

Pastoring Patiently

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. 1 Timothy chapter 5.

1 Timothy chapter 5. We're going to look at the whole section that we read. But if we just read again at verse 1. Where Paul writes, Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, all in purity, in all purity.

Honour widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents.

For this is pleasing in the sight of God. And so on. You know, throughout his letters, Paul often describes the church using different images and different illustrations.

One such image and illustration is, as you know, the bride of Christ. Where Paul says that Christ loved his bride and he gave himself for her.

[1 : 26] He redeemed her from sin and he rescued her from slavery. Christ bought and even betrothed himself to his beloved bride to await the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory.

So there's the image and illustration of the bride of Christ. But there's also the image and illustration of the body of Christ, where the church is a body. Christ is the head of his church and we are the body of Christ.

And like a physical body, Paul explains that there are lots of limbs, there are moving members of the body that are all to work together in union and in unison.

Therefore, whether we are, as Paul describes, a foot or a hand or an eye or an ear or a mouth, we are all important. We're all integral to the body of Christ.

But, you know, Paul, he not only describes the church as a bride and a body, he also describes the church as a family. Whereas Christians, as those who are in Christ, we have all received that spirit of adoption.

[2 : 34] We've been adopted and accepted into the family of God. We have been numbered and named as the children of God. And the wonderful thing is, even as we gather on a midweek meeting, we can bring all our baggage and all our burdens, all our prayers and all our petitions, and we can bring it all to our Father which art in heaven.

And we can cry, as Paul encourages us, to cry, Abba, Father. Now, it's no wonder John the Apostle said, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, we should be called the children of God.

But as you know, it was John the Reformer, John Calvin. He said that God is our Father, the church is our mother, Jesus Christ is our elder brother, and everyone who is united to Jesus Christ by faith, they are our brother and our sister.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ. The church is a family. And that's what Paul is reminding Timothy in these concluding chapters of his letter.

He's reminding Timothy that the church is a family, a family which needs to love one another, and a family that needs to look after one another.

[3 : 56] We need to show care and concern and compassion towards one another, like a family. And in this opening section of chapter 5, Paul highlights and homes in on two areas of the church family.

He talks, first of all, about real wisdom. And then he talks, secondly, about real widows. So there are two headings this evening, real wisdom and real widows.

Real wisdom and real widows. So first of all, he speaks about real wisdom. Look at verse 1. Paul says, Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father.

Younger men as brothers. Older women as mothers. Younger women as sisters. All in purity. Or in all purity.

As you know from our study in this letter, Paul wrote this personal and pastoral letter to guide Timothy through some of the pastoral problems that he was facing.

[5 : 01] And we've witnessed some of the many pastoral problems he was facing. Timothy, you'll remember, he was a young minister. He was actually about my age. He was about 35. And he was preaching and pastoring a congregation in the seaport city of Ephesus.

But when Paul wrote this personal and pastoral letter, we can see that he addressed Timothy, or he addressed all these problems using, well, I've described them as five Ps, because that's how my mind works.

There was problems in the church. There was the importance of prayer, positions of leadership, passion for truth, and pastoring patiently. So the five Ps were problems, prayer, positions, passion, and pastoring.

The problems in the church, as we saw from chapter 1, they were caused by false teaching, where the elders were infecting and influencing the Christians in Ephesus.

In fact, there were so many problems, as we said before, that Timothy, he wanted to throw in the towel and just walk away altogether. But Paul, as a father figure in Timothy's life, he exhorted and he encouraged Timothy to stay there, to stand firm, and to just stay focused.

[6 : 18] And with the problems in the church, Paul emphasized to Timothy the importance of prayer, to pray through all the problems in the church. And not only to pray for one another, but to pray for those in authority, pray for those in positions of leadership, especially because Ephesus, or the Ephesian church, it was being run and overrun by these erroneous elders and disobedient deacons.

As we said before, they were soft on sin, they were loose on the law, and they were just glossing over the gospel. But then when we came to chapters 3 and 4, Paul focuses upon the third and fourth P's, positions of leadership and passion for truth.

