

“Women in Ministry down Through the Ages”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, May 29th, 2016

Thank you, you may be seated. Thank you, singers. Thank you, musicians. Thank you, everyone that comes to put their heart and life in worshipping the one most high, true and one wise God. The omnipotent, the omniscient, the omni-potent, the omni-everything. Don't you weep for me when I'm gone, 'cause I won't have to leave here alone. I understand, I understand that Heaven is near, and I can't stay here. Amen. What a God we serve. What a mighty God we serve. What a great—you know, if we could spend time on that, service would be over. If we just talked about what He is and what He does, we could just leave. We could just go. We would take the rest of our lives talking about how good He's been. What kind of God He is.

To that same God, to that same God, the wonderful, beneficent, benevolent, the wonderful, the counsellor, the everlasting Father, the mighty God, the lover of our souls, the one who makes a way out of no way, the one who understands us when we don't understand ourselves, the one whose mercy we will never know the depths and heights of. It just surpasses all understanding. To that same true and wise God. I'd like to give honor to Him. I'd like to give honor to those who have gone before us in this ministry, in this ministry we've been called to. Our founding pastor, he and his family. Our pastor, who was here last week—and what a beautiful, wonderful time that was—he and his family, the sacrifice they've made. You know the Bible says give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7), and double honor to whom double honor is due (1 Timothy 5:17), and I know, personally the sacrifice. I know about his sweat, I know about his tears; I know personally. I know how they've applied to me from time to time, and I'm extremely appreciative. And, giving honor to all those who have come and stood in the gap to make up the hedge. And, giving honor to all of you that are here, who reverence that same one true and wise God.

We've had a beautiful month, so far, a month that we've set aside to honor our women, women of ministry, women *in* ministry, and it's just been, it's just been incredible. It's just been amazing. And, our scripture for today is going to be from the Book of Acts; it is our theme of the month, it is, also, our theme for today.

Acts 1:13-14 *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

If we could bow our heads for just a moment. Lord, we continue to get amazed every time we are allowed in Your presence, God. Who is liken unto You? God, who scatters the wind, the waves, and the universe with a breath? And who makes evil retreat with just a look? Who stands in Your presence, and who is justified in Your sight? God, we are truly amazed. We thank You for all that You've done for us, God. We thank You for waking us up this morning, Almighty God. We thank You for giving us the breath of life this morning, wonderful, true, compassionate Savior. We thank You for Your blood that You shed on Calvary, and we thank You for giving us Your Word to live by. God, we thank You to be able to come and praise and worship You this morning. We thank You for a time of choral singing. And we thank You for how You deal with our hearts and our lives. Thank You, God. We thank You for every testimony, every song. We thank You for our great nation this morning. God, truly, You have been good to us. And, we ask, God, we ask at this time, that we turn over to going over the message part, going over to Your Word. We ask that Your Word would do, as it said in Your Word, not to return unto You void, but to accomplish in our lives that which You have sent it to do. God, we thank You, I thank You, Lord, for the

prayers of the Saints who just gathered around to pray for me. They look for a message that You would give to Your people, God; they don't look to a person, but they look to You. God, You are faithful. And we turn to You and we ask, have Your will and Your way with us this morning. And this we do ask and claim in Jesus' name, and everyone said amen.

Amen, amen, amen. So, we are ending the last Sunday of the month of May, and, man, what a month it's been. There's been a lot packed into this month. Our first service this month was, Brother Chris Ulrich brought the message, and he talked about a respect that had to be there, respecting women in ministry. And he went on, and he talked about learning from women, and he also talked about appreciating the differences between men and women. Appreciating the differences. What an awesome aspect. And he talked about unsung heroes, just to give a quick overview of the message. I'm not going to repeat what he said. It was a beautiful message, and I'm just going to give a quick overview of that.

Our next message, it was about Sarah and Hagar, and the message was that these two women of yesteryear, a long time ago, they did not realize the power they had within them. Yes, Abraham was great, but they did not realize the power that God had given, specifically, over them, and how their decisions actually have affected generations and nations for thousands of years. And, we also talked, in that message, about God is not finished with us yet, and has special words for mothers, as that was Mothers' Day.

The next message was from Brother Jesse, and he talked about Esther, saying, "Why am I here, and what is my purpose?" He went on to talk about Priscilla-, "Not competing, but completing ministry." Not competing, working against each other, but completing, working together in ministry. He went on to talk about Tabitha, "A legacy of good works." And he talked about Abigail- "Good advice leads to good results." Good advice that leads to good results.

