



A TEACHING ON EASTVIEW'S VIEW ON WOMEN + PREACHING

Presented by the Elders of Eastview on September 27, 2026

I. HOW WE GOT HERE

Good evening. We are so grateful for all of you coming tonight. It shows a real desire to learn, grow, and dig deeper. But before we dive into the actual topic — women and preaching — we want to start with a significant number.

Seventy.

Seventy years of faithfulness here at Eastview. Seventy years of faithful men and women who have attended, served, given, led, studied these Scriptures, and listened for the Holy Spirit — generation after generation — anchoring this church in something steadier than any single issue we will ever face.

Not a committee.

Not a study.

Not even the Elders sitting up here tonight.

That's who got us here.

And before anything else, hear this: that anchor holds.

Whatever you walk out of here believing, our central hope is that Eastview stays anchored in Christ.

Our vision statement says we want to become:

Loving, Life-Giving People Bringing Hope + Healing in Jesus.

Notice where the weight of that sentence falls.

Not on being right. In Jesus.

Everything else must bend toward Jesus, or it isn't worth much.

So let us tell you plainly what kind of conversation we believe this is. This is an open-handed issue — faithful, Bible-believing Christians have read these passages differently for a very long time. Genuinely faithful people, doing genuinely careful work with the same Scriptures, have landed in different places.

This doesn't determine whether you're saved, and we don't believe it's sinful to land on either side of it.

Which means something important we want you to hold onto:

Unity doesn't require agreement here.

Theologians sometimes distinguish an open-handed issue from a closed-handed one — convictions at the center of the Christian faith, like the identity of Jesus, his death and resurrection, the gospel. Those we don't hold loosely, because they're foundational to what it means to follow Jesus.



This isn't that.

There's a line that's shaped how our Elders have tried to hold this — familiar, if you know our Restoration Movement roots: **"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love."**

We believe this question belongs in that middle category.
Which means our posture toward it, and toward each other, must be liberty held together by love.

So, a few things we're *not* going to do tonight.
We're *not* going to ask for a show of hands.
We're *not* going to ask you to leave this room in full agreement with us.

Some of you have been hoping for this for years.
Some of you may leave unsettled, maybe even hurting.

We are not questioning your faithfulness or your love for Scripture. What we're asking is that you hear our process with the same generosity you'd want brought to yours — because no matter where you land, we believe Eastview can still be a church you love, a church you stay in, a church with room for you.

One more thing.

Tonight is intentionally a teaching. We've written it out, and we're going to read it closely. A topic this weighty deserves precision. That also means we won't be opening this up for questions as a group tonight. We'll be here afterward, and there will be opportunities for conversation in the days ahead — but this isn't a decision still open for input.

We, the Elders, have done this work carefully and prayerfully, and this is where we've landed. What we do want to continue are conversations about what comes next: how you process this, and how we remain one church even when we disagree.

All that said — we haven't communicated every part of this process as clearly as we should have. Some of you heard pieces of this decision indirectly before hearing it clearly from us. This created confusion and frustration. We own that. We're sorry. **Please forgive us.**

So let us give you the honest version of how we got here.

The commitment to study this seriously is older than Pastor Brandon's time as our Lead Pastor. It began nearly three years ago with the Elder board that served during the transition between our former senior pastor and Brandon, prompted by a finding from a third-party audit that stated:

"Address treatment of women at Eastview, particularly to determine what structures, processes, or values — whether explicit or implicit — might be leading to a sense that women are not valued."

That board built a preliminary framework and gathered research — but they also waited to launch the full study until a new Lead Pastor was hired who could walk through it with all of us. When Brandon arrived in the summer of 2024, our Elder board was itself in transition, so the wait continued a little longer. We didn't want to take on a question this significant with a team still finding its footing.

Once we were ready, we spent countless hours in Scripture, read commentaries and church position papers, listened to scholars who landed on different sides of the question, prayed and studied together, pushed on one another's assumptions, and took a weekend away simply to sit in the weight of it.

Throughout, we tested everything against three things:

1. **Scripture**
2. **Faithful scholarship across church history**
3. **Our vision as a church**



And after all of that, this is where we landed:

The Elders of Eastview believe women are free to preach and teach in every ministry environment at Eastview, across both campuses — including our Sunday services.

We're not asking you to simply take our word for it — that would undercut the whole point. What got us here was doing the work ourselves rather than inheriting someone else's answer.

So, for the rest of tonight, we want to do some of that work with you.

We want to open the Scriptures together and let you see what convinced us.