Paul knew that Timothy's pastoral problems were positional problems. These erroneous elders and disobedient deacons, they were in positions of leadership within this New Testament church, which is why Paul explains and exhorts Timothy to make sure that he has effective elders and make sure that he has devoted deacons in positions of leadership within the church.

And Paul tells him that you're to have these positions of leadership so that it will encourage and enable the congregation as a whole to be mission-minded members.

And then in chapter 4, we saw that Paul emphasized, and he exhorted Timothy to have this passion for truth, to directly deal with these erroneous elders and the disobedient deacons by criticizing and condemning all their demonic doctrine and their demonic deception.

[7 : 59] And as Paul emphasized, he said, if you don't do it, if you don't deal with these problems, it'll only get worse. Satan will subtly and silently get a foothold, and eventually he will open the floodgates.

But now having addressed the problems in the church, the importance of prayer, the positions of leadership, the need for passion for truth, we come to these concluding chapters, chapters 5 and 6.

And Paul is now encouraging Timothy with the fifth and final P, pastor people patiently. Pastor people patiently.

And in these concluding chapters, Paul encourages Timothy to pastor widows and the wealthy, pastor the elders, and also employers.

And we'll see that in the coming weeks. But in these opening verses, verses 1 and 2, Paul says to Timothy, do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

[9 : 11] In other words, Paul says, always remember that you're a family. Always remember that as a church, you are a family. You're the family of God.

You're not just singing saints, as it were, or friends that gather in fellowship. You're not just acquaintances that attend church. No, no.

You're a family. You're a church family. So remember, Timothy, that you're in a church family. And remember that, well, as we all know, a family is open and honest.

A family within our own family home, we seek to spend time with one another. We love one another. We look after one another. And Paul says, that's what it should be like in church too, in the church

family.

You're to be open and honest. You're to spend time with one another. You're to love one another and look after one another. Because as Jesus taught us, the greatest witness of our church family is that we love one another.

[10 : 15] That's what Jesus said to his disciples in the upper room. Love one another as I have loved you. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

As someone once said, love is the backbone of a church family. Love is the backbone of a church family.

Therefore, we must love one another. And as John reminds us in his letter, we know that we've passed from death to life when we love the brethren.

We love our brothers and sisters in Christ. Because as a church family, whether we're dealing with sin or sickness or suffering or sorrow, we are to declare, we're to demonstrate, we're to display love towards one another.

And that's why Paul reminds and reaffirms to young Timothy in these opening verses. He says, do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father.

[11 : 23] Encourage younger men as brothers. Encourage older women as mothers. Encourage younger women as sisters in all purity.

In other words, Paul was saying to Timothy, don't shirk or shy away from this role and responsibility. No, as the minister, Timothy, you're to pastor people patiently.

You're to pastor people patiently. And, you know, Timothy, he was going to have these challenging and sometimes complex conversations with members in his congregation.

But as Paul emphasizes and explains to Timothy, he was to deal with all these issues lovingly. Do it all in love.

He wasn't to rebuke and reproach people publicly. He wasn't to ridicule and reject people in a harsh way. He wasn't to be arrogant or aggressive. He wasn't to be hard or even hard-hearted.

[12 : 24] No, Timothy was to pastor people patiently and even peacefully. He was to address and admonish the members in the congregation with care and compassion and concern.

And as Paul says, Timothy was to respectfully recognize their age. He was to respectfully recognize their age because if they were from an older generation, well, he's only 35, so if they were from an older generation, he was to exhort them as fathers and mothers.

If they were from his own generation, he was to exhort them as brothers and sisters in Christ. But you know, I love the word Paul uses here to describe how Timothy was to pastor people patiently.

The word encourage or sometimes it's exhort, the word there that Paul uses in the original language is the word paraclete. Paraclete.

It's the same word that Jesus uses in the Gospels to describe the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as Jesus describes, is the paraclete. He's the comforter.

[13 : 37] He's the helper. He's the one who's called alongside. That's what the word paraclete means. Called alongside. And so as Paul explains to Timothy, he says, when you're dealing with cases of discipleship or even cases of discipline, you ought to come from above them.

