

Structuring the Church for Evangelism

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[0 : 00] Well, we turn now to the life-giving, nourishing Word of God, the Bible. And let's open our Bibles at the first letter to Timothy, chapter 2.

And if you have one of our hardback Bibles, you'll find this on page 991, 991. And our reading is the whole of the second chapter of 1 Timothy.

First of all then, Paul writes to his friend and young colleague, First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

For this, I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. I'm telling the truth, I'm not lying. A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.

[1 : 43] Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness, with good works.

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. Rather, she is to remain quiet.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

This is the word of the Lord, and may the Lord make it a blessing to us this evening. Let's turn then to our second chapter in 1 Timothy, page 991.

My title for this evening is Structuring the Church for Evangelism. Now, it may sound perverse, but we can be grateful for the way in which some of the first century churches went off the rails in the first century.

[3 : 22] Just think of it. There were severe problems in the Galatian churches. There were severe problems at Colossae. Corinth was a train wreck.

The Ephesian churches were teetering on the brink of disaster, and the result of all these difficulties was Paul's letters. Without these disastrous departures from true Christianity, Paul would not have needed to write these letters.

But these churches kept on veering off the right road, and Paul, because he loved the churches so much, had to correct them. He was not willing just to stand by and watch them implode.

He was determined to bring them back to truth and reality. And 1 Timothy is a prime example of Paul wrestling with the heart and mind of a church so as to bring it back to the path of right understanding and right behavior.

Now, I know that in a formal sense, this letter is addressed to Timothy himself, and rightly, we call it 1 Timothy. But in reality, it's addressed to the church at Ephesus, where Timothy was temporarily stationed so as to discipline the church and rescue it from its waywardness.

[4 : 35] Just look with me again at chapter 1, verse 3. As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus. Why? That you may charge certain persons not to teach any different or heterodox doctrine.

Now, that was the big problem at Ephesus. People in the fellowships there were bringing in strange ideas, wrong doctrines, which led to, chapter 1, verse 4, speculation, speculative talk.

Chapter 1, verse 6, vain discussion. Chapter 1, verse 19, shipwrecked faith. Chapter 4, verse 7, 4-7, irreverent, silly myths.

And chapter 6, verse 20, irreverent babble and contradictions. So we can be very grateful for the problems of the first century churches, because they caused Paul to write these matchless letters, which are as useful to us as they were to their first readers, because the same kinds of false teaching and corrupting influence surface in every generation.

And this is why Paul's letters have been so influential and so beneficial to the Church of Christ for 20 centuries. We need them today as much as ever. What tends to happen in the history of the Church is that a particular congregation, a particular Church, flourishes for a generation or maybe for two or three generations, and then the work runs into the buffers, because wrong influences creep in and are not checked.

[6 : 13] I can think of one or two churches that I know in England which have been strong and excellent for 50 or 60 years and still are, because the leadership of those churches has insisted that the Bible determines the life and practice of the Church.

But I can also think of churches which used to be a great force for the Gospel, perhaps in the 19th century or the early 20th, but are now a mere shell of a Church because the Bible was allowed to drift into the margins of Church life.

So let's thank God for these corrective letters of Paul the Apostle and let's continue to accept them not as the words of a mere man, but as the teaching of Christ himself, because after all, the Apostles, by definition, are his mouthpiece.

to every generation. We're looking now at chapter 2 in this letter. Let's see how Paul begins it. First of all, then. Now the line of his argument in chapter 1 is something like this.

Timothy, I've left you there in Ephesus to stop this false teaching, this silly irreverent babbling on about myths and genealogies. These foolish people, they profess to be Bible teachers, they claim to be, teachers of the law of God, but they don't know what they're talking about.

[7 : 28] They're strangers to the true gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. In fact, I am a prime example of the grace of God shown in the gospel because the Lord rescued me, me of all people, a blasphemer, a former persecutor, a violent man.

But the Lord saves sinners and I am the worst of them. But he saved me as an example, a kind of prize exhibit so that other people seeing a wretch like me being saved will realize that they too can be saved by the same grace.

