



*From the Office of the Senior Pastor  
Bishop W. James Thomas, II, D. Min.*

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As you have probably already read or heard, the Southern Baptist Convention has voted to “advance a formal ban on women serving in the office or function of a pastor/ elder/ overseer, specifically preaching to the assembled congregation.” Since we (Calvary Baptist Church) fully affirm women serving at all levels of leadership, you may not give this matter much thought, but we should, because it touches on theology and the dignity and calling of women. With that in mind, allow me to make three comments (and yes, I do have much more to say).

First, God calls, gifts, anoints, and uses women in the work of ministry. This is not a concession to culture. This is not an attempt to be trendy, modern, or politically correct. This is a theological conviction rooted in Scripture, confirmed by the witness of the Spirit, and demonstrated through the faithful ministry of women throughout the history of the Church.

The Bible gives us a broad and beautiful witness concerning women whom God used in significant ways. Deborah served as a judge and prophetess in Israel. Huldah spoke the word of the Lord with prophetic authority. Mary Magdalene was among the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Priscilla, alongside Aquila, helped instruct Apollos more accurately in the way of God. Phoebe is commended by Paul as a servant of the church. Junia is described as notable among the apostles. The daughters of Philip prophesied. The women at Pentecost were included in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Peter declared, “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.”

Second, this is not just denominational politics. It is about how the Church discerns calling, how the Church reads Scripture, how the Church treats women, and how the Church recognizes the gifts of the Spirit. It speaks to the broader Christian witness. It speaks to how women understand their place in the Church. It speaks to how young girls imagine their own calling.

Third, women are not problems to be managed; women are gifts to be received. Women are not threats to biblical authority; women are witnesses to God’s authority. Women are not secondary citizens in the Kingdom of God; women are daughters of God, filled with the Spirit of God, called by the Son of God, and sent into the mission of God. So, to all women who preach, teach, or lead, we see you, honor you, and thank God for you. Your leadership matters, your gift is not a mistake, and your ministry is necessary in the Kingdom.

With pastoral love and expectation,

 *W. James Thomas, II*

Bishop W. James Thomas, II, D.Min., Senior Pastor



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