You're to come alongside them. You're never to be heavy-handed on top of them. You're to put your arm around them.

You're to lovingly entreat and encourage them as fathers or mothers, brothers or sisters. You're to lovingly address and even admonish them.

You're to pastor people patiently and also peacefully. Which, as you know, that requires real wisdom.

That requires real wisdom. But this real wisdom is not only to be possessed and practiced by the minister in the congregation. It's to be possessed and practiced by all the members in the congregation.

[14 : 47] Because, remember, we're a family. We're a family. We're a church family. So what Paul is saying is that as a church family, we all have the role, we all have the responsibility to pastor people patiently.

We all have the role and responsibility to love one another and to entreat and encourage and address and admonish one another lovingly. We all have the role and responsibility to pastor people patiently, which requires real wisdom.

And as James says in his letter, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives freely. But, you know, when it comes to pastoring people patiently, it needs real wisdom, especially when dealing with real widows, which is what we see secondly.

Real widows. So we need real wisdom when pastoring patiently, but we also need real wisdom when dealing with real widows.

So real widows. Look at verse 3. Paul says, Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

[16:17] She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Command these things as well so that they may be without reproach. You know, as a church family, as the family of God, you know, we see the care and the concern and the compassion of our own heavenly Father.

We see that being emphasized not only here but also throughout Scripture. We see it particularly in the book of Deuteronomy, way back in the Old Testament. Because throughout the book of Deuteronomy, you find it fascinating that the Lord repeatedly commands the Israelites to love the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

If you look it up in a concordance, you'll see how many times the Lord says to His people, love the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Love the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

And the reason the Lord gives for this is because the Israelites themselves, as we know in our study of the book of Exodus, they were once slaves and strangers in Egypt.

[17:36] And you know, it was because of Pharaoh's punishment and persecution of the Israelites that many of the families of Israel, they were left fatherless and many of the wives were left as widows.

Therefore, when the Lord redeemed and rescued the Israelites, when the Lord brought them out of Egypt, when He saved them from slavery and freed them from Pharaoh, the Lord commanded His people.

He said to them, don't forget your past. Love the stranger, love the fatherless, and love the widow. Love the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

And you know, we see the love of God for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. We see that declared in one particular book of the Bible. We see it displayed and declared in the love of Boaz in the book of Ruth.

I love the book of Ruth. It's a wonderful book. And you'll remember that it was that Ruth herself was a stranger. She was a stranger in the promised land because she was from the land of Moab.

[18:42] She was outside the covenant nation of Israel. Ruth was also fatherless in the promised land because she had no family in the promised land. She had a mother-in-law, Naomi, but that's all she had.

And together, Ruth and Naomi were introduced to them in the book of Ruth as widows. They had been brokenhearted and bereft of their Israelite husbands.

But as you know, the book of Ruth, that short book in the Bible, the book of Ruth is a love story between Ruth and Boaz. Boaz is her kinsman, redeemer.

And of course, the redeeming love of Boaz, it's a picture, it's a proclamation of the redeeming love of the Lord for his own people and of how the Lord loves his people and how the Lord looks after his people and how the Lord loves also like he loved Ruth.

He loves the stranger and the fatherless and the widow. He loves the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. But you know, the love of the Lord for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow.

[19:50] It was also declared and we see it in the book of Ruth. It's displayed in the way in which the Lord's people tithed. They tithed a percentage of their crop for those who had no income.

And that's what we see. That's how the story unfolds in the book of Ruth. Boaz leaves a percentage of his crop in the field so that the poverty-stricken stranger, the fatherless and the widow can come and glean in the field for food.

Because as you know, well, the stranger had no property. The fatherless and the widow had no one to provide for them. They had no breadwinner. And you know, this provision for the poor that we see in the Old Testament, we see it continued into the New Testament church where the church family of God were told that they would tithe their resources in order to help those who were less

fortunate financially.

They would help the stranger and the fatherless and the widow. In fact, deacons were first appointed in the early church to provide support and sustenance to widows.

