

## 04: Strength Wrapped in Beauty

Quick intro -

Last week, Jessical Mitchell did an amazing job preaching the paint off this place. If you didn't get a chance to hear her last week, I would suggest going back and listening to it. And make sure to listen to the post-sermon podcast we're producing each week. She laid the groundwork for understanding Women.

One of the key things she mentioned was that the first woman to describe women was "Ezer." Sounds attractive, right? That word Ezer is helper and it's not made for home but for the battlefield, and it's the same word used to describe God as one who helps us in the battles... Women, you were created with purpose, a design, and a calling. I love this... Jessica said,

"The woman is created not from Adam's rib—so she wouldn't be beneath him.

Not from his head—so she wouldn't rule over him.

But from his side. "She stands face-to-face, bringing strength that matches and complements man's calling."

I'm telling you, you have to go back! It also got me thinking we need to add one more week to this series. One more week to connect the dots between men and women in dating and marriage. We could even call it The EZER & GEEZER! 😊 - I know that puns are the lowest form of comedy, but it's still funny to me. And yes, we're going to do that. Next week, so please be here for the bonus week of this series.

Today, let's dive into a discussion on Women. Something I clearly know a lot about! Have completely figured out, and never get it wrong. Ha!

No, in reality, I know very little about women, and just about the time I believe I'm getting ahead, I learn I know totally nothing. I didn't grow up around sisters; I didn't play with Barbie and Ken, I didn't dress up, or even watch princess movies. The Lord didn't bless me with any daughters either, which means I didn't get all the emotions and even the cute tenderness that can stir your heart and make you pull out your wallet. I didn't get the paint don ad's nails while he sleeps on the couch, I never had to come to anyone's hair, honestly, I'm not ever sure how you make braids, buns, or put squuncies, bobby pins, or whatever else in hair... news flash, I don't even have hair. I don't know the difference between a tank top, a crop top, or a romper...or what exactly a blouse is. I know I could Google this stuff, but I decided I don't want to... Just like I don't want to watch Hallmark movies, romantic movies, not even rom-coms — except for maybe a Knights tale. I don't listen to Taylor Swift... I do Adel and some other ladies, but not Taylor. I've only lived with two wommen in my life, my Mom and my wife. So you can either blame them or pray for them! I love them both very much.

Let me also say, I don't know what it feels like to be bombarded with messages that make you feel like you're not enough, or that your to much, as Jessica talked about last week. I also don't

know what it means to live in a world that objectifies you, that belittles you, and does not listen to you when you speak out. I don't know what it feels like to be hit with a wave of hormones that bring lots of feelings, because I don't know what it feels like to be a woman. While I don't know those things, I don't believe it precludes me from saying something today.

Because I do know this... the crown jewel of God's creation is a woman. Literally none of us would be in this room without a woman in our lives. You are strong, you are smart, you are beautiful. Women, I want you to know I believe in you, love you, and want to do my best honor you today, but also, the more I prayed about this, I felt called to challenge you just as we did the men. The challenge is simple. **ACT LIKE WOMEN.** That's not derogatory or misogynistic; it's the same challenge we gave to men. To live out your calling and your design in the way that God gave was good.

The first thing I want to make crystal clear is this...

## **WOMEN HAVE A KINGDOM PURPOSE IN THE WORLD**

The apostle Paul wasn't married and had about as much experience with women as I do, and gives this challenge to women in a few places. This one stood out to me.

Listen 1 Timothy 2:9-10 **9 I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.**

This past week I went through the bible and started making a list of the women whose kingdom purpose made a difference, and to be honest, this book is full of them. Here are a few.

- Miriam, the sister of Moses, who helped save his life. And who could forget the midwives in that time that disobeyed the Egyptians' laws to save babies.
- Rahab was a prostitute who helped the spies in Jericho and eventually ensured the walls of that city came down.
- Deborah was a judge who brought peace to the entire nation of Israel.
- Esther was the one who bravely risked her life for her people group.
- Jael killed an enemy soldier with a tent stake to prove a point.
- Ruth lost her entire family, tried changing her name to Miriam or Bitter - but instead of becoming bitter, she got better as she set in motion an event that would bring about a king known as David.
- Anna, the prophet who was one of the first to see Jesus and declare him.
- Or the Samaritans who thought she such a strong past of being married multiple times, be discounted, and yet she was the link that reached Samaritans.
- Mary Magdalen who was the first one to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus
- Lydia was a businesswoman who supported the launch of the first church.
- Priscilla, a missionary who trained leaders.

- Tabith, who was always doing good and helping the poor
- Phoebe delivered and explained Paul's letters to churches.
- Or Mary, the mother of Jesus herself -

What all of them have in common is that they embodied what Paul described when he wrote a strength wrapped in beauty. Women, I believe there is an enemy who brought pain, heartache, confusion, and years of attack against your identity. From day one, he tried to bring confusion to the clarity of God.

Jesus says this.