II. HOW DO WE READ OUR BIBLES?

So — *how do we read the Bible?*

Underneath every other question we're going to talk about tonight, that's the real question.

There's a word for this: **hermeneutics**.

It just means the lens we bring every time we open the Bible.

Everybody has a hermeneutic, whether you've called it that or not.

The question isn't whether you have a way of interpreting Scripture.

It's whether you've ever stopped to examine it.

Here's why that matters, with something low-stakes first.

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount,

"If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away," and, "If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away." (Matthew 5:29–30, NIV)

Now, virtually none of us has read those words and concluded that faithfulness to Jesus requires literally removing an eye or cutting off a hand.

Why not?

Not because we don't take Jesus seriously.

Because we do.

We understand that Jesus is using intentionally shocking language to communicate the seriousness of sin.

We interpret his words in their context, in the way he intended them to be understood.

And that's hermeneutics.

Every one of us does this every time we open our Bibles.

A text without a context is just a pretext.

That's the whole ballgame tonight.

And before we open a single passage about women, we want to make something really clear. This is not a disagreement about whether the Bible is true, authoritative, or the Word of God. Faithful Christians on both sides affirm those things. Nobody here is arguing Scripture can be set aside because we don't like what it says. The disagreement is about interpretation.

Scholars talk about three places we need to look:

1. **Behind the text** — *what's happening historically, who was this written to?*
2. **Within the text** — *what do the words actually say, why this word instead of another?*
3. **Within the larger arc of Scripture** — *how this passage fits everything else God has revealed, ultimately leading to Jesus?*

**A careful reading pays attention to all three—
behind the text, within the text, and within the larger arc of Scripture.**

This is where we can get into trouble, even when we love the Bible and sincerely want to obey it. We can read a command, take it exactly as it sounds in 21st-century English, and apply it to ourselves without ever asking what it meant to the people who first heard it.

That isn't necessarily the more faithful reading.

Sometimes it's just an incomplete one.



Tonight we'll keep coming back to two primary questions:

- 1. What did this mean where it was first spoken (which includes the actual words used), and...**
- 2. Where does it fit within the larger arc of Scripture that leads to Jesus?**

Whether you realize it or not, you already read your Bible this way in one important place: **circumcision**.

In Acts 15, the early church faced a choice as it was launching — apply Genesis 17 exactly as written, or ask a harder question: *what was this command actually for, and where does it sit in the larger story God is telling?* God had told Abraham plainly, "every male among you shall be circumcised" (Genesis 17:10–11, NIV).

But after watching God pour out his Spirit on uncircumcised Gentile believers, James stood and said, "we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God" (Acts 15:19, NIV) — and the council's letter agreed: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements" (Acts 15:28–29, NIV) — circumcision wasn't one of them.

They didn't erase Genesis 17, or pretend the covenantal sign God had given wasn't real. They read it inside the whole story — a story that started with Abraham but was always headed toward "all nations" being blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). The question was no longer simply "what does Genesis 17 say," but "how does this command apply now that Jesus has come and God is bringing the nations into his family?"

They found their answer not in a single verse announcing circumcision was over, but in the shape of the whole story and the visible work of the Holy Spirit.

We want to say this plainly, because we know it's where some people get nervous:

**Doing that work isn't a workaround for taking the Bible seriously.
It's what taking the Bible seriously requires.**

So as we turn to what Scripture says about women, we'll keep asking those same two questions — not to get around Scripture, but because we love it enough to read all of it, not just the verse that's easiest to quote.



III. THE POSITIVE PATTERN

Let's start at the beginning — before the fall, before anything went wrong.

Genesis 1:27 tells us God created humanity, male and female, in his own image:

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, NIV)

And the very next thing God does is give them a job to do together —

"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:28, NIV)

Simply stated—male and female are to rule and steward the earth. That command is given to both, in the same breath. Before either of them had done a single thing right or wrong.

In Genesis 2, God says it's *"not good"* for the man to be alone, and makes the woman as what our English Bibles usually translate *"helper"* — the Hebrew word is **ezer** (EH-zer). In our language, *"helper"* can sound like an assistant. That's not what the Hebrew implies.

Scripture repeatedly uses ezer for God himself, coming to the aid of his people — *"My help (ezer) comes from the Lord"* (Psalm 121:2). Ezer is a word of help and strength, not subordination.

Thus—there are two image-bearers, jointly commissioned, before sin ever entered the story. Only after the fall do we hear *"he will rule over you"* (Genesis 3:16) — that's not God's original commission. It appears after the fall, as part of a world now fractured by sin.

