

"Let the Women Keep Silent"
What?



Pastor. Shane Vaughn

Transcribed Sermons of Pastor. Shane Vaughn
Founder of First Harvest Ministries Intl.
www.HisComingKingdom.com

transcriptionist: Sis. Susan Buckley

SHOULD WOMEN KEEP SILENT IN THE CHURCH? It is an important question, heavily contested, and highly debatable. I want to bring some clarity to the question because it does matter.

TRUTH MATTERS. *The day that truth no longer means everything is the day it no longer means anything.*

There must be a Bible answer if there is a Bible question. However, when it comes to the subject of women preachers, women ministers, the Bible seems to say emphatically that women are to keep silent. SILENT MEANS SILENT—CORRECT?

I DON'T KNOW. We'll find out. We are going to have a great study. I really believe if you truly want the answer whether you are for or against, you need to read this study thoughtfully and objectively as possible.

First, I want to tell you about my life long journey with this subject of women in ministry and how I have been on both sides of the fence, and finally, how I got to where I am today, and how one thing helped me bridge the divide. WHAT WAS THE BRIDGE THAT CLOSED THE GAP FOR ME PERSONALLY?

I started out in my life as an avid supporter of women preachers. Why? Because I am in the unique position of being the grandson of one of the greatest women preachers who has ever lived. Her name: *Sister Lois Gatlin Terrell*. She was known all over the Southern United States in her heyday, which would have been in the 1950s, and 60s, 70s, and 80s. She was dynamite. I've never heard anyone preach as well as my grandmother—powerful! She was well known as a lady; she didn't act like a man, she didn't handle the pulpit with masculinity but rather as a true mother in Israel. She was a lady and handled the pulpit like a lady. I loved her dearly and I was her biggest admirer.

When I was about twenty-five years old, all of that changed. I started following a ministry that was adamantly against women preachers, and eventually they convinced me that women are not to preach. As much as I loved my grandmother, THERE WAS ONE THING I LOVED MORE—THE TRUTH; the truth of Yahweh's Word.

So I turned against women in ministry because I wanted to please God. I wanted to be right, much to the chagrin and the hurt of my own grandmother. If I believe something, I'm going to stand for it, no matter the cost. Of course, my new understanding found its way back to her and caused a lot of hurt, and even some discontent between me and her. Anyone who knows me and my love for her knows how hard that was for me to take a stand against women in the ministry.

I stayed with that concept for about twenty years, until something happened in my life about ten years ago. I was introduced to the Torah, a subject that I knew nothing about. We didn't hear about the Torah in the church I grew up in. The Torah for those who don't know, is the entire Word of Yahweh, but the Torah of Moses is the first five books of the Bible. As I began to read the Torah, I noticed something. What I noticed in the Torah settled it for me. I am going to teach you what I learned in the Torah, and how it made me reevaluate women in the ministry.

Let me say this: I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT WOMEN PASTORS, OR BISHOPS, OR ANYTHING OF THAT NATURE IN THIS TEACHING. I am teaching specifically on women preaching, ministering, or speaking in the Church; not pastoring or having ecclesiastical usurped authority over men.

Let's start our journey. Let's go to the scripture where everyone loves to go when they are against women ministering in the

Church. We're going to go to the book of 1st Corinthians 14:34

I Corinthians 14:34-35, 40 NIV

Let your women remain silent among your regularly convened gatherings for worship, for they are not permitted to teach, but they are to be set apart, under the men, when, namely, the Law is taught.

35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home. The reason for this is: one's nakedness can be exposed, creating a shameful condition, should women teach the Law to all the called out ones.

I Corinthians 14:34-35, 40 KJV

Let your women keep silent in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

NOTICE IT DIDN'T SAY IT WAS A SIN. IT SAID THAT IT WAS A SHAME.

That is the Greek word AISCHRÓS. It is dishonorable. It didn't say it was sinful; just dishonorable.

Let's continue reading verse thirty-six.

36 NIV *What! Did the word of Yahweh; the Law and the Prophets, originate with you? Has it only come to you?*

36 KJV *What? Came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?*

I would like to go to the beginning of the chapter, which I always love to do when I am studying the Scriptures. When we come to the beginning of the chapter we find out that PAUL IS SPEAKING ABOUT PROPHESYING IN THE CHURCH, AND IN THE WHOLE CHAPTER HE IS SETTING THE CHURCH IN ORDER.

