

I Timothy 2.15
30 May 2010

Beloved, the devil is bent on attacking the godly women: not only are you tempted to take up the preaching role in the church but also to forsake your wonderful calling as a godly mother of covenant children. You forsake children so that your children are brought up by those who do not know the Lord and it results in ungodly values are inculcated in their minds and therefore it is no wonder that they forsake the Lord when they grow up. But you must resist the temptation, though the world through its mass media extols the modern liberated women, who is not only a successful businesswoman but an entrepreneur, who against all odds have been successful. And you sometimes are in doubt whether you have made the right choice to be a full-time mother when it is so much easier to leave your children to domestic helpers, childcare centres or to the ungodly in-laws. And the reason why you ought to resist the temptation is because you are a woman of faith. You walk steadfastly in the will of God and this calling to be a godly mother burns in your souls with deep convictions so that you would not give up your calling for what the bowl of pottage that the world offers you.

Ladies and mothers, from the last sermon you may have felt ashamed that the reason why you are not permitted to preach in the church is because of the role Eve played in the fall of the whole human race, but today the Lord wants to comfort and encourage you. Though you may not preach or take an authoritative role over the man, God has given you a great and wonderful calling to be a godly mother. The thought to text is: if godly women will abide in faith, love and sanctification, meanwhile exercising self-control and reserve, they will find their joy and salvation in bearing children to God's glory.

The theme: woman saved in child-bearing. First, the meaning. Secondly, the way.

The Meaning. "child-bearing". Here "she" refers to first to Eve. Eve also represents every Christian women whose calling is in childbearing. And this is the reason why the apostle uses the plural "if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety". Ladies, your calling does not lie in preaching authoritatively in the worship service but in childbearing or motherhood. After you heard that the apostle does not permit you to teach or to usurp authority over the man but to learn in silence, and the reason given is because you were born after Adam and you were in transgression in a way that Adam was not: shame, humiliation and discouragement may have filled your soul. And here in this verse, the apostle wants to encourage you so that you will be saved in childbearing. And God holds before you the hope of salvation in the way of walking in godliness and holiness.

The work of childbearing begins already at conception and giving birth to the child. This means that your primary calling is in the sphere of the home. This is where the husband is the head of the home and you are a help meet or suitable to your husband so that you enable him to fulfill his God-given calling to be the head of the home. And you submit yourself in all subjection. And you

help your husband to make a home a place where God is honoured and worshipped daily. The home is the place where Christ is the centre of the home, and all behaviour and plans are aimed for the glory of God. The home is where godly conversation is not carried out at the dinner table but also at all times in the home. And your calling as what God said to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden in Gen. 1.28, is to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea. Thus your calling is to replenish the earth with many children. Or as the psalmist says in Psalm 127, “happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them (referring to the children of the youth in verse 3); they shall not be ashamed. Or in Psalm 128.3, “thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children live like olive plants round about the table”. But childbearing does not stop here, but continues in the raising of that child in the admonition of the Lord. Besides breast-feeding your children, changing nappies and patting them to sleep your calling together with your husband is to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You are to teach them the Word of God so that they love God and His Word. They are to live antithetically so that they will know the lie from the truth. And above all, these children become godly men and women for the kingdom of God. And I hope you realise the significance of your labours – you are raising the next generation for the kingdom of God. What a great privilege! A calling to mould them for God. From your womb may come the next Calvin, Martin Luther or an ordinary pastor, elder, deacon and missionary.

Where is this calling of childbearing rooted in? This calling is not according to the social practice of the day so that if it is the common trend, then we bear children nor is it based on monetary incentives given to the third or fourth child or whether it is convenient to have children. Rather is it a deep conviction of soul that this calling is according to the Word of God – this calling is rooted in creation. According to Genesis 3.16, as result of the sin of Eve, God pronounced unto the woman, that she will be in great sorrow in conception and in sorrow she shall bring forth children and her desire would be unto her husband and he shall rule over her. And the apostle says the curse of childbearing was changed into a blessing. He saw the prospect of childbearing, where Adam called her name “Eve” which means “life” because she was the mother of all living (Gen. 3.20). Adam called her Eve because he had faith in the promise of God and looking forward to the fulfillment of the Seed of the woman, foretold in Gen. 3.15. This is where the Messiah will be victorious over the seed of the serpent after inflicting a fatal wound and we know that this was fulfilled at the cross where the devil was soundly defeated.