Move forward through the Old Testament and the pattern continues.

Right after Israel comes through the Red Sea, **Miriam** is called a prophet and leads God's people in worship (Exodus 15:20-21). In Judges, when Israel needs someone to hear from God and lead the nation, that person is **Deborah** — Scripture identifies her as both prophet and judge, and Barak refuses to go into battle without her (Judges 4:4-8).

Then there's **Huldah**. When King Josiah's officials discover the Book of the Law and need someone to help them understand what God is saying through it, they seek out a woman named Huldah (2 Kings 22:14-20) — and don't miss this: Jeremiah was already a prophet during Josiah's reign, but the king's officials sought out Huldah. They listened to her, and received her message as the word of the Lord.

Come to the Gospels. Look at **Mary of Bethany**. When Jesus comes to her home, Mary sits *"at the Lord's feet listening to what he said"* (Luke 10:39, NIV) — the posture of a disciple. Martha wants Mary to get up; Jesus doesn't send her back — he says Mary *"has chosen what is better"* (Luke 10:42, NIV).

Then come to Easter morning. Who does the risen Jesus entrust with the first announcement of the resurrection? Women. He tells them, *"Go and tell my brothers"* (Matthew 28:10, NIV), and **Mary Magdalene** goes to the disciples with the announcement: *"I have seen the Lord!"* (John 20:18, NIV).

The first people entrusted to announce the risen Jesus were women—and they announced it to men.

At Pentecost, Peter explains what's happening by reaching back to the prophet Joel: *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy"* (Acts 2:17, NIV). Later in Acts, Luke introduces us to **Philip's four daughters** and simply tells us that they prophesied (Acts 21:9). And the Apostle Paul refers matter-of-factly to **"every woman who prays or prophesies"** (1 Corinthians 11:5, NIV).



Paul isn't debating whether women can do this; he assumes it. And whatever else prophecy means in the New Testament, it involves speaking something believed to come from God for the benefit of God's people.

In Acts 18, a gifted speaker named Apollos has a gap in his understanding, and **Priscilla**, alongside her husband Aquila, takes him aside and "*explained to him the way of God more adequately*" (Acts 18:26, NIV). This is a theological instruction, given to a man who would become an influential teacher in the early church.

In Romans 16, Paul calls **Phoebe** a deacon of the church in Cenchreae, entrusting her with his letter to Rome (Romans 16:1-2). In the ancient world, carrying a letter like that often meant helping the church understand what had been written, not simply delivering an envelope.

Just a few verses later, Paul names another woman—**Junia**. He describes Junia as "*outstanding among the apostles*" (Romans 16:7, NIV). There is debate over exactly how that phrase should be understood, but many scholars understand Paul to be identifying Junia as notable among the apostles.

Then, there's **Nympha**. She's easy to miss. Near the end of Colossians, Paul writes: "*Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house*" (Colossians 4:15, NIV). When this was written—churches gathered in homes. And the people who opened their homes to those churches often carried significant responsibility and influence within those communities. Nympha opened her home to a congregation of Jesus followers, and Paul recognizes "*the church in her house*."

Finally, keep moving to something Paul writes in Galatians:

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28, NIV)

This verse by itself doesn't answer every question about roles in the church. But it tells us our ethnicity, our social standing, and our gender do not determine our standing, our inheritance, or our access to God in the family of Jesus. We are one in Christ.

So—do you see the pattern?

Women are active throughout the Old and New Testaments — speaking, leading, teaching, prophesying, discipling, and advancing the gospel.

None of these examples by itself answers the question we're asking tonight. But they belong in the biblical evidence too.

And when we come to the two or three passages that appear to restrict women from speaking or teaching, we have to interpret them in a way that takes this evidence seriously as well.



IV. ADDRESSING THE HARDER TEXTS

There are two words we're going to use in this section that we don't want to assume everybody knows.

Complementarian is the view that men and women are equal in value and dignity, but that God has given men and women different roles — particularly in leadership in the home and the church.

Egalitarian is the view that men and women share full equality not only in value, but also in leadership and teaching roles within the church.

We'll sometimes use "traditional reading" and "complementarian reading" interchangeably tonight.

And one more thing before we go further:

Complementarians are not the opposition in this room.

Many of you hold that view. People we love and respect hold it thoughtfully, prayerfully, and biblically. Some of the scholars and teachers who helped shape our own study hold it too. So we're going to try to represent that position at its strongest.

