

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 9/26/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, September 27 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those in our country and world who are facing challenges as a result of recent hurricanes and storms. Pray also for the work of agencies like Lutheran Disaster Response who work to bring aid and support to those in devastated areas.*

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As I said in my previous article, the Christian Church has been a significant source for the suppression of women. I wrote about the way many Christians have cherry-picked those passages that have supported this reducing of the value of GOD'S female children, and often by misinterpreting scripture. I have heard it said that GOD created "man" first, gave him dominion over all creation, and then created "woman," so GOD'S plan is that men are to be dominant over women as part of creation. This couldn't be further from GOD'S intent. If you refer to your Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, you will know that, after all the rest of creation, GOD created "Adam." That's not a name, though. It is a play on the Hebrew word *adama*, which means "earth," or "dirt," or "soil." So, GOD took some *adama*, mud, and from it formed *adam*, the "mud creature." Since it has been used for centuries as a name, even Bibles mistakenly translate *adam* into a capitalized name. And it is this mud creature that was given responsibility over all of creation. Then, since GOD saw that here was no helpmate or partner for *adam*, GOD took a rib from its side and created *ish* and *isha*, "male" and "female," "man" and "woman." Both genders were created at the same time from the one mud creature over whom was given charge of all the world. Man and woman are equal and partners, not one superior to the other.

Another example is that Mary Magdalene is thought of by many as the prostitute who sat at JESUS' feet and cried over them and wiped them with her hair. This is so not correct. We know from scripture that Mary Magdalene was the one from whom JESUS cast out seven demons. She followed JESUS and was present at many important events, include HIS crucifixion and resurrection. But in 591 AD, Pope Gregory the Great preached a sermon that not only confused Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, but also made her that prostitute who wept over JESUS' feet. And if a pope says it, who's going to argue? But Mary was likely a wealth and noble woman. The fact that she was identified with the name of her hometown, Magdala, indicates that she was respected and of importance. What Pope Gregory did was to change her from Mary of Magdala to Mary of the corner of Third and Main. This, too, has contributed to the lessening of a woman who had a significantly supportive role in the life and ministry of JESUS.

In fact, it is worth noting how much the female disciples of JESUS did that often is overlooked. We know that it was the women who financially support JESUS and the Twelve in their ministry. When the male disciples abandoned JESUS when HE was arrested, the women remained and were present at HIS crucifixion, specifically Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, and Mary, HIS mother. And, of course, it was Mary Magdalene to whom JESUS chose to reveal HIMSELF after the resurrection, and this woman was the first one to announce that HE is risen.

Yet the Church has regularly shown prejudice toward women and pushed them into lesser roles. Even in the Lutheran Church, one of the sources of division has been the desire of some to restrict the gifts and abilities of women. There are more than thirty different Lutheran denominations in the United

States alone. And one point of disagreement is over the ordination of women. I will sometime describe the difference between three of these denominations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) this way with regard to women: If you see a Lutheran car traveling down the road with two couples in it, you can tell which synod they are from by the way the people are arranged. If it is an ELCA car, there will be a man and a woman in the front and either might be driving and a man and a woman in the back. If it is a LCMS car, there will be two men in the front and two women in the back. If it is a WELS car, there will be two men in the front seat and two women behind the car pushing. You see, the ELCA has ordained women as pastors for more than sixty years. The LCMS and WELS still refuses to allow women to serve as pastors, and the WELS will not even allow women to vote in their churches. Sadly, these synods deny and miss out on the inspired leadership and service of women that have enhanced our congregations in so many ways, including in pastoral and council roles. Repeatedly, women have contributed to mission of GOD'S kingdom in our churches, including as leaders and pastors. We must do all that we can to emphasize the equality of all whom GOD has called to serve and support them in these callings.

In CHRIST'S love,  
Pastor Jeffrey