So Timothy, my boy, strap on your armor and fight the good fight. Clear out what is false in the Ephesian churches and establish the true gospel and the lifestyle that expresses it.

Your work is the gospel and the ethics that accord with it. First of all then, chapter 2, verse 1, first of all, in view of all this, I urge dot, dot, dot.

So do you see the force that lies behind this opening phrase in verse 1? In chapter 1, Paul is saying out with the false, in with the true. So let's set about establishing the proper structures which characterize a true church.

[8 : 46] And here's the first thing, chapter 2, verse 1, that the church must learn to pray for political stability in the nation. And here's the second thing, chapter 2, verse 8, that the church must recognize the God-given differences between men and women.

So in this second chapter, Paul is teaching Timothy that if a church is going to function properly as a gospel church, as a church that commends Christ and his gospel to the world, certain things have got to be understood and set in place and practiced.

Now the same is true of the later chapters, 3, 4, 5, and 6, where Paul develops this teaching right through the letter on exactly the same lines. A true Christian church, a church which acts as a pillar and buttress of the truth, will look like this and this and this.

And Paul, through the letter, deals with four or five critically important areas of church life. So you could give this letter the subtitle, The Characteristics of a True Gospel or True Christian Church.

Well, let's take this second chapter now under these two main headings. First then, a true gospel church learns to pray for political stability in the nation so that the gospel can be freely proclaimed.

[10 : 07] Verse 1, First of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings, that's pretty comprehensive, that's every type of prayer, should be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Now, do you find it rather surprising that Paul should put this item in such a prominent position as a first of all? Is it really a top priority for Christians that we should pray for our rulers and governments?

And isn't it also surprising to see in verse 2 that the purpose of praying for our political leaders is that we should lead a peaceful and quiet life? Hasn't Paul been urging Timothy back in chapter 1, verse 18 to wage the good warfare, to be a battler?

So isn't there some discrepancy between a battling Timothy and a quiet and peaceful congregation? Well, the key idea in verses 1 and 2 is this, that if the nation, in this case the empire, is secure and well governed, the gospel can be preached and taught with much greater freedom.

But if law and order break down, it becomes much harder for evangelists like Paul to travel about and much harder to proclaim the gospel publicly because freedom of speech becomes restricted where anarchy and violence prevail.

[11 : 36] I imagine, for example, that it's almost impossible to preach the gospel in Syria today because of the destruction of law and order in so many parts of the country. I guess there are a few brave Christian souls who are doing it, but it's enormously harder when normal human relationships are so disrupted and where suffering is so acute.

Well, let's work our way through this paragraph and we'll notice the details. Pray for kings, writes Paul, and for all who are in high positions. I once went regularly to a prayer meeting dedicated to the work of overseas mission.

It was a missionary prayer meeting. This was back in the 1980s before the eastern communist bloc began to crumble. And I remember there were one or two very keen members of the prayer group who used to pray for the conversion to Christ of the top man in the Soviet Union, who in those days was Mikhail Gorbachev, and also for the top leaders in China and other communist countries.

Now, it was a loving and kind thing for those Christians to pray for the conversion of political leaders like that, and I don't criticize them for a moment for doing it. But what Paul has in mind here is quite different.

He's not saying pray for pagan kings to be converted. He's saying pray for kings and rulers so that they should govern wisely and well, upholding law and order, so that the churches should be able to lead a peaceful, godly, well-ordered life.

[13 : 06] Why? Well, if the churches can live in peace in the towns and cities of a well-governed nation, their influence is going to be much more powerful. Their non-Christian neighbors will notice them.

They'll have the chance to notice them. They'll notice their godly and dignified lifestyle, as Paul puts it at the end of verse 2, godly and dignified. And it's precisely that godly, dignified lifestyle which so often attracts other people to Christ.

I'm sure that many of us began to be drawn to Christ because we had Christian friends and neighbors who lived a godly and dignified life. And as we looked at them, we thought, this is human life as it should be, not chaotic and unprincipled, but solid and warm and steady and loving.