And, last week we had a—I almost fall short to describe last week's service, as we had here, at one point we had a snapshot, it was a bit of a talk show, or interview time, where there was an interview with four women, and there was Esther, who was interviewed, and, we had Mary, who was interviewed, and, we had Deborah, who was interviewed, and, one who I'm learning from, I feel like, every time I go to that story—I'm just beginning to learn—the woman by the well—what a beautiful story—and then, last behind those four, those four who paved the way from the testament in the Bible, they also called up our pastor's wife, Debbie, and she came over and she shared, not about herself, but she shared about her mom, the church mother of this ministry. And she said she may be the First lady of our ministry, but she said First Ladies come and go, but there was one who paid the price. One who walked the streets one who came and gave, and that's why you have a church mother who sets an example, an example that we should aspire to and follow. And, then, after that, our General Pastor came and preached the message, and he said God changed the whole message, the whole message. He said he had notes, and he wanted to preach on them so bad, but God had other plans. And, I don't know exactly what the title of it was, but I do know what the spirit of it was, and the spirit of that message was responsibilities and relationships. Responsibilities and relationships.

And, as we seek the title for today's message, the title is, "Women in Ministry Down Through the Ages." And, we're going to start with our first Scripture:

Part 1: The Helper

Genesis 2:18 *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

Let's talk a little bit about that one who we refer to, from this Scripture, as, "the helper." I will make help meet for that man and what a wonderful spirit that is, a help meet for him. We notice that a helper is one who is able to come into situations and find resolve. Find resolve, in that they are able to

come into situations and find resolve, or, find resolution. When there is comfort needed, there is the spirit of helps. Whether there is wisdom and patience that's needed, they are able to bring a spirit of helps, a spirit of helps, and, specifically, specifically, the spirit of helps. Not the gift of helps, the spirit of helps. There is a difference between a spirit of helps, and the gift of helps. You see, the gift of helps, we see that in the New Testament, and we see that a gift is something that is given, and it wasn't there before. But the spirit, the person was created with that spirit, that person came in with that spirit, that spirit is their makeup. It isn't something that was added, it is, literally, part of them, and, they're able to go forth in that spirit, the spirit of helps. That spirit brings life. How great, how great is the Spirit? You know that you always have to be on guard when somebody says, 'helps,' because, you see, when we say the word, 'helps,' we always think of, 'in assistance to,' not as great, as the primary, as the inception, the beginning. We say that, and we err on that side, because, without the help, whatever the idea, whatever the creatatory process was, whatever the issue is, it cannot be completed, because it needs help. And how great is that spirit? Before we say it's a secondary thing, we need to go to the Book of Psalms. We want to really put something on the run this morning. How great is that spirit? Let's find out.

Psalms 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

So, David said, the prophet, David, the king, David, the mighty David, the one who had a heart after God's own heart, he said, "God is our refuge and our strength. He is a very present help. He is a help in trouble." He's a help in trouble. David said Wow! You mean to tell me that the spirit of helping comes from Almighty God? That's exactly right. Help comes from God, because He's the only one that doesn't need help. So, help comes from God. For everything we need, it comes from God. It is not something to be looked down on. It is not something to be given a second tier. It is not something to take a second shoe, or second feet, or second place. Help comes from God; it cannot be completed without Him. Help comes from God, and, God, let's face it, God is our help. Thank You, Jesus. God is our help.

And why, why, the spirit, why didn't God just give it to you in the first place? Why? Well, help means to do something that you could not do of yourself, the very nature of that. If we were able to do things of ourselves, everything of ourselves, we would lose that whole relationship. We need to understand the whole significance of God's help. We need to understand that without Him, we cannot go on. Without Him, we will always come up short. We need to know that.

Help itself comes from a Hebrew word, *aw-zar'* - which means to *surround*. This help means to surround, it means to protect. It means to aid. So, it's not something that is added to, it actually is something that encompasses. It's something that is a shield round about you. It's something that is better than an umbrella; it is a shelter. It is an armor against all that is without. It also means, to succor. This help means to succor. And succor means assistance and support in time of hardship, in time of distress. So, God made it so that we would have help in time of distress. And, I want to say this right quick: If you ever see things that you could help out in, you need to thank God who gives that spirit, and the one He first gave it to. That's how that rolls. Thank God for the help that He gave in the first place, and then the one He gave it to. Thank you, Eve, and all of the descendants of Eve, which we all are. He gave it to us through her, the spirit to help.

