They were bringing with them their old ways of thinking.

- So Paul writes to the men in verse 8...

v. 8 "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing."

- (which was their culture, domineering, angry men)

v. 9 "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."

(plural... women)

- Remember the culture he is combating!!!

- Men: Don't do what men normally do & thus discredit the gospel.

- Women: Don't do what women normally do & thus discredit the gospel.

- Now... with all that context in mind...

v. 11-12 “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man, she must be quiet.” (singular tense both times)

- There was a rebellious teacher in the Ephesian church who was causing a ruckus & Paul was specifically calling her out.
- She was to be disciplined & sat down from leadership, in order to learn.
- Previously, he called out 3 men, Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus. He said that their souls were turned over to Satan.
- But with this unnamed woman, she was to be given a chance to learn.

- Why?

- B/c the women were at a cultural disadvantage & had never had a chance to learn, the men were in open rebellion.

- So, Paul is actually being gracious & empowering this woman to be shown grace & given another chance to learn & submit!

? So, Is this Absolute Truth or Situational Instruction?

- Well, let's play it out... if it's absolute truth, then it applies everywhere.
- If it's absolute truth like the 10 commandments, then breaking it is a sin.
- High School teachers, Sunday School, teaching a boy at home potty training!

The thought becomes ridiculous, doesn't it?

- ? Where do we draw the line?

- That all seems kind of absurd doesn't it?

- So... here's the point: In light of everything else Paul & the entirety of Scripture have to say...

- We believe women have a place in leadership here in THE Church & in this church as well!!!

***No one will ever be limited in their Calling & Giftedness here because of their gender or race or for any other reason!!!**

- The Mission is too great! - The Harvest is too plentiful!**
- The Cause is too Important!**

- Our job as a church is to Equip & Empower both Men & Women, our Sons & Daughters to become everything God has called them to become!!!

- I love looking across our church & seeing so many Strong Female Leaders rising up & taking their place of leadership within our church!

- If the Church is the Hope of the World, then we need 100% of the Workforce, not just 50% of it!!!

- Speak to the Women: If you are a woman, I want you to know that there is NO LID for you & your potential!!!

- You are empowered here to live out your destiny & calling in the Lord in this house!!!

3. Everyone!

A. We need everyone to be Fully Engaged & get in the game!

- You have a part to play here!**
- You are needed here!**
- God has a plan for your gifts, your talents, your story to make a difference in someone else's life!!!**

B. PUSH EMPOWERMENT TRACK!

- There's no better time to get in the game of what God is doing here!**

Closing / Challenge:

- You are Empowered!!! What are you doing about it???