1 Corinthians 14

Let's start in 1 Corinthians 14. Paul writes:

"Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says." (1 Corinthians 14:34, NIV)

Read that sentence by itself, in English, and it sounds pretty absolute. But remember what we just said about reading the whole Bible — and in this case, we don't even have to leave the same letter.

Just three chapters earlier, Paul writes about "every woman who prays or prophesies" (1 Corinthians 11:5). So Paul clearly assumes women are praying and prophesying. Paul cannot mean in chapter 14 that women are never allowed to speak when, in chapter 11, he's already talking about women praying and prophesying.

Something more specific must be happening.

When you read 1 Corinthians 14 as a whole, the chapter is about order in worship. Paul tells people speaking in tongues when to be silent. He tells prophets when to stop speaking and allow another person to speak. And he ends the chapter this way: "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40, NIV).

The reading we found most compelling is that Paul is addressing some kind of disruptive or disorderly speech among women in Corinth — not establishing an absolute command that women can never speak in church.

That reading doesn't remove the verse.

It helps reconcile it with what Paul himself has already said three chapters earlier.



1 Timothy 2

Now we come to the harder one.

***"I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet."
(1 Timothy 2:12, NIV)***

We're not going to soften that. We're not going to rush past it.
This is probably the verse the entire conversation most often turns on, so it deserves real weight.

This letter was written to a real church, in a real city, dealing with real problems. Timothy was leading the church in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), and false teaching is one of the major concerns running throughout this letter. So whatever Paul says in chapter 2 is said to a church where bad teaching is a major problem.

Ephesus itself matters too. The city was famous for the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Artemis worship was deeply woven into the life and identity of the city, revered among other things as a protector of women in childbirth.

That becomes interesting because just a few verses after Paul's restriction on women teaching, he writes one of the most puzzling lines in the New Testament: *"women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety"* (1 Timothy 2:15, NIV).

Scholars debate exactly what Paul means there; some see a connection to the Artemis culture. We don't want to pretend the cultural background solves the whole passage. It doesn't. But it reminds us Paul isn't writing these words in a vacuum — he's writing to a particular church, in a particular city, dealing with particular problems.

Here's where the complementarian reading becomes especially strong, because Paul doesn't only talk about what's happening in Ephesus. He goes all the way back to Genesis:

***"For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."* (1 Timothy 2:13-14, NIV)**

The complementarian reading says: there it is. Paul isn't grounding his instruction in first-century Ephesian culture — he's grounding it in creation itself. That order wasn't accidental; it established a pattern in which men were given a particular responsibility to lead.

So when Paul restricts women here, he's not creating a temporary rule for one troubled church — he's applying something God established from the beginning.

And this isn't the only place Paul reasons from Genesis.

In 1 Corinthians 11, he writes:

***"For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."* (1 Corinthians 11:8-9, NIV).**

So from the traditional perspective, you have Paul in two different letters appealing to the same creation story — that can look much less like a temporary local solution and much more like a settled theological conviction.

We want you to hear the weight of that. That's a serious argument.
It's one faithful, thoughtful, Bible-believing Christians have held for a very long time.
And we don't need to weaken their argument to explain why we ultimately reached a different conclusion.

So why didn't we land there?

Part of the reason is what we already saw in Genesis.



Genesis 1 begins with men and women equally made in God's image and jointly commissioned to steward creation. Genesis 2 describes the woman as an ezer — a word that does not itself imply inferiority or subordination. So when Paul reaches back to the creation story, we must interpret his use of Genesis alongside what Genesis itself says about men and women.

And notice what Paul does with Eve's deception. He pairs two ideas: Adam was formed first, and Eve was deceived. If the second statement is meant as a timeless description of women generally, it would seem to imply that women are inherently more easily deceived — more gullible, less able to discern truth — and therefore shouldn't teach.

But very few thoughtful complementarians would say that, and Scripture itself doesn't present women as inherently more spiritually gullible than men. A careful complementarian response is that Paul isn't saying women are naturally more easily deceived — he's pointing back to what happened in Genesis 3 specifically. That's a much stronger version of the traditional argument.

So the real question becomes:

Is Paul using Genesis to establish a permanent restriction on women teaching men, or —

Is Paul drawing from Genesis to address the false teaching and disorder happening in Ephesus?

That's the interpretive question.

And Paul himself gives us another reason to be careful about turning creation order into a simple hierarchy. In 1 Corinthians 11, right after saying that woman came from man, Paul writes:

"Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God." (1 Corinthians 11:11-12, NIV)

Even in the passage where Paul appeals to creation order, he immediately emphasizes mutual dependence. That doesn't settle the debate. But it tells us Paul's argument is more textured than simply, *"Adam came first, therefore men are always over women."*

Authentein

Now there's one Greek word in 1 Timothy 2:12 that really matters.

