

Role of Women in Church

Valvi Vishwas Gorakhnath

(Research Scholar), School of Social Sciences,
Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari, North Maharashtra University Jalgaon.425001,
Mob:-9284932913/7744037133
Email:-vishwasvalvi1986@gmail.com

Abstract: While some have suggested that the New Testament writers were unkind to women, the simple fact is that for that time in history the New Testament situations involving women tended to elevate them to a higher level than the Jewish and non-Jewish societies of that time did. Women were highly involved in Christ's ministry as well as the ministry of the early church. One writer wrote this about women in the New Testament, that women travelled (sic) with and helped support Jesus and the disciples, that women, not men, were the last at Jesus' cross and the first at his tomb, that Paul in various letters greeted women as co-workers. Women who wholeheartedly dedicated their lives to such religious activities received extravagant accolades from the post-New Testament writers. This brief paper will not cover everything about women and the New Testament Church. It shows that the New Testament writers recorded that women were not to be treated according to rabbinical traditions. It will also go over roles, responsibilities, and even opportunities Christian women have. Plus it shows that many women were praised and encouraged for their contributions to Christianity.

Keywords: women, church, Christ's ministry, Christianity.

Research Methodology:

Researcher has presented this research paper with the title of 'Role of Women in Church'. For this research paper Researcher has used historical method and Primary and Secondary sources.

Objectives:

- Women in the first century gave important contribute to spread Christianity.
- Many women played an important role in the church as evangelist.
- There are many changes in the work of women nowadays.
- Many women prophet played an important role in the development of early churches.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bible says that Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), and it often showed that He refused to take part in various added laws of Jewish tradition (Mark 7:5-13). And this included the Jewish traditions involving women. Notice John 4:7-19: 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. In the above account, Jesus violated two non-biblical Jewish traditions at the same time: He greets a woman and has interactions with a foreigner. And even this foreign woman knew that this was not the usual practice of the Jews.

Jesus even went a step further and started to talk with her about issues relating to religion and salvation. Hence, He considered that women were as deserving and capable as men in the area. And while that may seem to be self-evident, this does not seem to have been the usual practice amongst Jewish religious leaders of His day. Furthermore, that woman, a

foreigner, realized that Jesus was the Messiah before many men did: Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." That woman gave testimony of Jesus that others believed: And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. So a foreign woman, and other foreigners, who had some familiarity with the scriptures, believed. Notice that Jesus had to teach something to the Sadducees, who tended to be priests, that they had not grasped. He corrected their poor doctrinal understanding:

The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Thus, many people were surprised that Jesus did NOT relegate a resurrected woman to be inferior to any man. This was a radical departure from the non-biblical traditions that they held. Women have the same spiritual potential as men. Those who do not recognize this do not know "the Scriptures nor the power of God."

1) Women and the Early New Testament

The Book of Luke starts off by discussing two encounters with the angel Gabriel. The first was with a man who was also a priest: There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit,

even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Notice that even though he and his wife Elizabeth were both righteous before God, he was made mute for a time because he did not believe the angel Gabriel. On the other hand, Gabriel also visited someone else. A young woman named Mary: Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Notice that even though this could cause Mary to become a social outcast, that she, unlike the male priest Zacharias, believed what the angel Gabriel said. Furthermore, immediately after this, Mary met with the wife of Zacharias: Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." Notice that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said that Mary was blessed because she believed. Mary, by the way, did not only just believe at that time. According to traditions, she believed until she died apparently in Ephesus (some say Jerusalem) many decades after the visit from Gabriel (you can access photos of what is claimed to have been the site of Mary's last house at Photos of Ephesus). (It should be understood, however, that devotion to Mary is NOT part of the Bible, and according to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "we do not meet with any clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin in the first Christian centuries." In other words the devotion to Mary now seen in Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches was not an original belief or practice of the Christian church. More on Mary can be found in the article *Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Apparitions*.)

Shortly after Jesus was born, His family visited the Temple that contained a very important woman. Notice: Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Here is something that the old Radio Church of God published related to that as well as something else: Anna, well up in years, has become an example of how to serve God. This is an example of a very old lady. With all her heart and might she wanted to SERVE God. She was not able to go out into the cold and rain to serve the brethren in times of sickness or need. She probably could no longer knit or sew for those who needed clothing. The greatest service she could render God's Church and His people was PRAYER and FASTING! She did not feel left out or incapable of serving. And by fasting often, along with her prayers, she became an EXAMPLE for all generations to come.

Many widows begin to feel they cannot serve effectively because they do not have large incomes and cannot send in large amounts in tithes and offerings. But have you ever stopped to think that by your PRAYERS God can and will provide Co-Workers who can send in large amounts in tithes and offerings? Ask God specifically to provide tithe-payers who are able to send in one hundred dollars or even one thousand dollars a month. Mr. Armstrong really means it when he asks you to pray for the NEEDS of the Work, as well as to contribute what you are able.

2) Women have unique abilities and insights.

And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor." But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. 11 For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. 12 For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. 13 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." (Matthew 26:6-13) Notice that wherever the gospel was proclaimed, the woman who had the insight to anoint Jesus for burial would be commended (and this prophecy from Jesus was fulfilled--to see more, see also the free online book: Proof Jesus is the Messiah). The male apostles who should have known better that Jesus was about to die, not only did not anoint Him, instead they criticized a woman who did the right thing. Something to think about. Women played many unique and critical roles in the New Testament church.

3) Women After the Resurrection

Who were the first people to see Jesus after His resurrection? Was it His disciples? No, it was a woman. Mary Magdalene. John records: But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. So not only was it a woman who first saw Jesus after His resurrection, it was a woman who had to tell the disciples Jesus was risen. It was a woman who had the bravery needed at this time.

After Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9), the apostles returned to Jerusalem: Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. Women were waiting and praying with the apostles.

4) Women, Baptism and Salvation,

And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, (Acts 5:14) Women who professed Christ were also often persecuted in New Testament times: As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison (Acts 8:3). Being a Christian woman was no protection, as Christian women along, with Christian men, were subject to imprisonment and other punishments (see also Acts 9:2; see also Persecutions by Church and State). Women were encouraged to be part of the Christian Church as much as men were. They were taught the good news of the Kingdom of God and were baptized upon conversion as the Book of Acts shows: But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized (Acts 8:12). Women were baptized as they accepted truth about Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

REFERENCES

- [1] Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22, Holy bible
- [2] Mark 7:5-13, Holy bible
- [3] John 4:39-41, Holy bible
- [4] John 20:11-18, Holy bible
- [5] Acts 1:12-14, Holy bible
- [6] Matthew 22:23-32, Holy bible
- [7] John 4:10-26, Holy bible
- [8] Luke 1:5-21, Holy bible
- [9] Luke 1:26-38, Holy bible
- [10] Luke 1:39-45, Holy bible
- [11] Luke 2:36-38, Holy bible