He is talking about those who are speaking in unknown tongues, and he is also speaking in the next verse about people prophesying in the Church, and how they need to do it correctly. He says that when someone else is speaking, you stay quiet until it is your turn. And he goes on and gives instructions about these things.

33 *For Yahweh is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as among all the called out ones of the saints.*

EVIDENTLY, THIS WHOLE CHAPTER IS ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE OUT OF ORDER. We can find that in the last verse—verse forty.

40 *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

We find that in the last verse it is talking about things being done DECENTLY and IN ORDER. Now let's go back to verse thirty-seven and read that.

37 *If any man thinks himself is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the Laws of Yahweh.*

38 *But if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized!*

What was Paul referring to when he said, “WHAT I WRITE TO YOU IS THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.”? He said if anyone doesn’t want to acknowledge that what I am saying is the commandments of God, they are ignorant so just let them remain ignorant. BUT I DON’T WANT YOU, THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD, TO BE IGNORANT.

We are going to break down some of these words.
The first word is I Corinthians 14:34, and the word is SILENCE.

Let’s look and see what silence means.

It’s SIGAŌ. It means exactly what it says: *keep silent*.

Shut up! Let the women shut up in the Church is pretty much what it says.

However, the word is used in a few other verses as well.

Let’s go look specifically at I CORINTHIANS 14:27-28 and see if that same word is used.

I Corinthians 14:27-28 *If anyone speaks in another language, let there be two, or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.*

28 *But if there is no interpreter, let him remain SILENT among the called out ones; but let him speak to himself and to Yahweh.*

The same word is used, but interestingly, THIS TIME IT IS NOT USED FOR WOMEN.

We see in verse 27 that IT IS TALKING TO MEN who are speaking in an unknown tongue.

In verse 28, it is telling him to keep silent if there is no interpreter. We look it up and lo and behold, this silence is *SIGAŌ* the exact same word for the silence of women in the previous verses.

So now we have a scripture that tells men to be silent in the Church. Is it intellectually fair to say that is a blanket command; a blanket statement that men should never say a word in the Church, or is there a condition? Is there a prerequisite that modifies that command? I think you already know the answer. The answer is YES.

It has to do with IF YOU'RE SPEAKING IN TONGUES AND THERE IS NO INTERPRETER, SHUT UP—be quiet in the Church. We are not telling you that you can never open your mouth again. It's saying in that particular situation, in that setting, you need to be quiet and wait for your turn.

Paul in his writings is clearing up some confusion that is going on in the church. It is very important that we understand that Paul was answering questions that had been written to him while he was in prison, about things in the Church. He specifically says when he is writing this letter, *"You wrote to me and I'm writing you back about these specific things that are out of order."*

We can only assume in a letter that was previously written to Paul, that someone asked him a question, and he is answering the question. I want to go back and show you what I believe with all my heart, the question that I believe he was answering. Let's go back and look at I Corinthians 14 again, so you can see it with your own eyes.

Remember, this entire letter is his response in correcting errors in the Church. Let's go and see if we can make sense out of what he said.

Let's go to verses 34 & 36. Remember that I told you earlier that what changed my mind was the Torah. The Torah is referred to by Paul as the Law many times in his writings. However, every-time he says the word Law, it is not always referring to the Torah.

THERE ARE TWO GREEK WORDS: "HO NOMOS" AND "NOMOS."
NOMOS is Law,
Ho is "The": The Law.

Together; No HOMOS is THE LAW
Seperate; HOMOS is LAW in general

Sometimes Paul would write Ho Nomos, and sometimes he would just write Nomos.

Why is that? Because THE LAW is the Torah; the Law that Yahweh gave.

Whereas NOMOS is any law or custom, which is not necessarily the Law of Yahweh.

34 Let your women remain silent among your regularly convened gatherings for worship, for they are not permitted to teach, but they are to be set apart, under the men, when, namely, the Law is taught.

Here in the King James Version, Paul says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

Have you ever been in a church where women were never allowed to speak? Where in the world? She can't say Amen, she can't sing in the choir, she cannot teach Sabbath School?

I never have. If you have, I stand corrected. Is this a blanket statement that the women cannot speak in the church? NO! It is not a blanket statement. It is a **CONDITIONAL** statement because in these verses, things are out of control in this church.

