

Michaela Gulachek
Christian Thought Wednesday 3:00pm - 5:15 pm
April, 15, 2020

Egalitarian vs. Complementarian

Should women teach men in the church? Why or why not? That question is one of the hottest debates in modern Christianity. In a time where “radical” feminism has become the social norm in secular society, it is often questioned by believers and non-believers if women should be allowed to lead a church rather than just teach the women and children ministries. In Christian theology there are two points of views that believers tend to side on, complementarianism and egalitarian. The complementarian view follows the guidelines of 1st Timothy where it is written that women should not preach to a mixed congregation. The opposite position, the egalitarian view believes that when the bible says mankind was created in the image of God, men and women are looked at equally. Based on the research surrounding the view of equality from the beginning of time, women do have the ability to take on more leadership roles, including preaching, within a church.

The egalitarian perspective is the minority amongst Christians, however, W. Ward Gasque composed a strong argument on why it should not be. In Gasque’s argument titled *The Roles Of Women In The Church, In Society And In The Home* they present the basic reasons why complementarianism is so popular and easy to follow, all while pointing out the relevance of the egalitarian belief system. Gasque writes that the proper way to start the egalitarian argument is to go all the way back to the beginning -- Genesis chapters one, two and three. In Genesis 1:26-28, says that all of mankind was made in the image of the Lord God. When God created Eve in Genesis 2:18-24, He knew that she and Adam would become one flesh and become united under the image of God. The author Gasque suggests that “There is not even a hint in the narrative of Genesis that woman is in any way subordinate to man prior to the Fall [of man]” (pg. 2). Before

the Fall, male and female, in God's eyes were looked at as equal beings, yet because of the sinful actions of the two, God put a curse on mankind. God did not create a hierarchy between male and female, the sin of man did that.

Nijay K Gupta wrote a compelling article titled *Teach Us, Mary: The Authority of Women Teachers in the Church in Light of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)*. The author discusses different perspectives from outside sources on why women tend to not be allowed to preach in front of men, such as how males could be distracted by the woman. This interpretation is rooted way deeper rather than just a female distraction, however it is rooted in the oppression of the female body, discounting the potential for a phenomenal leader due to the male being distracted by “femininity” (pg.11). Despite the traditional view, Gupta challenges it by asking “what do we do with the instructional teaching voices of women in scripture, but also specifically as scripture?” (pg.11). Gupta being curious about the female voice in scripture, she dives into Mary Magdalene’s Magnificat in the book of Luke. The complementarian belief system says that Mary’s joyous hymn on her experiences with Christ are not relevant due to Luke being the one composing it. Mary has portions of biblical teachings in the book of Luke, but coming from Luke’s writings therefore validating it as Luke’s teachings. This is the traditional view that can further invalidate a ton more biblical teachings, however, does not due the information coming from males. By diving into Mary’s Magnificat in the book of Luke, there is a clear testimony of what she has seen Christ do. However, Mary is clearly sharing not only what Christ has done for her, but the characteristics of Christ on earth.

The complementarian view says that in first Timothy chapter two, Paul clearly states that women in the church should be silent and not have a position over men. The complementarian interpretation of this chapter in Timothy has become a one-lense perspective of how Paul words

his letter. However, Berkley Mickelsen challenges this perspective in their article titled *Who Are The Women In 1 Timothy 2:1-5 (Part II)*. Mickelsen suggests that Paul was giving Timothy a warning about certain women in the church. Paul tells Timothy that the women who are not humble and who draw attention to areas that should be kept lowkey are the ones who should not teach over men. Mickelsen also notes that in the literal translation of 1 Timothy verse 12 says “... I am not permitting woman teaching and domineering over man...”. The author emphasises the use of “teaching and domineering” as saying that women should not overpower men, yet have an attitude of preaching as an equal, not as a higher position.

Due to the different resources throughout this essay regarding the view of equality of women from the beginning of time, the debate on whether females should be allowed to lead in the church comes down to two different perspectives, egalitarian versus complementarian. By looking at literal transcripts, understanding the context of scripture and looking at the desired design of man before the fall, one can make a strong opinion on if the woman is fit for leadership. The complementarian view suggests that 1st Timothy goes against women preaching, however, the egalitarian perspectives suggests that Paul was writing to a certain type of woman. The argument of whether or not women should be allowed to preach to a mixed congregation is highly debated and will continue to be debated until individuals with the traditional view go back to the beginning in Genesis and see that before the fall of man, God designed man and women to be equal in all aspects.

Works Cited

Gasque, W. Ward. "The Roles Of Women In The Church, In Society And In The Home."

Priscilla Papers, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring 1988, pp. 1+. *eBook Collection (EBSCO)*,

www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/Ward_Role.pdf. Accessed 17 Apr. 2020.

Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:18-24, 1 Timothy 2:1-5. English Standard Version, YouVersion.

bible.com, YouVersion, www.bible.com/. Accessed 17 Apr. 2020.

Gupta, Nijay. "Teach Us, Mary: The Authority of Women Teachers in the Church in Light of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)." *Priscilla Papers*, vol. 29, no. 3, Summer 2015, pp. 11-14.

eBook Collection (EBSCO),

www.academia.edu/35421975/Teach_Us_Mary_The_Authority_of_Women_Teachers_in_the_Church_in_Light_of_the_Magnificat_Luke_1_46-55_. Accessed 17 Apr. 2020.

Mickelsen, Berkeley. "Who Are The Women In 1 Timothy 2:1-5 (Part II)." *Priscilla Papers*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring 1988, pp. 4-6. *eBook Collection (EBSCO)*,

www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/Ward_Role.pdf. Accessed 17 Apr. 2020.