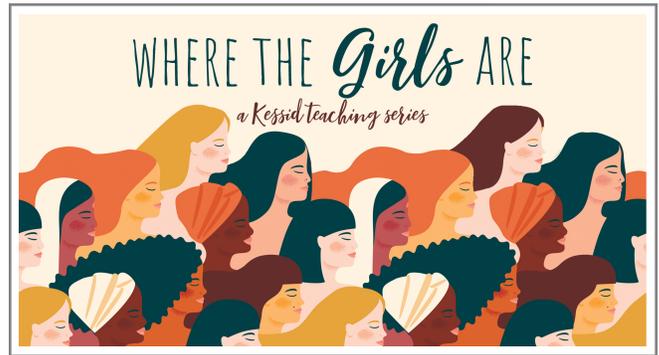


"DEFENDER"**Date:** August 15, 2021**Speaker:** Chris Potter

This last week our family got a little time away at the beach...

- This was a reminder of the risk that comes along with this experience... and unless you experience it, it is easy to forget...

At its core, this is a series about how we interpret and live out the Bible...

Excerpt from our Statement of Faith...

- "We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. **Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power.** All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine."

(Vs.) 1 Timothy 4:16 (NLT) - Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you..."

Paul knows that a "drift" can happen and must be defended against...

- On October 31, 1517, priest and scholar Martin Luther nails a piece of paper to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, containing the 95 revolutionary opinions that would begin the Protestant Reformation.

We must recognize our reality...

- The Center for Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary estimates that there are currently 47,000 denominations (Boil it down and we still have 200+ in our country alone).

I'd like to talk through a few principles today that can help us to interpret and live out the teachings of the Scriptures....

Principle #1 – When trying to understand the Bible we need to go on the “Interpretive Journey”.

Step 1 - “Grasping the text in their town” - what did the text mean for the original author and their original audience?

- Imagine I wrote a letter (Masks)

Step 2 - “Measuring the width of the river to cross” – what separates us today from those original writers and readers?

- Culture – Identify any unique differences between their culture and ours.
- Language – Identify any words that are significantly different from our understanding.
- Time – Identify the time of the passage.
- Situation – Identify significant differences between their situation and our situation today.
- Covenant – If it is an Old Testament passage, identify those significant theological differences that came as a result of the life and work of Jesus Christ.

Step 3 - “Crossing the ‘principlizing’ bridge” – what timeless/theological principles exist in this passage?

- Deut. 22:8 (KJV) "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence."

Step 4 - Grasping the text in my town - how can I apply those principles to my own life so that I learn from the text what the original audience learned?

- Many of us skip right to Step 4

Much of the hurt that has and is happening within the church is due to a lack of interpreting each book according to its context and purpose and doing so in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power.

Now I want to read a passage to you... and as I do I want you to feel the weight of how important it is that we interpret this well... and in so doing have to most fruitful defense of the Gospel....

- Paul is writing a letter of instruction to a young leader, Timothy, who is ministering in Ephesus...

(Vs.) | Timothy 2:8-15 - 8 *I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer without anger or disputing. 9 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. 11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 *For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.**

- This is the passage most often quoted to deny women teaching and leading ministries in the church.
- In the same paragraph of scripture, men are commanded to raise their hands when praying, women are forbidden to braid their hair, wear jewelry or expensive clothes, it is asserted that women will be saved through childbirth, and Paul forbids women to teach and commands their silence...
- Yet in an amazing display of Biblical inconsistency, some faith communities insist that the command that women be silent is to be followed to the letter in the twenty-first century, while the other troublesome commands in the exact same context are culturally conditioned and therefore not for today.

So let's go on the Interpretive Journey Together...

Step 1 - "Grasping the text in their town"

- If you journeyed to Ephesus in these times, where Timothy is ministering, the first thing you would notice as you approached the city is the Temple of Artemis
- The Temple of the fertility Goddess Artemis, was one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
- This temple contained popular Roman fertility cults of Artemis, and these cults were a dominant influence on the entire Ephesian culture.

Step 2 - "Measuring the width of the river to cross" – what separates us today from those original writers and readers?

