

“Paul’s First Letter to Timothy — Prisoners of Hope”

Review:

- ***In our last study we looked carefully at chapter 2 of 1 Timothy again and especially focused on the verses between 11 & 15. The apostle’s exhortation to Timothy there is especially strong:***

1 Tim. 2:11-12

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

- ***The Effects of the Rebellion, Its Effect On All Believing Women***
 - ***The teaching here is to consider things as God sees them regarding the position and responsibility of men and women in the churches. It is so important for us to take these teachings by faith since otherwise we will dwell in the worldly realm with merely human hopes and expectations. That would be so sad and yet that is where many believers are living today due to the failure in the churches to properly teach Biblical truth.***

As we saw last time, going to Genesis and to the works of God in the creation and in the lives of our first parents there in the Garden is essential. Consider for a moment as we go there the perhaps never considered the seriousness of this.

- ***The Effects of the Rebellion, Its Source According to Genesis***

1 Tim. 2:13-14

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

- ***Paul now goes back to the beginning, to the book of Genesis where it is the SOURCE of the Rebellion there in the Garden of Eden that was most relevant to him at this time. Now there is much more to the story, but Paul does not reference that. The main issue in Ephesus was with the women who had taken the leadership away from the men. So Eve and not Adam is the main focus here in his few words. The central scripture here for Paul is in verses 15 & 16:***

Gen. 3:15-16

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

In some ways which I trust are now becoming clear to all who hear these words, that 3:16 verse is a pivotal one indeed in the entire scripture. It is Verse 16 that the apostle is so focused on in 1 Timothy.

- ***Here we see the practical effect of rebellion against Almighty God, in this case at the beginning in the Garden of Eden! As I said before, going to Genesis here is incredibly bold and so very important.***
 - ***So Paul restricts the ministry of women in the churches Although they are still able to teach, they were not to do so publicly in the churches where they would be taking that ministry from its rightful owners. Paul did approve of women teaching under other circumstances (women and children, for example) as is clear from his other letters (see 2 Tim. 1:5 and Titus 2:3-5). So the prohibition here is only toward women who take over the duly assigned authority to teach doctrine assuming for themselves. Men are to hold that position and are to be respected and held accountable as leaders in their assemblies.***
- ***But Adam bears the true and final responsibility for what has been done as Paul writes here in Timothy and also in other places, such as in Romans, BUT IN ADDITION TO THE CURSE, WE FIND A HIDDEN BLESSING AND EVEN MORE IF WE SHOULD LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN! And even in Romans 5 where the primary teaching on this subject is found, that hidden blessing is repeated several times:***
- ***The Effects of the Rebellion, Its Promised Blessing By Grace Through Faith Even Through Childbearing***

1 Tim. 2:15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in [THE] childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

- ***“She shall be saved in the childbearing”.* The Greek word is found only here. Adam was given a very strong penalty here but the penalty given to Eve was not what was stated for Adam. Also made clear here is that with the penalty was included a promise and therefore a hope.**

What does the promise given here mean: “she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety”? What is the blessing then for women, considering the state the world has always been in?

- ***What is the hope here? We know the apostle is NOT speaking of eternal salvation for mothers here. That can have no dependence on the requisites listed regarding the offspring. Rather, it is about blessings in this life and redemption, deliverance, salvation from the effects of the childbearing as stated.***
- ***That the curse put upon women would be turned into blessing (and for the men too of course, there is a big “if” too, though it is not written of here) IF “they”, that is, the children, grow and prosper under the living and tender and heart-felt care of their mother is most wonderful. Also the woman herself is included in this surely. And all mankind too! And all of this in a more complete and eternal respect will be through the seed of the woman our Lord Jesus. This is most wonderful indeed. And amen! That the blessings would outweigh the effects of the curse as God saw it and as his chosen plan dictated.***
- ***So, Paul takes us back to Genesis here in First Timothy. It should not be surprising perhaps that the apostle takes us back to the Garden of Eden and the events that occurred there. For that was foundational for the consequences of sin in the human race and that have had its often overwhelming and tragic effects on all until the present day. But what is perhaps surprising to many is the teaching that we find here and that I want us to focus carefully upon today, that there is an hidden and unseen hope expressed by the apostle, an often unseen hope that so many so critically need to know. THAT THERE IS HOPE IN ALL OF THIS AND IT IS GOD’S WORD THROUGH PAUL THAT STATES THAT SO CLEARLY, IS MOST IMPORTANT. LET’S NOW CAREFULLY CONSIDER THAT.***
- ***So in this case, for Eve, but also for all women (and all men too, if were to focus on that aspect of this profound truth), you are in the very center of***

God's work. This may not always be so desirable considering the burdens and responsibilities of the challenges, but it is the fact as stated here in Genesis.

- ***For all, but especially for women, did you know that from God's point of view, you are on the very center stage? It was true from the beginning. Consider the Seed of the Woman promise of Genesis 3:***

Our Theme Today: "‘Prisoners of Hope’, God’s Blessing Upon Women Was Always A Reality” -- Today, In the Old Testament

The Overall Scriptural Theme: God Sees the End from the Beginning but his plan develops in history and that is where we all find ourselves. According to the glorious will of Almighty God we are bound to the course of a history with a glorious end. God knows the end from the beginning and has placed us in the very center of it all. We have been made “prisoners of that hope eternal” as the prophet Zechariah writes in chapter 9 of his great work of prophecy.

- ***Women have always been on his center stage of history as we shall now see revealed in the pages of sacred Biblical history. Let’s begin first with a significant prophecy from the prophet Zechariah:***

[READ] Zech. 9:9-11

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he [is] just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion [shall be] from sea [even] to sea, and from the river [even] to the ends of the earth.