**He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44b**

I don't know what lies he will try to make you believe, but hear me in this. That's not our purpose today. God made you to be a woman, and that is powerful, strong, beautiful, and life-giving.

I heard one old boy preacher I like, Joby Martin, say one time he was talking to his wife and she said, "I don't believe I'm good enough." and he said back, "No one talks to my wife that way." and she said, "I am your wife" He said, "Exactly, I don't even want you believe a lie, even if speak it over yourselves." Okay. That's the heart with which I come to share this message today.

Ladies - I said I would challenge you. Some of you have forgotten the number one place Jesus called you to be. It wasn't in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant; it wasn't just serving others or believing that the only place to be. No, Jesus has called everyone to be with Jesus.

Remember a couple of sisters, Mary and Martha... I love this interaction.

**38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"**

**41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."**

Here is the takeaway. You do have a purpose you do have a place. And that it's firmly at the feet of Jesus - I believe that can play out in so many way but I need you to hear this. That's

possible, and when you stop believing it you start believing a lie. Our church needs you stand confidently in your identity, be exactly who God designed you to be, right there with Jesus.

## **WOMEN HAVE A KINGDOM PURPOSE IN THE WORLD**

Secondly...

## **WOMEN SHOW WISDOM TO THE WORLD.**

I remember hearing about a woman whose husband was about to die, and he said something pretty selfish. He said, "When I die, I'd like all my money buried with me in the casket." Seems a little ridiculous. But he said it to everyone, to his family, friends, and to his pastor. A few months later, this guy actually dies, and after the funeral, the pastor asked the wife if she actually put all his money in his casket." She said, "I sure did." The pastor said, "Really?" She said, "I wrote him a check and put it in his pocket!" —— "I figured, if he can cash it, he can have it." That is a wise woman.

Hear me out... I believe this is part of the reason why the wisest author in our bible, Solomon, personifies wisdom as a woman.

**Blessed are those who find wisdom,  
those who gain understanding,  
14 for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.  
15 She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.  
16 Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.  
17 Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.  
18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;  
those who hold her fast will be blessed. Proverbs 3:13-18**

Let me tell you, the book of Proverbs describes women as wise.

When Solomon thinks of wisdom, he thinks of a woman. It's not that we can't all naturally access wisdom, or even pray for it. But it's why women more naturally have discernment; they do naturally have an understanding that can be helpful and even wise. That something can be inside of you that needs to be shared, something might be inside that needs to help others understand and find wisdom.

It's literally part of your DNA. There is no surprise to the saying that women live longer than men. It's rather funny to me to see how this plays out in almost every context. What's fascinating to this is that there is a lot of biological research that shows this as well. From the

advantage of having two x x chromosomes that can serve as a backup for their cells. The most fascinating part of that study was that women's brains – again, I'm not an expert on what women think. But science has shown that the brains of women and men are built the same, but do not function the same. Women's brains are designed to send more blood flow to the prefrontal lobe, which is what helps them resist temptations, show empathy, and use social intelligence to make wiser decisions.

Here's my challenge, women. Use the wisdom God gave you for good. It's also throughout this book that women choose to do foolish things like try to find their value in other things, in using their body to get attention, in gossiping about others, or even worrying about things that you know God has for you. It's smothering and quarrelling about things that might not be needed.

When you find yourself running towards those things, you are missing a key part of the way God made you. When you don't pay attention to the wisdom available, you lose sight of God's gift in how you were made. You can even struggle with those who are living it out unnecessarily.

One of the wisest things in the bible is this.

**Proverbs 13:20 Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.**

Ladies here me in this... **Women need other Godly Women.**

When you open up your life with others, when you decide I'm going to be known, and go deeper into a relationship, and even ask for help to grow spiritually, you are making a wise decision to act like a woman. To let those women who are ahead of you or beside you or maybe even behind you grow their faith. Find a small group of ladies or the ladies in your small group. Take some coffee and ask them questions, or just pray with someone.

Young ladies in the room. I need you to hear this: our church loves that you're here! You inspire us, and I've seen the way you want to learn, you want to grow, and the way you want to serve. I've heard stories from your leaders of how you are the first to sign up for something or show up for someone else. I want to say this... One of the best things you can do is ask women ahead of you to help you. It's encouraging to those helping. It's also going to set you up for long-term success...

I'm not done. We could talk about this for a while. But I want to dive into one more point.

## **WOMEN BRING LIFE INTO THE WORLD PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY**

So let's go back to creation. Let's go back to the very first woman, whose name was Eve. I still think that's a beautiful name for a girl, by the way. But it comes by way of Adam after living with the women for a bit... Adam, who was pretty good at naming things, gave one for his bride.