- **Culture** - In keeping with the trend of early Christianity, the first-century churches at Ephesus and Corinth attracted a lot of women, particularly widows. As a result, large portions of the pastoral letters of the NT tackle the mounting logistical challenges of caring for so many unmarried women.
- Of particular concern to Paul was a group of young widows who had infiltrated the church and developed a reputation for dressing promiscuously, sleeping around, gossiping, spreading unorthodox ideas, interrupting church services with questions, mooching off the church's widow fund...

- Scholars believe these women to have been influenced by the popular Roman fertility cults of Artemis that encouraged women to flaunt their sexuality and freedom to a degree that scandalized even the Roman establishment, hardly known for its prudish morals. These cults were also known for both their false teaching that Eve preceded Adam in creation, and for commandeering authority in an argumentative, abusive, and domineering manner.
- **Language** - Paul wrote: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have *authority* over a man;"
- This word, authority or authēntēō, is a rare word whose most common meaning is negative referring to a domineering or even aggressive or violent wielding of authority (as opposed to the ordinary and positive leadership authority in the church as we know it on our language).
- Paul's word in 1 Timothy 2:12, authēntēō, is not used any other time in all of Scripture.
- **This is the cultural context that Paul is addressing...**

Step 3 - "Crossing the 'principlizing' bridge" – what timeless/theological principles exist in this passage?

- **1 Timothy 4:16 (NLT)** - Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you...
- Having order in a church setting, and not chaos, is vital to doing the important work of the Gospel that Jesus has commanded us to, make disciples.
- See Paul knew what every skiller-discipler does, that unlearning is a vital step in growing in Christ-likeness...

Step 4 - Grasping the text in my town - how can I apply those principles to my own life so that I learn from the text what the original audience learned?

- Our "center of gravity" is Jesus... almost all of the arguments for limits upon the roles of women are centered around Old Testament Commands and Paul's writing. Both are to be interpreted in light of Jesus' life and teaching (not the other way around).

Principle #2 "Scripture Interprets Scripture"

- Psalm 18 - "You are my defender. The Lord is my protector;"
- In the Old and New Testaments of this Bible that we cling to, Women exercised significant ministry roles of teaching and leading with God's blessing.... (Underscore)
- We see in the life of Deborah in the book of Judges 4 & 5, and Miriam Exodus 15 and in Numbers 12, Huldah in 2 Kings just to name a few, as well as many other unnamed women throughout the books the Old Testament,

We see that Jesus Himself was deeply counter-cultural in the ways that he honored and included women in and through His own earthly ministries. In a culture where women were generally viewed as being responsible for the evil in the world and were strictly segregated from the social and religious life of the communities as inferior and unteachable, Jesus treated women with dignity and honor and included them in his ministry.

- Mary, the mother of Jesus, announced to the world that Christ had come. (Luke 1:46-55)
- Anna was a prophetess and evangelist in the Temple who continually and publicly spoke about Jesus. (Luke 2:36-38)
- Mary of Bethany was the only person among Jesus' disciples to grasp the significance of His repeated declarations that he would soon die and be resurrected. (Matthew 26:10-13)
- Influential women supported Jesus financially. (Luke 8:2,3)
- Women stood by Jesus at the cross (John 19:25) and some lingered and watched his burial when most of the male disciples had already fled. (Mark 15:47)
- Jesus first appeared to women after His resurrection. He commissioned them as the first witnesses of the good news in a culture where women were traditionally prohibited from being witnesses in a court setting. (Mark 16:9, John 20:10-18)
- In the early church: Women prayed with the apostles in the upper room; men and women prayed together. (Acts 1:14, 12:12)
- The Holy Spirit fell on both men and women at Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)
- Peter related the Pentecostal outpouring to Joel's prophecy "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..." (Acts 2:17,18)
- Women in the early church were persecuted and suffered for their faith because their activity in ministry and proclamation made them targets of persecution. (Acts 22:4)

See, Paul is right. There are many things to defend against in this world, but it is vital for the sake of the church and the generations to come, that those defenses are aimed in the right direction.