

God's View of a Woman

by Frank Viola

God's view of women is one of equality, honor, and value, as seen in Jesus' interactions and teachings about women.

Scripture: Genesis 2:21, Matthew 28:1, Luke 8:1, Luke 23:49, Luke 23:55, John 4:1, Acts 1:14, Galatians 3:28

Topics: "Jesus And Women", "Gender Equality"

Description

Frank Viola preaches about the revolutionary view of women brought by Jesus Christ, contrasting it with the low societal status women had before His coming. He highlights how Jesus interacted with and elevated women, showing them love, respect, and honor, contrary to the prevailing cultural norms. Viola emphasizes that in God's eyes, women are valued, cherished, and essential, as seen through Jesus' actions, teachings, and relationships with women throughout His ministry.

Transcript

This article is based on a message the author delivered to a newly planted church in Santiago, Chile on December 31, 2001. Note: The Chilean culture tends to have a very low view of women.

After tonight's message, if this tape gets out of this room and someone hears it in your country, I will definitely be declared a heretic. I may even be in danger of my life. Further, after tonight's message, some of the men in this room may not want me to come back. The women, however, will want me to move here!

Note the following passages:

And THE WOMEN also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how His body was laid. (Luke 23:55)

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with THE WOMEN and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. (Acts 1:14)

I am going to set the stage by describing to you how women were viewed before Jesus came. So let us go back to Israel in the days before Christ was born.

The Jews had a very dim view of women. Women were not allowed to receive an education. Hence, they were largely uneducated. They basically learned how to raise children and keep the house.

Women were also pretty much excluded from worshiping God. In Herod's temple, there was a special court that stood on the very outside. It was called the court of the Gentiles. The Gentiles could go into that court, but they were limited to that area alone. Five steps above the Gentile's court was the women's court. The women were limited to that one area. Fifteen steps above that was the Jewish men's court. Thus the men were given far more privilege to worship God than were the women.

A woman had no voice in her marriage. Her father decided whom she would marry, when she would marry him, and why she would marry him. A woman could not divorce her husband under any condition. Only a man could initiate a divorce.

Jewish women were to be seen as little as possible in public. In fact, young men were warned about talking to women in public. So much so that it was a shame in ancient Israel for a man to talk to a woman in public. Consequently, most women stayed out of the streets. They were regarded as inferior to men. They were regarded as property just like cattle and slaves. A woman was viewed as the property of a man, and they could not inherit property.

The Jewish males prayed a daily prayer of thanksgiving. I am going to read the prayer to you. It shows how poorly the Jews looked upon women. It goes like this:

"Praise be to God. He has not created me a Gentile.

Praise be to God. He has not created me a woman.

Praise be to God. He has not created me an ignorant man."

This was man's view of a woman in first-century Israel. It was not much better in other cultures. In fact, ever since the fall of man, women have been regarded as second-class citizens--inferior to men. But . . . something happened that changed all of that.

Jesus came!

In Jesus Christ we find God's view of a woman. Not man's view. Not the American view. Not the European view. Not the Asian view. Not the African view. Not the South American view. Not even the Chilean view. But God's view!

Jesus Christ is God made flesh. So He embodies all of God's opinions. In His earthly life, Jesus Christ was the visible expression of God Himself. Thus in His actions and in His words, we discover God's view of a woman. And that view is utterly contrary to the prevailing view of His day.

Consider this. God visited a woman! He chose a woman to bring forth into this earth His Son, the Messiah--the Anointed One that Israel had waited for thousands of years.

God elected that His only begotten Son would come through a woman! The life of God, brothers and sisters, was placed first in the womb of a woman before it got to you and me. Before the life of God was put in any other human being, before the life of God came into any man, it was first placed inside of a woman. And God was not ashamed!

Sisters, this is your Lord's view of a woman. Take your high place.

But that is not all. As Jesus ministered, He ripped down all of the social conventions that were placed against women. On one occasion, He rose to the defense of a woman caught in adultery. He became her attorney. He saved her life. And God was not ashamed.