Let's keep reading that verse.

but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

Paul continues, "*but they are to be under obedience as also saith the law.*"

The only problem with this line is that **THEY ARE COMMANDED**. **THAT PHRASE WAS ADDED BY THE TRANSLATORS.**

They are commanded is **NOT** part of the divine original Scripture. **THAT WAS ADDED BY MAN**, SO THERE IS NO COMMAND HERE FROM **YAHWEH** FOR WOMEN TO KEEP SILENT. So where does this custom or this command, if you will, come from?

Let's find out as we keep reading. Let's take the word commanded out. *But they are to be under obedience as also saith the law.*

The problem is this: The Law, the Torah—Moses' Law—which Paul would have been referring to if he had been referring to Yahweh's Law, never makes one mention of women keeping silent in the assembly. It is **NOWHERE** in Yahweh's Law.

You can search from Genesis to Exodus, through the first five books through the Torah where the 613 Torah Laws are written, the **HO NOMOS** law says nothing about this supposed silence of women in the temple.

The only thing you will ever find is in Genesis 3, where it says the woman WILL BE RULED BY HER HUSBAND. We are perfectly fine with that. We believe that. But here it says that *a woman is to keep silent in the Church because the Law SUPPOSEDLY says so*. The only problem is that THE LAW, the Ho Nomos law, the only law we are obligated to, doesn't say that. So now we have another problem.

THE PROBLEM IS CALLED JUDAISM.

The problem is that Yahshua and Shaul despised Judaism. Why? Because JUDAISM ADDED TO THE WORD AND TOOK AWAY FROM THE WORD. They created their own law.

This Jewish law is referred to as THE TALMUD AND THE MISHNA. These are ORAL LAWS that were added to the Torah over time. They were preserved until they were written down about 200 before Yahshua Messiah. When they were written down, guess what you will find in that Jewish, anti-Torah law? I am going to quote exactly what you will find. It is in the Talmud, verse 24a. Here is what it says in the law: the CUSTOMS of the Jews:

A WOMAN'S VOICE IS PROHIBITED BECAUSE IT IS SEXUALLY PROVOCATIVE.

So the Jews, ADDING to the Torah; adding to the Word of Yahweh said that women are not to speak in the church, or the temple, or the assembly because her voice is sexually provocative.

Paul gets a letter from these Corinthians about a situation with women and he is responding to the question. How does he respond? BY QUOTING TO THEM THE VERY RABINIC OR TALMUDIC LAW THAT THEY WROTE TO HIM ABOUT.

They wrote to Paul and said, “*We’ve got women here wanting to prophecy, but the law says the women are to keep silent in the church and not say a word.*” So now Paul, in answering that question, quotes to them the very law that they quoted to him. Now you’re going to find out where he actually mocks these men for referring to Talmudic law.

Let’s read again what Paul says to them. It’s really interesting how we’ve missed it all these years. That’s because we don’t have an understanding of Torah. The Christian Church doesn’t understand that you must get everything based off of the Law of Yahweh.

So Paul writes them back. He says, “*Concerning this law that you have written to me about, I have one thing to say to you.*” What he says is below in verse thirty-six.

Paul says, “*What?! Why are you trying to regulate Yahweh’s true Church by Talmudic law?* You Judahizers are placing a burden on the Church that Yahweh didn’t place on these women! What? Did the gospel message come only from you Jewish men. Did the Word of Yahweh really come out from you, Jewish men; or only to you?”

In other words: Hey, fellows. Who do you think you are? Do you think you are the only ones that Yahweh gives a word to? Do you think you’re the only ones that the Word of Yahweh has come to, the only ones who have a reason to stand up and say, “*This is what Yahweh says!*”? He is mocking them by using Yahweh’s Law. Here’s the problem we run into: the Scriptures must make sense ALWAYS.

Let me show you why it cannot mean what it says, and what we always thought it meant.

Over in 1st Corinthians 11:45, it says,

But every woman that prays or prophesies—which is preaching—with her head uncovered, dishonors her head.

We have a major problem here. Either the woman is to be silent and not speak as one verse says, but if that is the case, how is she supposed to pray and prophesy in the Church if she can't speak? That's why Paul said, "*What?*" These women knew they could pray and prophesy. They had heard Paul's teaching. But these Jewish men were quoting Talmudic law to these women, and they wrote Paul about these prophesying women.

Let's look at the word prophesy. I want to show you that Paul literally endorses a woman prophesying in the assembly which she really couldn't do without speaking. Let's look at the word.

