

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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### “Smart Women and the Church”

by Matthew Bassford

In the immortal words of Tammy Wynette, sometimes it's hard to be a woman. In fact, sometimes it's particularly hard to be a woman associated with the churches of Christ. Other than a few congregations on the liberal fringe, churches of Christ tend to be aggressively complementarian: no women in leadership positions, no exceptions.

This is particularly difficult for intelligent, capable women who in nearly any other situation probably would be leaders. Through the years, I've had my share of conversations with women in this category who express frustration at the teaching and leadership of men whom they judge to be less capable than they are.

I completely get their frustration. I've said for years that the single biggest problem in the Lord's church is the problem of inadequate leadership. Most churches can't come up with two men who are qualified as elders and willing to serve. All too many preachers spend the work week golfing or goofing off on the Internet and then turn to the same Internet on Saturday for a sermon that another man wrote.

I don't have to put up with the bad leadership because: a) I'm a preacher b) with an extremely competent co-worker c) for a congregation with five strong elders. I have those things because I prayed for them, actively sought them, and relocated so I could have them.

Most Christian women, though, have to play the hand they're dealt. Husband's job is here, so this is where she's going to go to church, even if there are no elders and the preacher isn't much. I'm sure there are competent, Biblically knowledgeable sisters in Christ who regularly come home from Sunday-morning worship thinking, "I could have preached a better sermon than that!"

Our society's answer to the problem is simple: put the ladies in the pulpit. However, that's the wrong answer. There's no ambiguity about what [1 Timothy 2:12](#) says: no women in positions of teaching or authority over men.

Mainline denominations have hand-waved the problem away by saying that complementarian teaching is specific to the societies of 2000 years ago, but that's an exception that inevitably swallows the rule. We can just as easily construct an argument that baptism for forgiveness of sins and barring the practice of homosexuality are also culture-specific. In practice, it will amount to following the parts of the Bible that we like while discarding the parts that we don't. At that point, why not stop pretending that we're Christians and start calling ourselves [Judges 21:25](#)ians? It's pretty simple, really. Either we submit ourselves to God, or we don't.

As important and true as all that is, it leaves the problem unresolved. What is a spiritually unsatisfied woman to do when she has been failed by the male leadership of her congregation? As it happens, I do have a few thoughts.

#### Read

Regardless of how poor the fare may be in the assembly, any woman of God who is literate can choose to seek out all the spiritual nourishment she needs. There are plenty of worthwhile resources on the Internet (like [my blog!](#)), but



most of all, she can choose to spend time in the word on her own. If the result is that she ends up knowing more than the lazy preacher, so what? Who cares about the treasure that anybody else does or doesn't have so long as you have it? Don't expect to be spoon-fed; solve the problem yourself.

## **Teach**

In my experience, there is nothing so spiritually rewarding as using the Bible to teach others. Even though women can't teach in the assembly, they can still teach in a number of other settings.

My mother was certainly in the class of intelligent, capable Christian women. She told me once that if she had been a man, she would have been a preacher. Not all the teaching she received in her life was good, but she constantly used her own understanding of the Bible to teach others. She was the best children's Bible-class teacher I ever had. When I was a little kid, I remember going all over the county with her to studies in others' houses.

During the last years of her life, she started a study in the Columbia, Missouri, senior center that I believe continues to this day. She never preached a single sermon, but she left more of a spiritual impact on the lives of others than many preachers. It would be a great blessing to the church if more Christian women with her abilities followed her example.

## **Serve**

It benefits preachers to get their hands dirty from time to time, and I think the same is true for intelligent, capable Christian women as well. It's easy for such women to hold themselves aloof from the community of the congregation, to allow their disgruntlement to take them away from the work. That's a terrible mistake. If the Creator could lower Himself to wash His disciples' feet, all of us have something to learn from humble service too.