So what is Paul's real concern? Is it simply a concern that Christians should be able to live comfortably and peacefully? No. His concern is for the gospel to be broadcast far and wide across the earth.

Look how he reasons it through. Verse 3, It is good and pleasing in God's sight for the churches to live in peace and security because, verse 4, God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

[14 : 24] And the truth, verse 5, is clear and unique and defined. There is one God, says Paul, and, this is the critical qualification, there is one mediator.

What Paul means is that there is only one mediator. He writes, there is one God and one mediator, but the force of it is to say that there is only one God and only one mediator.

Now, as I say, Paul's insistence that there is only one mediator between God and men, that is the critical phrase here. Faiths other than Christianity believe that there is only one God.

Judaism has always believed that there is only one God. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 4, that's the starting point of the Hebrew creed.

Islam believes passionately that there is only one God. Judaism and Islam are monotheistic as much as Christianity. Even some folk who follow some of the animist religions in Africa and places like that believe that beyond the spirits there is a great supreme being.

[15 : 38] So, a modern person, a 21st century person might say to us, many faiths believe that there is only one God. So, why should not the one God who wants all people to be saved save them in a variety of ways?

Some through Eastern religions, some through Judaism, some through Islam, or through other cults. Paul's answer is that the one and only God has provided only one mediator, the man Christ Jesus, the only one who can represent God to man and man to God.

Because Jesus is God, he can address man's need and meet it. And because he is man, he can truly represent the human race and bear the penalty for our sins in our place.

There is no other such mediator in the world. No one else could do for us what Jesus has done for us. As he said himself, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one can come to the Father except through me. A mediator is a go-between. And in his unique go-between role, Jesus has satisfied the just anger of God against our sin by accepting the wages of sin on our behalf.

[16 : 55] And he has opened the kingdom of heaven to all who run to him with a sense of their moral bankruptcy. Look how Paul unpacks it further in verse 6.

Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Now that phrase echoes Jesus' own words. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

It's a great word. If we're Christians, the ransom has been paid for us. We're no longer held captive by the power of sin. We are now liberated, free men, free women, ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.

Now let's not lose sight of where Paul is taking us. In verses 1 to 7, he's pressing on the Ephesians the truth that because there is only one God and because there is only one mediator between God and man, the whole world needs to hear this one truth.

There is no other truth. There won't be some other saving truth to be discovered on the plains of North America for example or in the forests of Africa or in the ancient civilizations of Japan or China.

[18 : 09] Paul says in verse 4 that God desires all people to be saved but he insists that there is only one way. Just notice the global vision, the extent of it in this paragraph.

Verse 1, prayers to be made for all people. That's a big word. Short word but a big word. Verse 2, for kings and all who are in high positions.

Verse 4, God who desires all people to be saved. Verse 6, Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all.

And verse 7, for whose sake was Paul appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher, for the Gentiles. And what he means by that word is the whole world beyond the borders of Israel.

It's the gospel of one mediator who gave his life as a ransom for all. It is the only gospel. Friends, do you believe that? Now this brings us back to Paul's starting point in verse 1.

[19 : 14] It's because this gospel is the only gospel for the whole world that Paul longs to put wings on his sandals and to travel as far as he possibly can preaching and teaching.

But he and his colleagues can only do that if the roads are safe and if people can move about without being afraid that their throats are going to be cut at every corner. And that kind of freedom can only come about if kings and governors are exercising a firm and just rule in their territories.

Let me put this in slightly different terms. Paul is teaching that the church and the state should recognize their duties to each other. The responsibility of the state is to preserve law and order and peaceful relations as far as possible to maintain a stable society in which the church can operate freely and preach the gospel without hindrance.

The church on the other hand is responsible to pray for the nation's leaders and lawmakers and of course to obey the law of the land. Unless of course that law directly contravenes the ethics of the Bible in which case we are to obey God and not men and go to prison if necessary.

Now for us today in this country let's pray often for our national leaders. You'll have noticed I'm sure that our minister Willie often does this almost every week in our morning services.