## **Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. Gen 3:20**

Meaning from this point forward, the legacy of every single person on earth will start with Eve. Meaning she will be the only one capable of giving birth to another human being. Eve = “Chavvah” (חַוְוָה) means - life/ living one/life-giver - this is important because there is a part of that inside every woman. Women, you bring life into this world physically. Something every one of us in this room have benefited from. We were all born of a mother. Even Jesus was not someone who just came into this world; he was born into this world through his mother. Women are given the unique gift of being the only ones to give birth to other little humans. Even today, with the advancement of all modern science, biologically, women are the only ones capable of giving birth. I’m going to be honest with you, after being there for all three of my kids’ births, I thank God for this, because when I was standing in the hallway, almost passed out while she was giving birth, I knew I was not designed for this. Yet again, I am so grateful for my wife, who brought life into our family. I’m grateful for my mom, who gave me life.

Here me in this. Just because women bring life into this world doesn’t necessarily make you a woman. There are great stories of women like Miriam, Mary Magdalene, Anna the Prophetess, and even Ester who did amazing things, but we have no record of them having a baby.

One of the hardest aspects of this is that not everyone will be blessed to have kids because of infertility; sometimes, miscarriages happen, or even after trying everything, praying deeply, and believing in faith, it doesn’t happen. It’s painful, it’s hard, and I want you to hear this, it’s even frustrating when you see others who don’t care about having babies, or making choices to terminate their pregnancy all the while you’re praying to just have one. It hurts deeply, and I don’t want to pretend to understand the why. I also don’t want you to believe the lie that you’re unseen. We see you, we love you, and we are with you, and we are praying for you and want to desperately come alongside you. We don’t always get it right or know what to say, and I’m sorry. You should never feel alone or unseen in this church because you’re not unseen by our God. I don’t pretend to understand why. I don’t, and that’s hard. But I do choose to believe and still trust even when it’s hard.

## **WOMEN BRING LIFE INTO THE WORLD PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY**

You don’t have to be a physical mom to bring life into this world. Women are more naturally gifted to bring spiritual life to people. To bring life to God’s vision for an area, to bring life to others growing up in the faith, and it’s the spiritual moms, grandmas, and even sisters that start to shape the faith of others.

When the Apostle Paul was thinking about a young man named Timothy’s faith, he said.

**I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5**

Meaning, it was a lineage of faith that came from a couple of ladies in his life named Lois and Eunice... We don't know much about this besides the fact that they believed deeply in God, and that gave life to Timothy's faith, which would eventually lead the church.

Women bring life into the world spiritually... and I could go back even further to Jesus's words.

Maybe you miss this, but at one point, Jesus says something that might get most sons slapped in the mouth, but what Jesus was trying to say proved a point. Spiritual Family exists. So when they asked him about his mother and brothers, he said it was those who put his words into practice (Luke 19:21). Meaning, there is a spiritual family. One where Spiritual mothers and grandmothers even exist to help people grow their faith. Where they pour into others, they pray for others, and they nurture their faith, and they try to do that for others.

When Jesus was doing ministry on a shoestring budget that had almost nothing in it, it was a group of ladies who decided to bring life to this ministry by supporting it financially. Meaning they used their gift. You want to know who Jesus says are like Spiritual Mothers, Sisters, or Grandmothers... this list was the first one mentioned in Luke 8

**After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. Luke 8:1-3**

Don't miss this. Jesus believed deeply in the women who came along side him, and they believed deeply in him. They supported his ministry and made it possible for him and others to find new life.

I can tell you that in the church I started attending as a kid, I started going to church with my brother and I all by ourselves. My mom watches online now, but that's not how it started. When I got to that church, it was a few sweet older ladies who decided to bring life into my world spiritually. They would greet me at the door no matter what, with a smile and tell me how glad that I was there, they would learn my name and say weird stuff to me like, I'm praying for you every week by name, Dave. Which I didn't know what that meant. They would encourage me when I looked down, and when something came up, these little ladies would do something to help. I remember I was getting ready to go on a huge mission trip, 5 months to Mexico, and I was already paying for my own college, and had no money at all. They said, listen - we're going to cook up some beans and raise the money to get you to Mexico. They literally baked up the largest batch of pork and bean soup I had ever seen, invited every single person they knew, and raised a couple of thousand dollars. None of them was a relative of mine, but all of them were spiritual mothers and sisters in Christ who gave life to my ministry. And maybe give gas to the whole town.

**WOMEN HAVE A KINGDOM PURPOSE IN THE WORLD**  
**WOMEN SHOW WISDOM TO THE WORLD.**  
**WOMEN BRING LIFE INTO THE WORLD PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY**

Today, as we're finishing up, I got a few people who said, I'm not sure, but are you planning to call the women up to the front of the stage. Like we did the men. And I said, NO. I'm not going to call them up, I'm going to call them out. What does that mean? It means that when I see women in this church standing in a circle around this room, bring strength to this place. I see them living out that Kingdom Purpose, Showing Wisdom, and bringing this place to life. So, Women Here is what I'd like to ask you to do... I want to ask that you gather in a circle around this room.

**Reflection Question:**

**What step of courage is God asking you to take—using your influence, gifting, or voice—in your family, church, or calling?**