The word translated "assume authority" is **authentein** (ow-then-TAIN), and it's unusual.

Paul regularly uses other Greek words for what's translated in English as "authority" elsewhere in his letters, including the **exousia** word group. However, here, he uses *authentein* — and it's the only time this word that appears in the entire New Testament. Scholars debate exactly what shade of meaning it carries.

Some evidence from Greek around Paul's time suggests it can have a stronger edge than simply *"have authority"*—something closer to dominating, controlling, or taking authority for oneself. If that's the sense here, Paul may be prohibiting a particular kind of abusive or wrongful teaching and authority rather than making a blanket statement about every form of female authority or teaching.

Complementarian scholars push back on that — they argue that *"teach"* and *"exercise authority"* belong together and describe the authoritative teaching responsibility of church leadership, which makes sense, they argue, because Paul moves immediately into qualifications for elders in chapter 3.

So again — *which is it?*

Faithful scholars who know Greek far better than most of us in this room land on both sides.

That's worth knowing — not because the Greek magically proves our position, but because our English translations can make a debated passage feel much more settled than it actually is.



If we're going to build a universal restriction for every woman in every church on this one verse, we should at least acknowledge that one of its most important words is itself disputed.

Kephalē

One other word worth mentioning.

In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul uses the Greek word **kephalē** (kef-ah-LAY), translated "head."

Some scholars argue it clearly carries the sense of authority — someone who has authority over another, the way we say "head coach" or "head of a company." But the Greek word doesn't always function exactly the way our English word does.

Others point to examples in Greek literature outside the New Testament where *kephalē* can carry the sense of "source," or point of origin — the way ancient writers spoke of the "head" of a river, the place where it begins, not something exerting control downstream. On that reading, Paul isn't describing a chain of command in 1 Corinthians 11:3. Rather, he's describing where someone or something comes from.

Still others argue for something closer to "foremost" or "preeminent" — where "head" refers more to first in honor, not first in authority.

Complementarian scholars push back on the "source" reading, arguing it's the rarer sense of the word and that "authority over" better fits Paul's use here.

Faithful scholars who know Greek far better than most of us land on more than one side of that question too — not because Greek solves the debate for us, but because we should be cautious about assuming the English word in front of us carries exactly the same meaning Paul intended two thousand years ago.

That's why faithful Christians can take the same Bible seriously and still disagree about what these passages mean.

So Where Do People Land?

When you put all of this together, careful Christians generally land in one of three places.

1. Some believe these passages establish a timeless restriction: women should not teach or exercise authority over men in the gathered church.
2. Others believe the restriction is real but narrower — specifically connected to the governing and teaching office of elder; on that view, women may teach, preach, prophesy, and lead in many settings, while the office of elder remains reserved for men.
3. Finally, others believe Paul is addressing a particular problem in Ephesus — especially false teaching — and is not establishing a universal prohibition on women teaching men for all time.

Some of your us *landed in that third place.* We believe that reading makes the best sense not only of 1 Timothy 2 itself, but of everything else we've already seen throughout Scripture about women whom God calls, gifts, and uses to speak, teach, lead, and prophesy.

But we don't want to flatten this into one voice, because it wasn't one voice.

Some of the us *find the second reading more persuasive* — that Paul's restriction is real and permanent, but attached to the office of elder specifically, not to the act of teaching or preaching itself.

Here's what matters:

Both roads arrive at the same answer to the question we're answering tonight.

Women can preach and teach at Eastview.



On that, every one of us is unified — not because we all argued our way here the same way, but because we each did the work honestly and arrived at the same place.

All three of these positions are held by people who love Jesus, trust Scripture, and sincerely want to obey what it says. Some of you may read these same passages and still land somewhere different than we did. We respect that.

Our hope tonight isn't that everybody leaves agreeing with us. It's that you can see how we got here — and trust that we got here because we're trying to take Scripture seriously, not trying to get around it.

But that can raise fair questions.

If we're saying context can change how a biblical instruction applies, what keeps us from doing that anytime we don't like what the Bible says?

Aren't we just picking and choosing — deciding which verses we want to follow and which ones we want to explain away, and then finding an interpretation that gets us where we already wanted to go?

These are fair questions, and they're ones we need to be able to answer.



V. THE CONSISTENCY QUESTION

Virtually every church recognizes that some instructions in Scripture are tied to a particular culture or circumstance, while the truth underneath them carries forward.