Once we are involved in the work, though, once we are on the lists for preparing the Lord's Supper and cleaning the church building and feeding the gospel-meeting preacher and visiting members in the hospital and bringing meals to the sick, something starts to happen. Sure, those things don't involve much mental horsepower, but they do demand a great deal of faith, self-control, and compassion. As we develop those spiritual attributes, our character starts to balance out, so that the intellectual problems that once seemed so important no longer strike us as mattering that much. It's hard for resentment to survive in the heart of a servant. The more we serve others, the less frustrated we will become.

## **Give Grace**

Saying, "Church leaders are inadequate," is really another way of saying, "Christians are imperfect." No matter the congregation, those who are determined to pick at the flaws of others will always find opportunity. As long as we're on earth, we will always be surrounded by Christians who fall desperately short of their example.

We can get upset about that and gripe and fuss, but we can only sustain such a spirit as long as we forget to consider ourselves. Maybe the preacher has failed. Maybe he fails regularly. Have I also failed? Have I also failed regularly? Throughout my life, have I been a humble, steadfast example of the love of Christ, or instead is the record of my days also stained with sin?

I understand the impulse to become frustrated. I understand the impulse to judge. However, we must also remember that as we measure out to others, so it will be measured out to us. As irritating as Christians who Just Don't Get It may be, I serve a Lord who has infinitely more reason to be irritated because I Just Don't Get It. When we are patient and gracious and merciful toward the failings of others, we store up patience, grace, and mercy for ourselves.



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# **“Are We Able Or Not?”**

Lesson Text: **Numbers 13:30-33.**

God Does Not Ask Us To What We Are Unable To Do! Nothing impossible or Unfair!

- Parable of talents shows God’s Fairness in Knowing What We Are Able-  
**Matthew 25:14-30.**

## **I. To Give Up Sin or Not?**

- **I Corinthians 10:12-13; Ephesians 6:10-13.**
- Is Sin so overwhelming to us that we can’t endure it? (Danger of extremes!)
- Some teach that Christians lose the ability to sin- **1 John 3:7-9.**
- We must change our mind (heart) **John 8:21; Romans 8:5-8.**
- We must rely on God’s power- **Ephesians 6:10-13.**

## **II. To Save Ourselves Or Not?**

- **Acts 2:37-42.**
- Not by Our own way (**Jeremiah 10:23**), good works (**Ephesians 2:8-9**),  
Or the doctrines and creeds of men (**Matthew 15:9**).
- Only by the Blood of Christ- **Hebrews 9:12-14.**

## **III. To Keep God’s Commandments Or Not?**

- **Acts 15:10**— The Bonner—Sharp Debate over perfect law keeping.
- God knows our weaknesses- **Hebrews 4:15-16; I John 1:7-10.**
- Some teach there are NO Laws or Commandments in NT. (Extreme position).
- **John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3.**

## **IV. To Sacrifice And Worship Or Not?**

- **Deuteronomy 16:16-17; Leviticus 12:6-8; 1 Chronicles 29:13-16.**
- **Hebrews 10:22-25**- In times of sickness or Pandemic?

## **V. To Escape Punishment Or Not?**

- **Isaiah 47:10-15; Jeremiah 10:10; 11:11.**
- Not able to Avoid, Ignore, or Run from God- **Luke 23:27-30; Rev. 6:15-16.**
- Not Able To Fight Against God! — **Acts 5:33-40.**
- Darwin Bedford, An Atheist who brags of killing Jesus!

## **VI. To Enter Into Heaven Or Not?**

- **Luke 13:23-24; Luke 14:28-31.**
- Not without: **1. Faith. 2. Love for God. 3. Obedience. 4. Perseverance.**
- **Numbers 13:30-31**- Which attitude do you take?

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles Melissa Felks & Star, Roy Robinson, Ronald McNeil (lost his brother and mother).

**Those Who Serve:**

<b>Announcements:</b>	Russell Briggs
<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Scripture Reading:</b>	Paul Johnson <i>Numbers 13:30-33</i>
<b>Song Leader:</b>	Dan Cottrell
<b>Lord's Supper:</b>	Doug George
<b>Preaching:</b>	Brian Meade
<b>Sermon:</b>	<i>"Are We Able Or Not?"</i>
<b>Closing Prayer:</b>	Tim Harris Jr.