And, we talk about women of purpose, that's the theme for the month. The title, of course, the Scripture theme is from the book of Acts, but the theme is women of purpose. We talk about women of purpose, and we need to cover two points about purpose: And, one thing is, there are purposes we are created for, that we're designed for, that we're assigned to, that we're actually called for; there's purposes that that falls under that category. It's all in—and an example of that would be—one example—in the New testament, when the Lord calls the Disciples to Him, and there was five thousand there, and He called the Disciples to Him, and He said, "I want you to tell those five thousand to sit down, and I'm going to

break this bread and the fishes, and I want you to serve the people. They were called for that purpose. They were assigned that purpose. They were created for that purpose, in assisting the Lord, to take of the Lord's meat and give to those who were round about. So, there's purposes that we are called for. There are purposes that we are designed for. Talking about women of purpose, of course, and next month is men of purpose.

There are purposes that we are designed for, but there's other purposes that we choose to purpose ourselves for. We choose to make ourselves part of that purpose. We see something going on, and we say, "You know what? I want to be a part of that. That's kind of significant. That's kind of wonderful. I'm drawn to that. You know, I want to help out there; I want to do something there. I want to have some of that, what's going on, right there." An example of that would be when the Disciples, once again, were in the company of the Lord Jesus, and James and John took it upon themselves to go to the Lord—yeah, they left the other ten, at that time—they left them, and they went up to the Lord, and they said, "Grant unto us; we've got a petition before you. Grant to us that we'd be able to sit with You, in Your kingdom, one on the right and the other on the left. We want to purpose ourselves after being with You, God. We know we're with You, Lord, but we want to further our purpose in You." (Mark 10:35-40) They weren't worried about the other ten. They took it upon themselves—"We want to get a little closer to You, Lord." And, of course, the Lord corrected them on that, and, yet, He gave them a name at the same time. He said, "You don't really know what you're asking, but, if you think about it, because of this, I gots to call you the sons of a certain something, and I'm calling you guys the sons of thunder, because you guys are striving to bring it." (Mark 3:17)

So, the first part was the helper, and how we purpose ourselves. The second part:

Part 2: The Barren Woman

Psalms 113:9 *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.*

"He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD." He maketh the barren woman, the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. I was doing some reading and studying a little while ago, and, as I was going through Psalms, the Lord stuck me, right here, on this verse right here, and I had several questions about it. "Lord, how is all these things able to come about? You talk about a barren woman—how is that possible? How do you make a barren woman--? Now, my understanding of barren, would simply be, you ain't got no kids. But, Lord, I need to open up to a greater understanding from You what this whole thing is about." And, as I sought the Lord about this, He went on to tell me how, how could this be, how could a barren woman be both a keeper of the house, and a joyful mother of children? And this is because she would allow herself. You see, she, women have been given something specific: They are able to exude motherhood past the fruit of their own bodies. And this is why you can set them in some situations, and you're like, "Do you have a hundred kids? Because you sure do show..." You could be a teacher, and you show mothering in such a way, fifty kids benefit from the one. A hundred can benefit from the one. They're able to exude it past the fruit of their own bodies. See, a father, he will provide guidance and he will provide substance. But, a mother, she will provide restoration, and she will provide a joy. She will provide compassion, and, she will also provide a bridge across what seems insurmountable. How is she able to do this? Yeah, men have a quality, too—we're not going to talk about that, this month, but men have a quality, too. But, how is a mother, a woman, specifically, able to do this? Because she chooses to. Because she doesn't say, "no." She is able to conquer over that land.

In Biblical times, barrenness was such an awful thing; you see, this was your system of helps. This particular—having kids was supposed to be your retirement, it was supposed to be your something, you