We see that in Acts chapter 6 where seven deacons, they were appointed to help with the daily distribution of food for the widows. And this daily distribution of food, it was long before state benefits were ever introduced or even long before the support of food banks were ever about.

[21 : 20] But because of the Lord's love for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, the early church always saw it as their role and their responsibility to help those who were struggling.

But more than that, when you look at the New Testament church, the early church, they not only saw the value of looking after the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, they also saw the importance of visiting the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

James tells us in his New Testament letter, he says that proper and pure Christianity is to visit the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Proper and pure Christianity is to visit the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. And you know, as the church living in the 21st century, we can learn, as we know, we can learn lots of lessons from the church family living in the 1st century.

Because the church family living in the 1st century, they not only valued the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow living in their community, they also visited them. And you know, that's something we need to redress.

[22 : 33] That's something we need to rectify in our church family. Not just because of COVID, but in general. Because there are so many people in our congregation and in our community whom we've probably not seen.

Some probably feel that they're neglected. Some of them, we know, they're anxious or aged. Some of them are ill and infirm. Some of them are housebound or hospitalized or in care homes.

And the minister can't be expected to visit all of them. That's why we are a family. We have elders, we have deacons, we have members. We are all a family.

We're to bear the burden together. That's why we're a church family that should love one another and look out for one another. As a family, we are to pastor people patiently and peacefully.

But you know, here, Paul isn't just talking about valuing or visiting the widows in the congregation and the community at Ephesus. That was a given. Instead, Paul is teaching Timothy about providing pastoral and practical care for widows.

[23 : 51] But Paul, he realizes with his real wisdom, he needs to differentiate and deal with real widows. He needs to differentiate between what is a real widow and, as he'll explain, not a real widow.

Of course, you could say that, well, every widow is a real widow. They're broken-hearted. They're bereft of their husband due to illness, old age, war, or tragedy.

But for Paul, it's a very interesting take on it. He says, a real widow was someone who had no financial support or security.

Nowadays, as you know, many widows, they have pensions or they have savings or they have state benefits. But back then, as you know, when your husband died, a widow had no support. She had no security. She had no one to rely upon for help. Therefore, a real widow was someone who needed the pastoral care and the practical care of the church because they didn't have children.

[24 : 57] They didn't have grandchildren who they could rely upon for support and security. But if, verse 8, as it says there, if their own children and grandchildren were told, if they refused to help a helpless widow in their own household, they're not only denying the faith they profess, Paul says they are worse than an unbeliever.

They're acting like an infidel. that their behavior, he says, is evil. But you know, the importance of showing care and concern and compassion towards widows, it's not only explained and even emphasized in Scripture, it's also exemplified by our Savior.

You remember that when Jesus was crucified on the cross, and as Jesus hung upon the cross, one thing that Jesus did hanging upon the cross was arrange for John, the apostle, to care for his widowed mother.

The love of Jesus that he cared for his mother, his widowed mother, whilst hanging on the cross.

We read in John 19, when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby,

he said to his mother, woman, behold, your son.

Then he said to the disciple, behold, your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. The love of Jesus for his widowed mother.

[26 : 32] And you know, in his commentary, John MacArthur, he reminds us that Jesus is the supreme example, the supreme example for the church. He's the head, we are the body.

He's the supreme example for the church for showing care, compassion, and concern towards widows. And he writes in his commentary, he says, Jesus spoke from the cross to only two individuals.

He forgave the dying thief and arranged for the care of his widowed mother. Nothing so clearly reveals the heart of God as that.

While bearing the sin, while bearing the burden of this world's sins, Jesus' mind was concerned with the salvation of one sinner and the care of one widow.

That's the love that we are to show towards one another. We're to love one another and look out for one another. We're to bear one another's burdens just as Jesus did.

[27 : 35] Jesus is our example. But you know, the thrust of Paul's teaching here is that real widows are wise widows and not worldly widows.

Real widows are wise widows and not worldly widows. Paul's care, concern, and compassion for widows is that they'll be godly widows and not gossiping widows.