And the text says that through her childbearing, she shall be saved. What does it mean that she shall be saved through childbearing? Is this another way of being saved from our sins besides the way that the sinners can be saved through the cross of Christ? No, God only way of salvation is in the cross of Christ. The apostle is not promising that she will come safely through childbirth. Rather, salvation here is the way of sanctification. You, who were effectually called, regenerated, having a new heart and new spirit created in you. And you were sanctified through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection. And as a result, the body of sin is destroyed and your lusts are

weakened and killed you walk in holiness for without which no man shall see the Lord. This process of sanctification is never completed in this life, for there are the remnants of corruption in us and there is titanic struggle within: the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. But, how about of you who are single ladies who wanted to be saved in childbearing. Have hope in God! Pray to the Lord that he will provide for you a man. And if the Lord answers your prayer, remember that in your education, training and career planning, your calling is to be a mother. And when a godly young man comes show some interest in you with the view of marriage, then you must be prepared to give up your career and fulfill your calling to raise children. And how about those single ladies who are in the middle age and it looks quite certain that you are not going to get married. How can you be saved by childbearing? Remember that the process of childbearing includes teaching. And parents do bring their children to Covenant Instruction classes and VBS, there you have the opportunity to teach them the Word of God. And you teach in faith in the promises of God and love of God that is shed in your hearts that you teach these children with the hope that they will grow up to take their place in the church and they will grow up to be godly. Single men, the spotlight is on you. Do not be selfish, thinking about your own needs but think on helping these single ladies to fulfill their calling to be mothers. God has placed this desire in their hearts to get married, to have a covenant home and to bear children. And if you see a godly lady, make the first move to woo her. Do not wait for too long. We marry too late or if we marry at all. By the time you finish university, take your time to know someone, date, and woo, you would be in 30s. That's too late for a lady to wait. So guys, help these ladies to be saved in childbearing.

And the apostle continues to say, "she shall be saved in childbearing if you continue in faith, love, holiness with sobriety". Firstly, faith in the promises of God. The sorrow of childbirth must be found in the fact that it is a word of God's wrath. It is a clear testimony that women bring forth children who are under the wrath of God. However, for believing mothers of the covenant who bring forth children they have their eyes on the promises of God. And these promises are in Genesis 17.7, that these children of the covenant and with whom God will establish his covenant and not only upon these but also in their generations. Acts 2.39 also promises that the remission of sins and the gift of the holy ghost will be given to these children. Thus, the curse of the wrath of God is overcome through the seed of the serpent and by crushing the head of the serpent. Thus believing mothers bring forth children with delight, joy to see the image of her Saviour reflected in the little ones who belong to Christ.

Secondly, in love. This is the love of God which is shed abroad in your hearts when you submit yourselves to God's calling, the joys of motherhood. That in the daily chores of motherhood, you are filled with the love of God and love fills your heart as you go about in your labours in the home. The love of God overcomes the pain and difficulties of mothering and gives you joy in your calling. You are joyful because you are fulfilling God's calling in your life and you look forward that the Lord has for you.

Thirdly, in holiness with sobriety. Holiness has mainly two ideas: to be separate from sin and to be consecrated to God. Sobriety is the same word that is used in verse 9. Generally, it refers to good judgment, moderation, self-control and decency. Sobriety is a command over the bodily passions, a self – mastery in the area of appetite. In I The. 4.3-8, holiness is that we abstain from sin, the sin of fornication which refers to all kinds of sexual sins: sexual sins before marriage, adultery, man with man, woman with women, and with those who are divorced. Holiness is that we know how to keep our bodies in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of desires. And we do not defraud or gain an advantage over in this matter of sexual and marital unfaithfulness for God has not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness.

And the apostle says, “if you continue to them”. This promise of women being saved in childbearing is not for those who do not live according to faith, love, and holiness with sobriety. They have children for selfish reasons and not according to the Word of God. They have children so that their children will take care of them when they are aging so that they will have a roof over their heads and have no desires whatsoever to train them in the Lord. This promise is for those women who are saved in childbearing if they continue in godliness. To continue means to persist, to continue uninterrupted and to carry on. And in times of difficulties and discouragement, and even to the point of depression, you continue in the labours of spiritual mothering. This is the path that the Lord has laid for you and the promise of the hope of salvation is in the way of faith, love, and holiness with sobriety. May almighty God give you much grace to fulfill your calling. Amen