could send them to your fields, it was even your life. It was how your cows got milked, or your goats got milked, if you were doing the goat-milk thing. It was how life was going to get extended. It was how you had a name in the populous, and the more kids, especially the more sons. Those were all things that would be talked about. But, truth be told, nowadays, barrenness has truly extended past children. It has extended to lack of education, so, "I'm barren, because I just don't know enough. I can't bring forth fruit in that." And, it has also extended into finances. It's extended into straight up, "I'm barren, because I can't do any more, because I got no life. I don't have financial life. I'm not strong enough for some things. Situations crack me down, and make me crumble. I'm not able to be strong or helpful in so many situations." And, also, barren in love, because sometimes—I've seen it here in the church, but I've also seen it in many, many situations—where so much is demanded. Maybe she has a certain amount to give, and everybody's seeing her give some, they all kind of gravitate and want to take from, and sometimes it takes its toll on some of the ladies, to supply more and more and more and more, and it almost takes them to the point where they say, "I just don't even more to give." And that barrenness, that barren spirit will even tack you, and say, "You are barren in the church. All these people been around for so long, they know so much, how can you compete with them? How can you do things around there? You weren't raised like that, you weren't educated around that church spirituality thing! All you can do is come and do a little of this and a little of that... And it even extends, the devil has sent that spirit to even extend into your Christianity—where you think that, "I can't even pray right, and see the evidence. I can't even read right, and draw down that anointing, and understanding. I can't even fellowship right. It just seems that, whatever I go to do in God, it's not getting a blessing for it!" That barren spirit. And it even—some of it has even started—I was talking with my sisters when I was back, and they told me there's a statistic—I learn so much when I talk to the ladies in my family. The men in my family are crazy, but I learn a lot when I talk to the women in my family. And, sometimes, you know, when I talk to my brothers, and the other men, the ladies just get up and leave, "I ain't got time for that nonsense." They'll just get up and go. This actually happened last time. They went on to tell me, they said, "Parrish, you don't understand the plight of some of the women today." They were telling me, "You see them at face value, but you don't see the things that have happened, that have caused them all kinds of problems, bringing them up to where they are, right now." Some of them, they've suffered so many emotional things, and they said, "Parrish, don't you realize some of the women have been abused and can tell nobody? Nobody! They can't tell!" And I was like, "How would I know? I don't know. I'm not subject to that world." They said, "Yeah, it's a really high number; it would surprise you." They said, "It's somewhere around a third of women have had some sort of experience in their younger years that has tried to rob them of the life that was going to be going forth." And that really settled with me. It's like that really punched me in the face. I really don't understand. And this Scripture came, and it highlighted, and it says that the Lord makes them, He makes them to have a joy. He makes them to be fruitful. He makes them to be positive. He will make them to be strong. He will make them to accomplish so many things. He will make life in their lives. The Lord will. Amen. And, you know, when the Bible says that, it's talking about the bridging of life, but, it's not just talking about the barren woman, it's not just talking to women; He's really talking about His bride, which is all of us, which is all of us. He's saying that, "No matter who you are and where you are, I will do this for you. No matter what you've gone through, what you've had to suffer, I will do this for you. No matter what people think about you, or no matter what you've had to go through to get to this place, I will do this for you."

Part 3: The Birthing Point

Acts 1:13-14 *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in*

prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

So, our setting here, our setting here is a time of restlessness among the Disciples, the early church. They were being, at the time, of course, the followers of the Lord were being persecuted by the religious hierarchy. In fact, you find, in some places, that they were hiding out, and they were being faithful to the promise that He had given them. He told them to tarry at Jerusalem... They saw Him, they saw the Lord be crucified, and then they saw Him rise. And, after they saw Him rise, they saw Him be carried up into the clouds, and away from them. What that must have felt like, to know that, "Man, I thought everything was everything was coming to an end, after He got crucified, we were kind of wondering, and then he rose. Yeah, we got this joy thing coming back. Something's going to specially going to happen now, and, then, He just left us again." What that must have been like. So, they also had seen their numbers dwindle. So, they had seen the Lord feed five-thousand, and four-thousand, and seven-thousand at a time; they had seen thousands of followers come, and sit down and partake of the fishes and the loaves, and, yet, as they are here in this upper room, they notice they've dwindled down from thousands, to just a little over a hundred and twenty. So, that must have had some sort of impact. But, they were being faithful at this point. They knew that the Lord told them to go and tarry in Jerusalem, until they would be endued, and here they are. But, we call this a birthing point because things are about to reach an epic, or an epoch. Things are going to reach an all kind of big crescendo, here.