[20 : 43] He does it I'm sure because of this paragraph that we're studying. we pray for world leaders and we pray for national leaders so that the gospel should be released across the world and across the nation.

So let's pray not just in our corporate prayers but in our private prayers as well for Mrs. May at Westminster and Mrs. Sturgeon at Holyrood and for their senior colleagues and advisors. Whether or not we like their party politics party politics are not the issue.

stability and security in the nation that's the issue that's Paul's issue here in verse 2. If you asked Paul whether he was a socialist or a Tory or a nationalist he would have said don't be daft there's something much more important at stake here.

And thinking back to the church at Ephesus when the church learns to focus on the proclamation of the gospel it's going to have no time for idle speculations and vain discussions and irreverent babble about myths and genealogies.

It's got some real work to do to tell the world that there is only one God and only one mediator and only one way to be saved. So in verses 1 to 7 Paul lays out for Timothy and for the Ephesian church the priority of evangelism.

[22 : 02] Out with the corrupting influence of these false teachers with their introverted and silly agenda myths and genealogies and so on in with the true agenda of the Christian church which is in effect the great commission getting the only saving gospel out into the world and praying for the political stability which will make that possible.

Well now secondly in verses 8 to 15 Paul teaches the church to recognize the God-given differences between men and women. Now friends do you feel a bit anxious about this passage?

Does your stomach tighten at the prospect of studying this paragraph? Well cast anxieties aside does not God include every passage in the Bible for our blessing?

For our good? For our happiness? Of course he does. We'll only find this passage unpalatable if we're nursing a determination to follow our culture's values rather than the values and teaching of God.

God so let's pause now for five seconds and quietly ask the Lord to give us a heart to obey him gladly and thoroughly.

[23 : 26] Amen. A movement or trend in society can be wrong and harmful in many ways without being wrong in every way and that is surely true of the secular feminist movement which has been so influential in the past century or two.

For example aren't you glad that British universities finally opened their doors to women students in about the year 1870? It's only about 140 years ago.

Isn't that amazing? I'm very glad about that. Aren't you glad that barely a century ago I forget the exact date was it 1920? When was the vote given to women?

28? Whenever it was. Less than a century ago aren't you glad that that happened? I certainly am. Aren't you glad that strenuous efforts are being made today for women to receive the same pay as men when they do the same job?

I'm certainly glad about that. There are aspects of modern feminism which have greatly improved the lot of women. Now the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in status equal in status and the things that I've just mentioned universities and voting and so on these things have greatly helped to raise the status of women to a point of greater equality and in those ways modern feminism is very much in line in tune with the Bible.

[24 : 53] But while the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in status and in dignity it also insists that men and women are different in function that they have distinct and different roles to play both in society and in marriage and in the life of the church.

They are interdependent but they are not interchangeable. And it's this aspect of the Bible's teaching which secular feminism rebels against.

And the passage in front of us is a prime example of the Bible's teaching that the roles of men and women are not interchangeable. When our Paul has a word for the men first verse 8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.

Now almost certainly this anger and quarreling is a byproduct of the false teaching at Ephesus. If you get into interminable discussions about genealogies and things like that it's likely to lead to quarrels.

Now it's not that women are so sweet natured and sugary and spicy that they would never quarrel and never get angry. But I think it's true to say that men as a gender are more inclined than women to be aggressive and to want to dominate other men.

[26 : 18] We speak of alpha males we never speak as far as I know of alpha females. The sinful male nature somehow wants to squash other men.

Think of the front row of the scrum in an international rugby match. What do those men say to each other? They certainly speak to each other. What do they say to each other as they bend down and lock their heads?

Do they say for example it's charming to meet you Patrick I do hope you're enjoying the weather the sun generally shines at Murrayfield. I don't think that's the sort of conversation that goes on.

Think of Prime Minister's question time in the House of Commons. Think over the last few years David Cameron versus Gordon Brown and then Ed Miliband and then Jeremy Corbyn.

At the point of those sessions I suppose they're discussing questions but the point of the sessions really is to deliver a knockout blow. And the victor when he delivers that blow crows over his opponent like a cockerel on a dunghill.

