

Day 180, 1 Timothy 5

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of respecting older believers, supporting genuine Christian widows, and maintaining hygiene and health through natural laws.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:1-23

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Family Responsibility"

Description

David Servant preaches on the importance of showing respect to elders, caring for widows, and supporting those who serve in the church. He emphasizes the need for genuine faith and service in determining who should receive support from the church, highlighting the responsibility of families to care for their own. Paul's instructions regarding widows and elders serve as a guide for the church to prioritize assistance based on faith, service, and need, rather than enabling irresponsibility. The sermon also touches on the importance of maintaining good health practices while trusting in God for healing.

Transcript

You don't have to be putting churches in order to benefit from the wisdom in today's reading. It is always wise to treat those who are older than yourself with due respect, even if you have been given some authority over them. Thus it is foolish to "sharply rebuke an older man" (5:1) and wise to treat "older women as mothers" (5:2). And for single men, like Timothy, it is also wise to treat "younger women as sisters, in all purity" (5:2).

Certain widows were supported by the early church, but keep in mind that the large majority of widows in Paul's day would have been just like those in undeveloped countries today, having no income, savings, or life insurance settlements. Most widows in the modern Western world are living like queens in comparison. In any case, Paul lays down some wise rules regarding which widows should and should not be supported by the church's charity. Again, most modern widows in the wealthy Western world do not meet Paul's requirements.

First, and naturally, if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should be supporting her, not the church (5:4). If they don't, they prove their profession of faith in Christ to be bogus, and they are "worse than unbelievers" (5:8).

Second, only genuine Christian widows whose daily lives and continual prayers validate their faith should be supported (5:5).

Third, only widows sixty years and older are to be helped by the church, presumably because those younger are generally strong enough to earn their own living (5:9).

Fourth, only those widows who have lived a consistent Christian life of service to their husbands, children, strangers and saints, "devoting themselves to every good work," should be supported (5:9-10). They have served the church, and so the church should feel obligated to serve them in return.

Fifth, it appears that these widows were required to make a pledge to remain unmarried so that they could continue to serve the church (5:11-12). For this reason, younger widows were not permitted to be added to the list of those supported by the church, as they might "feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ" and "set aside their previous pledge" when they married once again (5:11-12). Paul is also concerned that younger widows who are receiving the church's support will take advantage of it, and rather than being spiritually productive, they will be enabled to waste their time in ungodly activities, which might ultimately lead to their spiritual destruction (5:13-15). If only our government would be so wise as to not enable irresponsibility by its handouts!

So Paul wants younger widows to be motivated to marry and keep busy in their domestic responsibilities. "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." Incidentally, Paul's somber words about young widows who formerly served Christ, but who "turned aside to follow Satan"(5:15), is one more proof that there is no such thing as unconditional eternal security.

The church also supported the elders who served it, and Paul reminds Timothy that those who serve well in preaching and teaching should be proportionately honored (5:17).

Why did Paul instruct Timothy to "use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent ailments" (5:23) rather than instruct him to pray for healing? Notice that Paul first said, "No longer drink water exclusively." Obviously, Timothy was breaking the first rule of all traveling missionaries: "Don't drink the water!" Although people generally acquire an immunity to the bacteria in their local water, outsiders will find that their first drink results in some rather unpleasant symptoms. Wine, however, is clear of the local bacteria, and it also provides a medicinal effect upon a sick stomach.

Divine healing does not nullify the need to practice hygiene and the laws of health. If you are a true servant of Christ and you find yourself sick, it is wise to question if you are violating some natural law. It is scientific fact that most of the diseases that kill Americans, for example, are the direct result of their unhealthy eating habits. They are committing slow suicide. I recommend reading Eat to Live by Dr. Fuhrman in that regard.

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