Take, for example, head coverings.

Paul writes,

"Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head."
(1 Corinthians 11:5, NIV)

Read as a timeless command, Christian women should still be covering their heads to pray today. Most churches don't require that — including most complementarian churches — because we recognize head coverings carried meaning in Paul's world that they don't carry in ours.

**We distinguish the cultural expression from the principle underneath it.
The expression may change. The principle doesn't.**

The same is true just a couple verses past 1 Timothy 2:12, where Paul writes that women *"will be saved through childbearing"* (1 Timothy 2:15). Read alone, that sounds like women are saved by having babies—but nobody believes that, because it would contradict everything Paul teaches elsewhere about salvation by grace through faith.

So we interpret.

That's not explaining away the Bible.

That's interpreting the Bible, and all of us do it, constantly.

The real question isn't whether we're going to interpret some passages in light of their culture and context — of course we are. The real question is whether we're doing it faithfully and consistently, or only when it gives us the answer we want.

That's why these are the primary questions we kept coming back to:

- 1. Does this teaching show up consistently across Scripture, or does it appear in a particular situation?**
- 2. Is there something in the culture or the church that helps explain why this instruction was given?**
- 3. And does our interpretation fit the rest of Scripture, or force us to explain away everything else it shows us?**

There's one more kind of consistency worth talking about — not just consistency in how we interpret Scripture, but consistency in how we live it out.

Watch Jesus with the religious leaders of his day.

One of the things he repeatedly warns them about is adding human requirements to what God said: *"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions"* (Mark 7:8), tying up *"heavy, cumbersome loads"* and putting them on other people's shoulders (Matthew 23:4).

We are not comparing people who hold a traditional view of women in ministry to the Pharisees.

But Jesus' warning should make all of us ask an important question:

Are we ever requiring something of people that God himself has not required?



Because if we're going to tell half the church, "*God has placed this boundary around what you can do with the gifts he has given you,*" we ought to be really sure God is the one who drew the boundary.

This question got very practical for us as we took a step back and looked at what we already do at Eastview.

Women teach Scripture to our children — some of the youngest and most impressionable people in our entire church.

Women teach and preach in our student ministries and at camps.

Women teach and preach to our college students and young adults.

Women give communion meditations in our adult services — Christ-centered, Scripture-rooted teaching, from the stage to the whole church.

Women are sent to some of the most spiritually difficult places in the world to share the gospel and make disciples.

Eventually we had to ask:

What exactly makes that different from a sermon?

If a woman can stand on this stage and point us to Jesus over the bread and the cup, what changes if she stands here a little longer and teaches from that same Bible?

Or take our students — if a gifted woman can faithfully teach Scripture to seventeen-year-olds, what changes when they turn eighteen? Scripture never gives us that age. That line came from how we structured our ministries, not from a verse in the Bible.

This isn't as sudden a turn as it may feel, either.

We've had a female preaching intern who preached more than once at our Bloomington campus, and for years we've had versions of this conversation before — about ushers, about communion, about the title "pastor" — and over seventy years those barriers came down one at a time.

This wasn't because Scripture changed, but because we kept asking whether the boundary was God's or ours.

That brought us to one final question:

What makes a sermon a sermon?

Not length — a Bible study or student message can run just as long.

Not content — a communion meditation opens Scripture and points people to Jesus too.

Not the Auditorium stage or a particular hour on Sunday.

Those aren't biblical categories; they're logistical ones.

The line we had drawn was based primarily on *who* was in the room.

And for us, that question takes us right back to 1 Timothy 2:12.

If that verse is a timeless prohibition against women teaching men, the line makes sense. But if Paul is addressing something more specific in Ephesus, we couldn't find another passage that independently creates a category called "*sermon*" and reserves it for men only.

Simply, we could no longer find a clear biblical reason to tell a woman whom God has gifted to preach and teach that she can use that gift there—but not here.



VI. THE 'SLIPPERY SLOPE' QUESTION

Now, before we land the plane, we want to name something directly, because we suspect it's the real question for some of you, even if it hasn't been asked out loud.

Does this decision put us on a slippery slope?

More specifically —

If we change our position on women preaching, does that mean eventually Eastview will change its position on marriage and sexuality too? Is this a first step toward Eastview becoming what is often called an LGBTQ+ affirming church?

Let us be clear about what we mean by that. We're not talking about whether LGBTQ+ people are welcome at Eastview. They most definitely are. We're talking specifically about our theology.