And women can tell you something; women are more familiar with this than men are, they're familiar with something that's called a birthing pain. And, I'll tell you, the pain gets enormous, closer to the birth. And they say, "You know something's about to happen when it gets like that." And, here it is, the church is under attack. And they're tarrying and they're waiting. And they chose to be there. They chose to be in that room. They chose to follow. "I know we got things going on. I know we're being persecuted. I know we're under attack, but I choose to follow the Lord anyway. I choose to believe that He said that I'm going to get something if I go and give myself." And, so, here they go. They are there in the upper room, they are there to gather and presented themselves in waiting. And, they're there in the company of people. The Disciples were there, of course; the eleven—Judas, of course, was gone; Judas Iscariot, he's gone. But, the eleven are there, and so are the rest of the hundred-and-ten or so, and the Bible says they were there, having their hearts and minds and souls together, in one mind and one accord, and then, you kind have to wonder what must that have been like? What it must have been like for everybody to be on the same page, you know?—I mean, yeah, sure, they had things they had to worry about. There was guys, that had—and women—they must have had businesses, and they said, "I can't worry about my business, I can't worry about my finances, right now. It's time to seek and wait on the Lord." And, they had people that had families, and they said, "I can't worry about my family right now, because it's time to seek God." And, I'm sure there was people that said, "I got to clean my house. I need to prepare dinner. You know, there's people that's sick that I got to visit. I can't worry about that right now. Right now, I gots to seek God! He told me that now is the time." And, as they sought God, the Bible says, in one mind and one accord, what must that have been like? The Bible says, there came a sound from Heaven... Now, you have to, you have to understand, it wasn't a sound over the radio, it wasn't a sound from the TV, it wasn't somebody in the room shouting out, it wasn't a sound from outside the room, it wasn't a sound of the hustle and bustle, or the wind along the rooftop. It wasn't that. The Bible says it didn't come from Earth; it came from Heaven. And it filled them all. Now what is that like? One mind, one accord. And God says, "Yes, all of you, in one mind and one accord, I give it to all of you!" What must that have been like, to hear it come from Heaven, to hear it come from Heaven? And know that everyone of us that's in one mind one accord is going to receive what God has for us?

The issue is, it is still on to us. It is still unto us, this sound that comes from Heaven. It is still ours to have, men and women, if we allow our souls to get into one mind and one accord that is still ours. So, there is still a question that remains to that: who wants to go to the upper room? Who wants to be

endued with power from on high? Who wants to leave everything else behind, and seek God for that time-frame that He says, "Come to Me?" Who wants to be there in the upper room? Not as a spectator, but as a receiver.

Now, you have to ask, what kind of things are in that upper room? And I'm about to close here. What kind of things are in that upper room? Well for one thing, there is a waiting on the Lord; that's in the upper room. For another thing, there is a blending of our hearts together; that's in the upper room. And, finally, when we get to the upper room, we find out that it's not about us. In the upper room, if you've got to be the special one, you are not in that one mind and one accord. It's not about us. It is about our brothers and our sisters. It is about the Lord, and His ministry. It is about going forth in God. And, for us, the decision to go to the upper room happens every day. We say yes or no, every day. If I do good to my brothers and sisters: every day we ask ourselves and my going to go to the upper room where I seek God in my life and do good to my brothers and my sisters, I'm making a decision to come closer to the upper room. And, you notice it didn't give ages in the upper room? It doesn't say who's too old or too young? The only people who say too young or too old is us. It didn't say who's too tired, too hyper. It didn't say that. The only people who make a decision to go to the upper room is us; or not go. It didn't say, whatever your nationality is, or whatever your profession is, you're too important; you're too unimportant. It didn't say any of that. Again, the only people who make a decision to go to the upper room is us.

Part 4: Unity

Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Now, there is a power that we have when we pray or sing. There is a power that we have when we read. But there is a power that is magnified when we come together in one mind. There is a power that is magnified when we sing together. The solos sound great; the solos—especially when somebody has a beautiful voice—if they don't have a beautiful voice, they'll never sell a record, except for that one kid that everybody felt sorry for on American Idol. I forget his name. He sold some records, everybody felt sorry for him; now they got a record that won't be worth anything. So, anyway, solos sound nice, especially if you've got a great voice, but, how much greater is a choir? How much greater is that when you hear everybody singing to the same purpose. I'll let you in on my little secret: Because Christian music has a lot of choral singing and a lot of back-up singing, and a lot of praise and worship groups, the worldly, secular groups have tried to break that down, but they can't find how to make these many people join in the same purpose, to bring forth such a melody, because that is not what it's designed to do. But, you'll see it in several places, they've been trying to figure out how to do it. My sister told me that; she works for a radio station, and she said, "Every time they try, people can't agree on what they want to do. Everybody wants to be more special than the other." But, when you come and give glory to God, you understand that He alone is worthy. So, the unity of the Spirit is paramount. Why else would God say, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together?" (Hebrews 10:25) Or, else, why would God say, "How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity?" (Psalms 133:1) For in fact, that scripture, it says, God commanded us to be blessed, commanded us to be blessed (Psalms 133:3).

And, our last scripture:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Amen. Could we give the Lord a praise?