[27 : 21] So Paul is saying to the men of the church brothers don't be like that. It is better for God to be mastering you as you pray than for you to be mastering each other as you fight with words.

In verse 8 Paul is countering the sinful tendency of men to want to dominate each other. He's saying no let the Lord dominate you pray together and of course the implication is work lovingly together support each other rather than trying to establish pecking orders of dominance.

Now before we turn to verse 9 let's remind ourselves of the Bible's teaching which comes largely from Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 about the characteristic temptations of men and women.

We won't turn up Genesis 3 at this point but just think about the Garden of Eden for a moment. Eve sinned Adam and Eve both sinned but Eve sinned by allowing herself to be deceived by the devil and thereby submitting to the devil at that point and not to her husband who surely had told her beforehand about the Lord's command not to eat the fruit of that fatal tree.

Adam sinned by weakly abdicating responsibility. He not only stood by and allowed his wife to eat the forbidden fruit he ate it himself when she offered it to him.

[28 : 50] And in that one fateful episode we see the characteristic temptations of both men and women. The woman's temptation will be to dominate the man and make a bid for leadership over him and the man's temptation will be to shrink back wimpishly from taking responsibility for leadership.

So when God later in Genesis 3 pronounces judgment on both the serpent and Eve and Adam he says to Eve your desire and this is your temptation your desire will be to master him.

And to Adam he says because you listened to your wife which means because you submitted to her and have disobeyed my command about the fruit cursed is the ground because of you.

The whole environment cursed because of you Adam. So the entry into the world of sin and death and every disorder is traced in the Bible directly back to the disobedience of both Adam and Eve.

She disobeyed the Lord's command and allowed the serpent to master her and deceive her as Paul shows in our verse 14 here and Adam disobeyed the Lord by his cowardly and weak decision to submit to his wife even though submission to her involved rejecting the Lord's authority.

[30 : 13] So woman's characteristic temptation is to dominate and lead man. Man's characteristic temptation is to abdicate the responsibility of taking the lead and in as much as we behave like this we reverse the God given order of man taking the lead and woman being his helper.

Now you may be thinking in this passage here in 1 Timothy 2 is it perhaps just about marriage or is it about men and women in the church in general?

Well in Ephesians chapter 5 that famous passage Paul is teaching about marriage wives submit to your husbands husbands love your wives but here in 1 Timothy 2 Paul broadens the scope and he's writing about Christian men and Christian women not about husbands and wives as such he's writing here about the life of the church the whole church when it meets together and how it behaves corporately yes he refers to Adam and Eve by name in verses 13 and 14 but not because he's writing about marriage it's because he's writing about men and women he's holding Adam up here as the prototype man not as the prototype husband and Eve here as the prototype woman not the prototype wife to try to restrict what Paul is saying in this passage solely to the marriage relationship is I think to read the passage dishonestly and with a view to avoiding its far reaching implications so what is Paul teaching here we'll boil it down to two headings first appropriate adornment for women and secondly appropriate attitude for the women of the church first then appropriate adornment now Paul is not saying here just look at it carefully

Paul is not saying that Christian women should not adorn themselves in fact quite the opposite look at verse nine women should adorn themselves but with the right adornment namely respectable apparel worn with modesty and self control and not with inappropriate adornment which he describes as braided hair gold pearls and costly attire and then he returns to right adornment in verse ten which is he says good works so a life of action and activity serving others in all sorts of ways now it would be a mistake I think to read verse nine too legalistically so as to make the church end up with a list of minute rules in which for example braids might be distinguished from plaits that's not braids it's plaits I'm wearing or real gold and real pearls might be distinguished from mock gold well Dr.

