

May 12, 2019

Acts 9:36-43

Since my first day at Amicable, inclusive language important

Challenged in seminary to use inclusive language, changed my understanding and relationship to God – made me think

I changed my relationship to women – it helped me mature

It is hard to change culture, especially when the culture one seeks to change is so deeply embedded in our language

- Chairman – Chairwoman feels awkward, shorten to Chair
- “Man a station” – Staff
- mankind – humanity, humankind, kingdom

Changing our words is hard, because it forces us to think before we speak

Such thinking before we speak can change us

And, a willingness to try says we value women

Church’s history on women is atrocious; it demands repentance – a turning around

One way to challenge those in the Christian church tradition, who would silence women, is to look at women in the Bible

This Sunday’s story is about Tabitha, Dorcas, Gazelle is a good example

Very sparse, but enough, for we know

- disciple
- leader
- “known for doing good and helping out”

Disciple – a term for a follower of Jesus, she possibly knew Jesus personally, possibly even part of the inner circle

“Disciple” includes more than men

Leader – she was important enough to have others travel to Peter and encourage him to go to Joppa

And, important enough for Peter to leave Lydda and go to Joppa

“**known for doing good and helping out**”, in other words, a deacon (or deaconess) also, “in other words”, she was doing the work of the church

How did we then get to “women should keep silent in church” or “women are evil”?

Societal pressure forced the women out and men to take control; women were to be silent

Here is the reality, now and then:

without the work of women, the church would not still be here or still be strong,

Not railing against men; they have been good church leaders too

But on this Mother’s Day Sunday it is important to not only name our mothers – biological, adoptive, spiritual – but also to lift them up, recognizing how they nurtured us and encouraged us

They not only nurtured our bodies and minds, they nurtured our spirits

In so many ways, through their unconditional love they were the hand, voice, and face of God, seeing us through trying times

In so many ways, because of the love they shared with us, they, like Tabitha, continue to rise up in our lives, walking with us,

encouraging us, supporting us, and always loving us.

On this Mother’s Day, then, we give God thanks for the example of women like the disciple named Gazelle, and all the women in our lives, who like Gazelle, have done us good and helped us out, sharing with us a faith that helps us conquer our fears and allow us to grow into all God desires us to be. Amen.