It's *PROPHĒTEIA*, and here's what it means:

It means to speak forth by divine inspiration, to utter forth; to declare a thing which could only be known by divine revelation. To break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse; prompting to teach, to refute, to reprove; to act as a prophet.

Here is what Paul just said: IF A WOMAN PRAYS OR IS MOVED WITH A SUDDEN IMPULSE TO BRING FORTH A DIVINE MESSAGE FROM YAHWEH OR TO TEACH OR REFUTE, LET HER DO IT.

But the religious Jewish leaders said no. They said it violates the law. Paul wrote back to them, their own law, and said, "*What? Have you lost your mind? Do you think the Word of Yahweh only comes to men and not to women?*" He literally made fun of them for saying that.

It's very important that we understand that everything must go back and line up with Torah. Torah is the basis of the whole Bible. Now let's go over to another scripture they love to use:

I Timothy 2:11-12.

11 Let the women learn in silence with all submission;

12 But I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man, but to be silent.

See? It looks once again like Paul is telling the woman she cannot speak. What you need to understand in verse twelve, Paul makes it clear what he is talking about here. If you go back up and read the chapter starting in verse nine, it begins to speak about the woman and her role towards her HUSBAND.

We know according to Genesis 3:15, the woman cannot teach or usurp authority over her husband.

The husband rules over the wife. We know that, and have no problem with that. The problem we have is that people do not see this as referring to husbands and wives. They are acting like this is in the Church, but it is not. Read it.

Let THE woman; not just any woman with all subjection. The only thing a woman has to be subjected to is her husband, so here is your context.

I do not allow the woman to teach OVER the man, or to USURP authority OVER the man. Let me break it down. I do not allow the wife to teach over the man, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence, or in respect to her husband. Usurping authority means she has become a Jezebel and taken authority over her husband; THE MAN; NOT JUST ANY MAN. THE

MAN IS HER HUSBAND.

Now let's see if the word silent there means silent. Actually, the word means QUIETNESS. The Bible said for the woman to be of a meek and quiet spirit.

Yahweh despises Jezebel women who overtalk their husbands, take authority over their husbands. That is against the Word of Yahweh throughout the Word of the Torah. But again, this verse in Timothy has nothing to do with the Church. That is strictly concerning the MARRIAGE, and a woman trying to be a husband by taking over the man.

Here is how we know without a shadow of a doubt that Paul was not against women preachers. We know that because we see where he gives honor to women preachers in Acts 21:9.

Let's go read it. The Bible is really simple if you know how to read the Torah.

Acts 21:8-9 The next day we of Shal's company left there, and came to Caesarea; and we entered the house of Philip, a teacher of the message of the Kingdom of Yahweh, who was one of the seven; and stayed with him.

9 Now Phillip had four virgin daughters, who prophesied.

Philip's daughters prophesied. Paul just said that if a woman prays or prophesies it is okay, as long as she doesn't get out of place with the men; take authority over the men. Once again, they prophesied and that means they spoke forth with divine utterance. What do you think a preacher does? We speak forth the Word of Yahweh with divine utterance. These girls were preachers, and Paul is literally mentioning them in his writings.

Let's read about another woman who spoke in church.

Luke 2:36-38. This woman literally lived in the church; literally. Her name was Anna. I'm going to read to you what Anna did.

Luke 2:36-38 There was also a prophetess there, Anna; Channah; Honor, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity; widowed after seven years of marriage.

She was married for seven years, and after that she was a widow, and moved into the temple.

37 And had been a widow for about eighty-four years. She never left the sacred precincts, but served Yahweh with fastings and prayers night and day.

If she was a widow of eighty-four years, that means she must have been a hundred and two years old because she was a widow for eighty-four years, and married for seven years, and in those days they married at about twelve years old.

38 And she, coming up at that very time, gave thanks to Yahweh also, and spoke about the Child to all who were waiting for redemption in Yerusalem.

When you came to Jerusalem you would go to the temple, and who would you meet there? Sister Anna. And what would she do there? She was speaking in the church about the redemption that came to Jerusalem, which was Yahshua. She was preaching about the man Yahshua to everyone. Where was she doing it? In the temple, on the very temple grounds. Let's look at one more example in

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the called out one in Cenchrea:

2 That you may welcome her in Yahweh in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for she has been a succourer; an assistant, of many, and of myself also.

The word succourer there is the word PROSTATIS, which means that she has been a guardian, a protector, a patroness. She was a woman that was set over others. Where does Paul say she did that? In the Church. It is so very plain.