As a godly, he says that a godly widow is in verse 5, she who is truly a widow left all alone has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

So a godly widow is someone who prays. She spends her time in prayer. And you know, just from experience, I suppose, visiting elderly widows who are Christians, they always think, well, why has the Lord left me here?

Why am I still here? And I remember visiting Dole Hobby the other day, that's what he said to me.

Why has the Lord left me here? And I said, do you pray?

[28 : 50] Oh yes, I pray. I said, that's why the Lord has left you here. You're to pray. And it's a wonderful reminder that what Paul is saying, a godly widow is someone who sets their hope on God and continues in supplication and prayers night and day.

But a gossipy widow, a gossiping widow, he says in verse 13, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house. And not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies saying what they should not.

And as you can see, the contrast is stark. It's a stark contrast because a godly widow will set her hope on the Lord and spend her time in prayer. But a gossiping widow will not only be a galloping gossip, she will also become a nuisance with her neighbors and a busybody in everybody else's business.

But as Paul reminds Timothy, he says to Timothy, pastor people patiently and peacefully. It's the role and responsibility of the church to show care and concern and compassion towards all the family of God.

We're to love one another. We're to bear one another's burdens. We're to pastor people patiently with pastoral and practical care. We're to pastor people patiently and also peacefully.

[30 : 27] And God willing, next week, we'll consider the next section of this practical and pastoral care within the church family. So, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. our heavenly Father, we give thanks to Thee that we are able to address Thee as our Father and to know that we are Thy children, that we are children of God and that we can echo the apostle and say, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

It is a wonder that sinners such as we are, those who were once strangers to grace and to God. And yet now we are part of this wonderful family, a family that is not only found in the community of Barvis, but a family that extends beyond our shores to the far corners of this world, that we are all one in Christ, we are united to Him, our King and Head.

and we thank Thee that although we are different nations, tribes, peoples and languages, that one day we will see one another, we will see Jesus face to face, but we will meet with one another in glory and there we shall rejoice at the marriage supper of the Lamb, singing, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

Oh, we bless Thee for the wonder of salvation, but help us in this life and in this world to bear one another's burdens, to love one another as Christ hath loved us, to look after one another, to value one another and to visit one another, that we would do everything to the glory of Thy name and the furtherance of Thy kingdom.

[32 : 21] Lord, teach us, we pray, teach us to be more like Jesus, teach us, Lord, to die to self and to live unto righteousness, teach us to follow after Him, Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, cleanse us then, we pray, go before us, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Well, we're going to sing again, this time in Psalm 146. Psalm 146 in the Scottish Psalter, we're singing from verse 7 down to the verse marked 10.

Psalm 146, it's on page 446, we're singing from verse 7.

Who righteous judgment executes for those oppressed that be, who to the hungry giveth food, God sets the prisoners free, the Lord doth give the blind their sight, the bowed down doth raise, the Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in upright ways, the stranger's shield, the widow's stay, the orphan's help is he, but yet by him the wicked slay turned upside down shall be, the Lord shall reign forevermore, thy God, O Zion, he reigns to all generations, praise to the Lord give ye.

We'll sing these verses of Psalm 146 to God's praise. Psalm 146, who righteous judgment executes, for those oppressed that be, heard, who righteous ev■■ me.

[34 : 20] H■■ and herbicide th■■■ meshescherogy and gin ■■■. terug moon■ ■ wynWhen grandmother women he gives failed, her daily life, areth mid häser sheens or Gosh that vastly Huh say butterflies hendolin it!" He gives trial to me home team and Paul said the LIKE Father for those oppressed that be, that I will ayuden my jsut Yahweh, hands, ■ifall drugs that be, hath got male Curious, and grill the hum13, and Loaderamente care the blind their sight, the blind their sight, the blind their sight, the blind one word humano The fire of heaven doth raise, The horn of dearly rose, Thou walk in the bright ways.

Thou strangers shield, Thou wittows stay, The horn of self-pessing, But yet by him the wicked wind, Turn up, sight, and shall be.

The Lord shall be forever old, Thy God, O Zion, meek, Wings to all generations, Wings to the Lord, meek.