So let us answer it plainly, using the same hermeneutic we've used all night. We're asking the same questions: *what pattern do we see across Scripture, is a particular instruction tied to something happening in a particular church or culture, and how does it fit within the entire arc of Scripture?*

With women teaching and leading, we had to account for a significant biblical pattern — Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Priscilla, Phoebe, women praying and prophesying in Paul's churches, and others we've looked at tonight — that made it difficult for us to read 1 Timothy 2 as a universal restriction on every woman, in every church, for all time.

We don't find that same counter-pattern when it comes to marriage and sexuality.

The Torah addresses same-sex sexual relationships more than once (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13). Paul addresses them writing to Rome (Romans 1:26-27), again writing to Corinth (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), and again instructing Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:9-10) — different books, different cities, different circumstances. Rather than one instruction tied to one particular church, we see the same sexual ethic repeated across Scripture.

And we don't find a corresponding positive pattern pointing another direction. Genesis describes a man and woman becoming "*one flesh*" (Genesis 2:24), and when Jesus is asked about marriage, he points back to that same picture: "*male and female, the two will become one flesh*" (Matthew 19:4-5).

So let us give you the direct answer:

No, this decision is not a first step toward Eastview becoming an LGBTQ+ affirming church.

Eastview continues to believe that Scripture reserves sexual intimacy for marriage between a man and a woman. Our Statement of Faith says:

"We believe marriage is defined by Scripture as the union of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive covenant."

That is what we believe Scripture teaches, and tonight's decision does not change that conviction.

And we want to make an important distinction here.
Non-affirming does not mean non-welcoming.

LGBTQ+ people are welcome at Eastview — people we love, people in our families, people already in our church. Every person who walks through our doors should be treated with dignity, compassion, and love.

Holding a theological conviction about marriage and sexuality does not give us permission to treat anyone as less valuable, less worthy of our love, or less welcome among us.



At the same time, welcome doesn't require us to change what we believe Scripture teaches — and because we believe those entrusted with spiritual leadership should live consistently with the sexual ethic we teach as a church, someone living in a same-sex sexual relationship would not serve in a pastoral or preaching role at Eastview.

We know this isn't an abstract conversation for everyone in the room. So if this is personal for you, we hope you hear more than a theological position from a stage. We'd welcome the opportunity to sit with you, listen to you, and have that conversation with the care it deserves.



VII. ELDERSHIP + NEXT STEPS

We've traced the arc of Scripture, wrestled with the hardest passages, and tried to show you not just where we landed, but how we got there. Now let us bring it together. We started tonight promising you honesty. Let us end with the same honesty about where it's led us.

So let us state our conclusion as plainly as we can:

After years of study, prayer, conversation, and honest wrestling with Scripture, the Elders of Eastview believe women can preach and teach at Eastview—in every environment, on both campuses, including Sunday morning worship.

Not because Scripture matters less to us. Because after looking at these passages in their context, alongside the rest of Scripture, this is where we believe faithfulness to Scripture has led us.

But we want to be clear about what tonight does not answer.
Tonight answers: *Can a woman preach and teach at Eastview?* Yes.

It does not answer a related but different question:
Can a woman serve as an Elder at Eastview?

Before we answer that, we want to name a question some of you may already be asking:

If we're not convinced that 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 permanently restrict women from preaching, does that mean we've rejected the idea of male headship altogether?

The honest answer is that we don't all understand or apply headship in exactly the same way.

Some of us hold a more traditional understanding of male headship, in the home and in the church—that God has given men a particular responsibility to lead and serve in those settings, and that this ordering is grounded in creation rather than culture. Others believe Scripture affirms real distinctions between men and women without those distinctions necessarily establishing a hierarchy of male authority in the home or the church.

That difference is part of why we haven't reached unity on the question of women serving as Elders.

Even so, we believe men and women are equally made in the image of God and equally gifted by the Spirit, even as Scripture may call them to different roles in particular relationships and settings.

And there is something else all of us can affirm about authority: Jesus completely reshapes what it looks like.

He said the rulers of the world "*lord it over*" others, and then told his disciples,

"But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant." (Mark 10:43, NLT)

Jesus went on to say,

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45, NLT)

So wherever Scripture gives someone authority or responsibility — in a home, a church, or anywhere else — the model is never domination. The model is Jesus. It's laying down your life, serving, listening, sacrificing, and using whatever authority you've been given to lift others up rather than yourself.

Biblical authority should look less like getting the final say and more like picking up a towel.



But here's something else all of us can say together:
Preaching and Eldership are not the same thing.