Now let's look at one more:

Philippians 4:2-3 I plead with Euodia, and I plead with Syntyche, to be of the same mind in Yahweh.

3 Yes, I urge you also, true yokefellow: help these women who labored with me in the message, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow laborers, whose names are in The Book of Life.

Here Paul says that there were people who worked with him in the evangelistic field in the Gospel. One of them was Clement, and two of them were women who worked with him. Euodius and Syntyche were two women who worked with him. How would they do that if they would have had to be silent in the Church?

I Corinthians 1:10-11 Now I appeal to you brothers by the authority of our King Yahshua Messiah, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

11 For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by

those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

Evidently there was a woman named Chloe who was complaining to Paul because men in the Church were trying to have a different opinion. Therefore, the brethren wrote to Paul and told him of the problem in the house church of Chloe.

When we go to II John 1:1, we find out that the entire book was written to someone known as the elect lady. Remember, most churches in those days were in houses.

II John 1::1-2 The elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but all those who have known the truth,

2 For the truth's sake, which dwells in us, and will be in us forever.

Then he tells her in verse four and five:

4 I greatly rejoiced that I found some of your children walking in truth, according to the Laws we have received from the Father.

5 But now I plead with you lady, not as though I wrote any new Laws to you, but that which we had from the beginning; That we love one another—

Here he is, writing to this woman. This whole book is about this woman who has children walking in the truth, and he is writing to her house church that those children are walking in the truth, and they should continue to walk in the commandments. Let's go look in the Torah itself.

The Old Testament. Here is what we find in the Torah: We find in Judges 4:4 that Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel. She led the Church. Israel was Yahweh's Church in the Wilderness. She was their leader for a time.

That brings me to the subject of women pastors. It is not the design or the perfect will of Yahweh for a woman to rule over a man. It's plain. No one can deny that. However, it's also not the unpardonable sin.

It is not recommended. It is not ideal, and it is not in the perfect plan of Yahweh. But, have there been times when that pattern was broken for a short period of time? Yes. Deborah was one of those. Do you know why Yahweh raised Deborah up over the Church? If you go read that story, you will find that all the men of the ministry had turned away from Yahweh. There was no man qualified to lead in spiritual things. There was no man to judge Israel. So Yahweh raised up Deborah.

The balance to the story is that Deborah knew that this was not ideal. She knew her place, and any true lady minister has no desire to lead the Church. If they do desire that, it is probably a Jezebel spirit. However, I didn't say every woman leading the Church is a Jezebel. I said a TRUE lady of Yahweh doesn't have that DESIRE in her. She would much rather a man lead the things of Yahweh. No, Yahweh has never designed a woman to lead the Church, but He also never designed a woman to lead the home, but how many times has she had to when there was no man who would or could do it?

So Yahweh raised up Deborah, but notice what happened. Deborah was such an Israelite, she knew that this was not proper. It was allowed, but it was not proper, because Yahweh raised up a man under her. His name was Barak.

Right when Barak was ready to take over Israel, Deborah was ready to let him do it. She was ready to step back and let a man lead Israel. However, Yahweh had to use her to get that man to do it. She told Barak these words—and you can read these words yourself—*Please take Israel into battle. Don't let me do it, because if I do it, the glory of Israel is going to be given to a woman.* She knew that although it was allowed, it wasn't proper. Barak stepped up and took over.

Ironically, when you get to the book of Hebrews, chapter eleven—the heroes of faith—DEBORAH IS NOT MENTIONED. BARAK IS. Why? That was proper. There are many women in similar circumstances. My grandmother was one of those women. My grandfather left her with ten children, and they together were working in a church. He was the pastor and she was a prophetess. He left her with ten children and there was no one there who was qualified to lead. My grandmother was forced into that position. She told me later in life that pastoring was her biggest regret because it took her away from her children.

Did Yahweh allow that? Absolutely. Someone had to do it. But as soon as Yahweh was done with her, she turned that church over to a man—Brother Gerald Hightower, and left and went back to being a prophetess, and became an evangelist, and worked for the Lord.

With that said, the Scripture never condemns a woman speaking in the Church. Under divine inspiration, ONLY THE TALMUD FORBADE THAT, and Paul corrected the issue. In the Torah there is mention of several more women.

You can read in II Kings 22:14. Hilkiyah the High Priest and Ahikam, Achbor, Shapan, and Achbor all went to a woman named Huldah the prophetess.



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