11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein [is] no water.

[READ] Zech. 9:12-17

12 Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare [that] I will render double unto thee;

13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, [and] make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, [and] as the corners of the altar.

16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they [shall be as] the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

17 For how great [is] his goodness, and how great [is] his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

I am reminded here of Paul's many statements in his letters regarding suffering for Christ and in Philippians chapter 1, even bearing Christ's "bonds":

Phil. 1:12-13

12 ... But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things [which happened] unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places];

There are many such "Prisoners of hope" found in the pages of scripture. And the sacred record of this is a foundation of our hope as well, isn't it? Amen. Rejoice! " 1 Cor. 10:6: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

- ***Firstly, let's consider the example of Sarah:***

Heb. 11:8-10

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

[READ] Heb. 11:11-13

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- ***Consider the example next of Moses' sister (Meriam), yes, and Pharaoh's Daughter, for they worked together as a pair!***

[READ] Ex. 1:8-10, 17, 22

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel [are] more and mightier than we:

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and [so] get them up out of the land.

...

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

...

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

...

[READ] Ex. 2:1-10

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took [to wife] a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he [was a] goodly [child], she hid him three months.

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid [it] in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash [herself] at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when she had opened [it], she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This [is one] of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give [thee] thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses [*Web. "drawn out"*]: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

- ***What an amazing and miraculous turn of events this was! I find my mind drawn to what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians:***

1 Cor. 1:22-31

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

- ***Moses' deliverance from the king's determination to destroy the Hebrew male children was dramatic indeed and positioned him from the house of pharaoh to be Israel's deliverer -- and all this "through the woman". Amen. God worked still! Prisoners of hope indeed. Jochebed knew it, Moses' mother, a daughter of Levi indeed. What was her hope and was her life indeed as a "prisoner of that hope"?***

- ***Consider the example of Rahab (and the man who married her!):***

Joshua 2:18 Behold, [when] we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

- ***Do you remember the background of this, historically?***
 - ***After wandering in the desert of Sinai for nearly 40 years Joshua had sent two spies to Jericho, a walled city of considerable stature indeed. But it would be the beginning of God's deliverance of this land and people to the children of Israel.***
 - ***The spies take for their temporary dwelling in Jericho the house of a prostitute named Rahab. I guess they would be pretty invisible there as the coming and goings there were well know to the town fathers, as it were. The house was built into the wall guarding the city.***
 - ***Well, Rahab hides the spies having told them that in Jericho it was well know what had happened 40 years before when God by a mighty hand had delivered the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt and had brought them on their way through the Red Sea. She said she had believed that it was Jehovah God who had delivered them and asked for her own salvation at their hand and that of her family. They promised to save her and her's when the city would soon be taken victoriously at Joshua's command. They escaped by night and marked her house as "protected" by God (and them) with a scarlet thread.***

Heb. 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

- ***But it's go on for the rest of the story is even more amazing, the larger picture:***
- ***For that we will consider Ruth next:***
 - ***You will remember the storyline as it develops ...***

- *There had been a time of famine in Bethlehem-Judah and a man with his wife and two sons traveled to Moab and settled there for their survival sake. Naomi, the man's wife was soon widowed as her husband passed away. Both sons took wives of the Moabite women and then they also died during the next ten years. Hearing that the famine in her homeland had largely passed, she planned to return to her homeland. She suggested that her two daughters-in-law remain in Moab, marry, and fulfill their womanly desires, remarry, and bear children from new husbands.*

Ruth 1:11-14

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? [are] there yet [any more] sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go [your way]; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, [if] I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

- *The one believed she would be sick at heart for her own land of Moab and stayed there while the other, named Ruth, returned with her mother-in-law to Bethlehem. The town should tell you the rest of the story!*
 - *A fateful decision that was on Ruth's part. Fateful indeed. For she would meet the owner of a farm named Boaz as she was gleaning the crop left behind for the poor, and he would show kindness to her and eventually would take her to wife.*
 - *The hope of women, as Naomi knew of it as it had no doubt been passed down to her by her own mother, was to be a part of a long line of those that would bring this hope that was ultimately based on the promise of Gen. 3:15 with the hope of verse 16 as well. What an important and encouraging part of sacred history this is. What is the rest of the story, you might be wondering, if you have not considered the sacred place in the fabric of God's dealings with his people this way before.*

Surely these women were caught up in the web of time and this “prison of hope” was becoming a reality for them as God worked in their midst. What does the rest of the revealed word say about this?

Matt. 1:4-6

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her [that had been the wife] of Urias;

- ***So, David’s great-great-grandfather was Salmon and his great-great-grandmother was Rahab; his great-grandfather was Boaz and his great-grandmother was Ruth!!] Ahhh, the Seed of the Woman continues as the central theme of the Bible and with Rahab and then here with Ruth we even had the “crimson” or “scarlet” thread. I wonder what Rahab told her daughter-in-law Ruth about that scarlet thread while they were sitting by the warming fire on a dark winter evening? So blessed indeed.***

But if you were Rahab or Ruth in the center of this drama, how would you have considered the circumstances of your day as they developed during those critical times? Are there any examples here of such a hope that they became “prisoners of hope” as the prophet had written. The answer is surely yes and amen!

Application:

Heb. 11:37-40:

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and [of] Barak, and [of] Samson, and [of] Jephthae; [of] David also, and Samuel, and [of] the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 And others had trial of [cruel] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

So, the fulfilling of the Seed Promise regarding Christ was NOT the end of the story, but in some ways the beginning. And that is where we are today.

Heb. 11:38-40:

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and [in] mountains, and [in] dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

“Prisoners of Hope” indeed. So we are.