Preaching is the exercise of a spiritual gift.
Eldership is an ongoing office of spiritual oversight, shepherding, and governance in the local church.

And some of our Elders who hold a traditional view of male headship also believe Scripture gives women freedom to preach and teach, while understanding the office of Elder to be reserved for men. That's important, because our decision to allow women to preach does not require every one of us to resolve every question about headship in exactly the same way.

That brings us back to the question we have not reached unity on, which is Eldership itself.
We want to give you the honest answer rather than a cleaner one.

The Elders have studied this, prayed over it, and challenged one another—and we have not reached unity.

Some of us believe Scripture allows women to serve as Elders; others believe the qualifications Scripture gives for that office point to it being reserved for men (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Both groups have done the same careful work we've walked you through this evening. We've simply arrived in different places.

So our decision is that Eastview's eldership will continue as it has:
Eastview's Elders will continue to be men.

We also want to add something important to that.

If our Elders are going to continue to be men, we also want to be increasingly intentional about making sure women's voices and perspectives are heard in the decisions our Elders make. That includes seeking the wisdom of women throughout our church and staff—especially when we're making decisions that significantly affect women—as well as listening more intentionally to our Elder wives.

An all-male Elder board should never mean that only male voices are shaping the decisions of our church.

But on the question we came here to answer tonight, we are unified:
Women can preach and teach at Eastview.

We also want to do more than put that decision on paper. We want to build something underneath it. We want to identify women God has gifted and called to preach, equip them, coach them, and give them opportunities to become great preachers, not just occasional ones.

Because a decision like this means very little if we don't create a pathway for women to use the gifts God has given them. We're taking a first step.

We've invited our first female preacher to preach at our Normal campus on Sunday, November 8, 2026. Her name is **Ashlee Eiland**. She lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and their three kids, currently serves as Head of School at Living Stones Academy, has previously served as a pastor, and has preached and taught at churches around the country.

Ashlee will be with us four times over the next year—preaching and helping us develop women here at Eastview who sense that same calling. She is not joining our staff, but we are genuinely excited to welcome her and her family to Eastview over the next year.

We intentionally chose to invite Ashlee first because we know there may be added weight to being the first woman to preach here—and we didn't want one of our own women to carry that weight first.



VIII. LANDING THE PLANE

As we come to a close, we want to give you one more picture of the church we hope we can become.

In 2010, thousands of Christian leaders from around the world gathered in Cape Town, South Africa — different countries, cultures, denominations, and plenty of theological disagreement. Out of that gathering came the Cape Town Commitment, and one line from it has stayed with us throughout this process:

"We lament the divisiveness of our churches and organizations, because a divided Church has no message for a divided world."

They didn't pretend their differences weren't real.
But they refused to let every disagreement become a reason to divide.
That's the posture we want here.

We know some of you are going to leave tonight disagreeing with us.
We see you. We respect you. And there is still a seat at this table for you.

We're not asking you to pretend to agree with us tonight — we're asking you to trust that we've taken Scripture seriously, done this work prayerfully and carefully, and that even when we disagree, we can keep following Jesus together.

We know some of you are going to have questions even after tonight. We've covered a lot, and you may walk out thinking, *"I wish they'd said more about this."*
If that's you, we want to hear from you — you can email the Elders at eastviewelders@eastview.church.

Additionally, **our Elder team will be available for prayer and conversation the next two Sunday mornings—October 4th and 11th—from 10:30–11:30am in Room 1404.** These conversations are not an opportunity to reopen the decision. Rather, we want to hear how you're processing this, listen to your questions and concerns, and pray into this together.

As we land the plane, we want to say one more thing clearly:
We are not merely at peace with this decision. We are genuinely excited about it.

We're excited for the women in these seats whom God has gifted and called.
We're excited for our daughters and granddaughters.
We're excited about voices we haven't heard yet, and gifts we haven't developed yet.
And we're excited to see how God will use those voices to help more people find hope and healing in Jesus!

At the beginning of tonight, we told you our Elders tested this decision against three things:
Scripture, faithful scholarship across church history, and our vision as a church.

We've spent most of tonight on the first two. So we'll end with the third:
Loving, Life-Giving People Bringing Hope + Healing in Jesus

That's the point—Not women preaching. Not winning an argument.
Jesus—becoming more like him, and helping more people find hope and healing in him.

So whatever you walked in believing tonight, and whatever you're still working through as you walk out — our prayer is that we don't let this question become bigger than the One we're all trying to follow.

"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love."

Eastview, let's go be that kind of loving, life-giving, unified church.

Together.

