**14291, Ruth Davis – Women’s Tea**

Good Afternoon Ladies,

It is such a pleasure to be here today and share my thoughts with you, although I was a little surprised when they asked me to speak. Let me say that all you look very lovely in your spring finery. It’s not often that we dress up this much in today’s world but I enjoy the opportunity when it arises. Don’t you?

Today I want to share with you what I think it means for Women to teach girls to become ladies. It doesn’t just happen you know. Young girls don’t just one day get up out of bed and they are suddenly ladies and no longer little tom boys. It’s a process that takes time and effort on the part of the women and the girls. In Titus 2:3-5 the Bible teaches that the older women are to teach the younger women how to grow into Godly women. It is our responsibility and also our joy to pass along the lessons from the Bible and the lessons we have learned from life to the next generation.

Sometimes these lessons will be passed on by a mother to her child. Sometimes they may be passed on by an older woman to a younger woman who is not her child by birth but her child through the spirit. We all have children like that. We didn’t give birth to them physically but God placed them in our lives or them in our lives so that we could pour into them and help them to grow into the person God created them to be.

Allow me to share a little about myself with you. I am 71 years young so I guess you would consider me one of the older women, at least in years. I have been the Choir director for over 20 years. I retired from my day job after 40 years of employment for a non-profit organization (2010) and decided to go back to school. I just finished my degree work at the Masters College and graduated on May 8th this year. So, I guess I’m not quite ready to pick out my rocking chair just yet. I sincerely hope you’re not either.

One of the most well-known passages of scripture regarding women is Proverbs 31:10-31. The woman described is even known as the Proverbs 31 woman. This woman was not an actual, historical woman. But, according to scripture, this was the instruction given to the king by his mother for the traits he should look for in a wife. The perfect wife if you will. That reputation alone has frightened many a woman away from even trying to emulate her behavior. There was even a book published many years ago titled, “Help, I’m Intimidated by the Proverbs 31 Woman”. But, God didn’t include this in scripture to intimidate us. He included it so that mothers and daughters, whether physical or spiritual, can see the importance of becoming a virtuous woman, living by these principles and passing those principles along to the generations that come after us.

Now, we have all heard the jokes about how mothers and daughters don’t get along. There have long been the stories of the generation gap and how the older generation doesn’t understand the younger generation. We may have even experienced some of that in our own lives. What kind of relationship do you have with your mothers, if she is still with you, or did you have if she has already passed on to Heaven? Was it a good relationship, a happy one, or was it strained and difficult? Did you love to learn at your mother’s knee or did you cringe every time your mother tried to teach you something?

Let’s look at Proverbs and see some of the attributes of this famous woman. It begins by saying her price is far above rubies. If you don’t know it, rubies are among the most valuable of gemstones so this is a high complement indeed. It says she will do her husband good and not evil all her life. She is described as an industrial woman, not the least bit lazy. She looks for wool and works with it with her own hands. She rises before dawn to feed her household. She keeps active so she is strong and healthy. She keeps her candle lit and her lamp filled with oil. But, she does more than just the typical household duties.

Scripture goes on to say that she considers a field, buys it and then plants a vineyard. She is a landowner and a crop grower. She takes raw wool, works it and puts it on the loom and makes her family’s clothing so they are warm in the coldest of winter. Her family wears the finest of clothing made and purchased by her hand. She buys and sells merchandise, not just locally but from far away. She doesn’t just do simple crafts, she is a well-known merchant. She reaches out to the needy. She is filled with wisdom and kindness and treats her servants well.

These are not all the traits but they cover the most important ones. Being a lady is not just dressing well, even though this woman dresses herself and her household very well. Being a lady is about character. This woman is not just complemented for her outward beauty. She is respected in her community for her wisdom and kindness to others. Her husband is respected by the men of the community because of her behavior. Scripture says that her children call her blessed and her husband praises her. Proverbs 31:30, 31 says “Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Our society would have women believe that being a woman, even being a lady is about looking and acting sexy. They tell us that to be respected you have to have power and authority, and that you have to compete with men and overcome them. But, God’s word teaches differently. God teaches us that to be a woman of God is to be a real lady, a lady with class. God’s woman doesn’t have to climb up on a soapbox and declare herself to be stronger, louder and more powerful than a man. It also doesn’t say that to be a woman or a lady is to be the weaker sex, one who is helpless and feeble. The world seems to see only those two extremes.

But, God’s word teaches that we are strong when we follow him. We show true beauty when we seek him first and allow his light to shine from within us. And we exhibit true character when we express his character by speaking wisdom, showing kindness and using all the gifts he has bestowed upon us to glorify him and to help the around us.

Now, think about your relationship with the woman and girls around you. Is there someone special that you seek out for advice or that you offer advice to? What is it about that person that draws you to them? Is it the world’s definition of womanhood or is it the natural draw of the Holy Spirit to the godliness within her?

I know that mother and daughter relationships can be strained. But, I also know that God intended those relationships to be close so that we can learn from one another and so we can pass along the lessons God has taught us to the next generation. I want to encourage the older ladies to learn a little more compassion toward the younger women and learn about their differences. You will find that most of them are not negative or ungodly, they are just different. Younger woman, look beyond the differences between you and the older women and seek out what you have in common. Her attitudes are born of experiences you have yet to see.

I would hope that both the older and younger can see beyond the surface differences and look for common ground so that you can develop those mentoring relationships that will add value to your lives in ways you cannot imagine.

God bless you all and thank you