Philip these are artificial pearls or perhaps a rule that when he talks of expensive attire maybe it's okay to buy a dress that costs seventy pounds but don't you dare to buy a dress that costs a hundred no Paul's point in verses nine and ten is very closely linked with what he says in verses eleven and twelve the danger with a woman going to town on her personal appearance is that the more gorgeously she is decked out the more she can wrap the men around her little finger isn't that what's going on for example think of this very place an hour ago just before the evening service begins it's 6.25 on a Sunday evening and a gorgeously dressed woman sweeps into the grand hall what happens all the men turn their heads don't they well they turn them back again very quickly but they've turned them you see she is exercising a certain power over them Paul is not telling her to come to church in frumpy ugly clothes the worst she can find what he's saying is care for others and serve them don't make a bid to be admired there's an appropriate adornment and an inappropriate one and it's to do with exercising power over men now this leads straight on into the second point in verses 11 to 14

[34 : 32] Paul is teaching an appropriate attitude of women towards men and that is that in the church's work of teaching and learning it's not the only thing the church does but when it comes to teaching and learning Paul is saying that the men should be the leaders their leadership is primarily expressed in their role as teachers and the women should learn as Paul puts it in verse 11 with all submissiveness now what Paul has in mind here is the gathered congregation like this group tonight where there are numbers of adult men and adult women meeting together but Paul encourages women to teach in other contexts so if you read Titus chapter 2 you'll see that he says that the older women in the church should teach and train the younger women it's most important ministry and in 2 Timothy chapter 1 Paul remembers with obvious approval that Timothy as a young child learned his faith from his mother and his grandmother

Paul is strongly encouraging the women to teach and train each other and to teach and train the young but the idea that a woman should be the church's senior teacher or the church's senior pastor that's something that Paul will not allow because it's a reversal of the God-given order an order which is rooted not in first century culture but in the original blueprint of creation as verses 13 and 14 make clear so it's not a transient cultural matter it's something which is written into the way that God has made the human race from the beginning therefore friends let us be willing to accept this our culture today cries out against it often fiercely but our job is to be obedient to the Lord and not to our culture if we will dare to resist culture and follow the Lord the result will be happy churches united churches but where a church resists this teaching on men and women resentment unhappiness and division build up and the real work of the

Lord's people is hindered there are churches which claim to be Bible believing churches which would never have a passage like this read and preached in public on a Sunday just wouldn't want to open it now those are compromised churches let's dare to believe that God will bless us when we obey the Bible when it boils down to it we will either love the Lord or we will love the world the Bible teaches us to recognize and respect the differences between men and women our world is constantly trying to blur those edges isn't it these days the Bible teaches men how to be men and women how to be women failure to recognize the Bible's teaching on this leads to all kinds of unhappiness and confusion not only to homosexuality but also transgenderism which is rapidly becoming such a big problem and the church urgently needs to address it by carefully teaching our young people

I know we're beginning to do this at the tron already but we must keep at it the devil is the father of deception and lies and the fundamental problem at the heart of this transgenderism is a deception to imagine that by surgery or by hormone treatments a man can become a woman or a woman can become a man is simply a self deception there are certain brute biological facts about us there is a givenness a god givenness to the nature of each of us and nothing can alter it so we must teach this to our young people and help them to embrace the bible's teaching with gladness it's the only way to be happy about sex and gender well what then is paul doing in this whole chapter he's beginning to describe to timothy for the sake of the ephesians the nature of a church which is equipped for real gospel service timothy he says stop that vain silly teaching that's chapter one and now timothy chapter two i'll start to lay before you the characteristics of a real church they are first prayer for rulers so that the gospel can be broadcast in a stable and peaceful society and second a proper understanding of the differences between men and women let's pray dear heavenly father have mercy upon us and help us to be obedient from our hearts to the wonderful and clear teaching that the apostle your apostle gives to us we pray especially about this problem of sexuality and all the confusions around it these days and we do ask that you will help each of us to accept the

Bible's teaching clearly and happily and to be able to pass it on to others especially to our younger people for whom there are such confusions awaiting them at school and in other places as well so please have mercy upon us and help us as a church congregation here by praying for our rulers and by following the teaching about men and women to commend the gospel to those around us so that they may see the good order the love the harmony the good behavior in our church and that they may be drawn to the one God and the one mediator in whose name we ask it Amen