Jesus was noted for palling around with sinners. He supped with prostitutes and tax collectors. We are told in John Chapter 4 that Jesus met a woman who was from Samaria, and He did something that shocked the disciples. He talked to her in public! And He was not ashamed. Not only was she a woman, she was a divorcee. But not only was she a divorcee, she was an adulteress living in adultery. Not only was she a woman, a divorcee, an adulteress living in adultery, she was worse than a Gentile. She was a Samaritan--a half-breed. A Samaritan was a person that Jews were never to talk to. But your Lord talked to this Samaritan, divorced, adulterous woman in public, and He forgave her of her sins. And He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

But that is not all. Jesus Christ had a custom of using women in His parables and making them heroes. He talked about the woman who searched and found her lost coin. He spoke of the woman who was unrelentless with the unjust judge and honored her for her persistence. He spoke of the widow who dropped in the smallest amount of money that she had into the temple treasury and praised her for doing so. And He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

Once Jesus was dining with a self-righteous Pharisee. In walked a woman. But this was not just any woman. She was a woman of the streets--a prostitute. Upon seeing the Lord, she dropped down to her knees and brought all of her savings. She brought her entire bank account in the form of precious oil. In the presence of the Pharisee, this woman broke it open and poured it upon the feet of our Lord. This unclean woman touched Jesus Christ! In public! She cried, washed His feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair. This event shocked the self-righteous Pharisee. At that moment, the Pharisee lost all respect for Jesus and doubted that He was a prophet. But your Lord was not ashamed!

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

But that is not all. Your Lord allowed an unclean woman to touch the hem of His garment, and He was not ashamed. In fact, He praised her for it! He also gave a Canaanite woman who was viewed as a dog in the eyes of Israel one of the highest compliments He ever gave anyone. He also healed her daughter, and He was not ashamed.

In the Lord's last hours on this earth, He stayed in a small village called Bethany. It was there that He would spend His last days before He gave His life on Calvary. Jesus went to the home of two women who lived in Bethany. They were His friends, and they received Him. And He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

When Luke writes his Gospel, he talks about the twelve apostles. He often refers to them with the shorthand phrase the Twelve. These men were with the Lord for three-and-a-half years. They lived with Him. They went with Him everywhere. But Jesus had a group of women following Him in addition to the Twelve. Luke also used a shorthand phrase to refer to them. He simply calls them the Women. He uses this phrase the same way he uses the Twelve. These were the Lord's female disciples. They were His

followers, just like the Twelve. The Women followed the Lord wherever He went, and they tended to His needs. They took care of Him. And He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

But there is more. The greatest disciples of Jesus Christ were not the Twelve. They were the Women. The reason? Because they were more faithful. When Jesus Christ was taken to die, the Twelve fled. They checked out. They said, "See ya!" But the Women stayed with Him. They did not leave. They followed Him to Calvary to do what they had been doing all along--comforting Him. And they watched Him undergo a bloody, gory crucifixion. Six long hours of torture.

To watch a man die the most hideous and horrible death is something that goes against every fiber that lives inside of a woman. Yet they would not leave Him. They stayed the entire time. And He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

Following His death, it was the Women who first went to His burial. They were still following Him and taking care of Him even after His death. And when He rose again, the first faces He met--the first eyes that were laid upon Him--were the eyes of women! It was to them that He gave the privilege of announcing His resurrection . . . and He was not ashamed.

Sisters, take your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

On the day of Pentecost, the women were present in the upper room--waiting for Him to return, along with the Twelve. They never left Him. When the men were not following Him any longer, the women were still following. They followed Him to the end. Their passion for and dedication to Him outshined that of the men. And God was not ashamed.

All throughout the Lord's life, it was the women who tended to His physical needs. It was the women who watched after Him. It was the women who cared for Him up until the bitter end and the glorious climax. Not the men. It was the women who supported Jesus financially during His ministry (Luke 8:1-3). They were indispensable to Him. And He was not ashamed.

But beyond all of these wonderful things that the Lord did in showing how beautiful women are, He did something else. He chose you--a woman--to depict that which He came to the earth to die for--His Bride. And He is not ashamed!

Sisters, rise to your high place. This is God's view of a woman.

Brothers, honor your sisters in the kingdom of God. For God honors them. Let me remind you that when God pulled Eve out of Adam, He did not take her out of his feet below him. Nor did He take her out of his head above him. He took her out of his side.

Sisters, you are fellow heirs in the kingdom of God. You are fellow priests in the church. You are honored. You are cherished. You are valuable. You are needed. In Christ, there is no male or female. You are His friends, His followers, His daughters, yea, His own kin.

So sisters, take your high place . . . this is God's view of you.

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