

Adairly

Title: Care of the Neglected

Text: I Timothy 5:1-16

Would you open your Bible, please, to I Timothy chapter 5. I Timothy chapter 5. The subject this morning is a subject I must honestly say that I have never heard a message on ~~in I Timothy chapter 5~~ this particular scripture. And I have often wondered if anyone had ever preached on this text. I Timothy chapter 5 is dealing with the subject of widows. Maybe you have heard a message from this part of scripture. I trust you have. But, as we have studied through this book of I Timothy, I find that I can not ignore any part. Especially one of the great parts which concerns one of the most neglected groups of people within the church. You know, it takes the love of Christ in a person's heart to care for those who no one else is caring for. Whether it be widows, or the handicap, or the mentally retarded, it takes the love of Christ.

And in our ministry here at ~~First Baptist~~, we must be concerned with all people. Often we limit the work of Christ because we are only concerned with those who are like us, or who are our own age. But, the love of Christ in our hearts must force us to go beyond self. And one of these areas of neglect is widows.

I Timothy chapter 5 beginning with Vs 1. Please follow along in your Bibles.....(READ I Timothy 5:1-16)

Shall we pray

Our Father in heaven, we pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit. We know that the Spirit of God can give us understanding as to the meaning of these verses of scripture. And so we pray that our understanding might not be just head knowledge, but it bring conviction on the part of each of us to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. So that we might more effectively minister in this most neglected area within the church. And we ask this in the name of Jesus....Amen.

The background for understanding what Paul is saying here in I Tim 5 comes from Acts chapter 6. ~~And sometime you should study this passage of scripture.~~ In Acts 6 the problem was concerning the widows in the church. And there developed a dispute between the Hebrew and Greek widows. And the Greeks were murmuring because their widows were being neglected in the daily administration. And so the Apostles appointed Deacons to take care of this problem. Deacons, ones who would serve in the church, were appointed to handle this problem relating to widows. That is the original function and purpose of deacons.

When I was in Youth work I heard over and over again that the most neglected people in the church were the young people. That it was the youth who were being neglected. And I must say that after working for many years in the area of Youth, after spending time as a chaplain working with young men, that it is not my conviction that the most neglected group of people is young people. We have more programs today than we have ever had in the history of the church. We give more attention to young people than we have ever done before.

And while it is true that young people are becoming the largest part of our society. And while it is true that there are more young people living today than there ever has lived in history. And soon, we are told, one-half of the people living in the United States will be under the age of 25. But, I still say that the young people are not being neglected.

Now, I didn't say that they didn't need to be reached with the Gospel. I really believe we need to increase our vision for a ministry with youth. We should do ~~all~~ everything in our power to provide programs, materials, leaders in ministering too and reaching young people for Jesus Christ

Now,

But, my friends, it is my conviction that the most neglected group of people within the church, today, is the elderly. ^{We have program for children, youth - but few program for elderly folks} ~~it is the group who is over 60 years of age as mentioned by Paul in Vs 9.~~ It is those people who are being neglected by the church. Neglected as to their own service to Christ, and neglected as to their personal needs.

So, ~~ask~~ ^{ask}

(5B)

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH? ^{Do} ~~AND IF~~ WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO WIDOWS, ^{Widowhood} WHAT KIND OF WIDOW SHOULD THE CHURCH SUPPORT?

I would ^{Like} ~~like~~ to share with you from these verses ^{Some} ~~three~~ great principles concerning the elderly.... ~~THREE PRINCIPLES~~.....

(1) Number one, our attitude towards the elderly. In Vs 1 we read, "Do not sharply rebuke an older man."

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In the KJ it says, "Do not rebuke an elder." The word "elder" is not referring to the "Pastor" of the church. It is a different word in the Greek than the word that is translated "elder" or "bishop" or "overseer" in I Timothy 3:2.

Here, it simple means "an older person." "Do not sharply rebuke an older man. The word "rebuke" means "do not strike with blows." It carries the idea of bitterness.

And it is a dangerous thing for anyone who is young to have bitterness with a desire to strike with blows the elderly. So many young people are filled with hatred toward their parents. Young people who will do anything to rebell against them. THAT IS A VIOLATION AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD. And if that is in the heart of anyone here today, whether young or old, you need to repent and confess your sin to God. It is never right to rebuke, to have bitterness or to strike with blows and older person. Regardless of their spiritual relationship to Christ. And this is very, very important. " Do not rebuke an older person. But, rather appeal to him as a Father."

The Word "appeal" means "to respect" or "to honor". ^{you are to} Respect... ^{honor...} but never rebuke an older person.

"The younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity." So, here we have the general rule concerning a Christians attitude towards the elderly.

(2C) Now, let's come to the ^{second principle. The} issue of widows in the church. What kind of respect or honor should the church provide for widows? This is the content of Verses 3 thru 16.

(1D) I would like you to notice, ^{in these verses} first of all, ~~that~~ Paul is talking about five(5) kinds of widows. And only one of which is to be supported by the church. So, what are the five(5) kinds of widows?

(1E) Number one, in verse 3 we find the first kind. Vs 3 says, "honor widows who are widows indeed." That is --GENUINE WIDOWS-- ^{then} And down in Vs 5 Paul tells us what a GENUINE WIDOW IS: "Now she who is a widow (that is a genuine widow), and has been left alone." This means that she is all by herself--she is completely alone --she has no family -- she has no one to care for her at all. "She has been left alone, and she has fixed her hope on God." As a constant habit of life she has faith in the Lord.

And "she continues in subications and prayers night and day." In other words, she is a woman who is consistent in her prayer life. Not one who is up one moment and down the next. But, she is consistent ^{in her prayer life}.

So, that is the discription of a Genuine Widow. ^{The kind of widow the church should support.}

(2D) Then, there is a second kind of widow mentioned in this passage. The widow who has a family. Vs 4 says, "But if any widow has children or grandchildren." That is a family. And the church is to react in a different way towards widows who have a family. And I will mention how in just a moment.

(3E) The third kind of widow is found in Vs 6. The widow who is not a christian. Vs 6 says, "She who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? That is talking about a widow who is living in the world. One who is not a christian. And these widows are not to be enrolled by the church. And we will notice that in just a moment.

(4E) Then, there is a fourth kind. Notice verses 9 and 10. "Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old." These are widows who are actually enrolled by the church and supported by the church.

(5E) The final type is found in Vs 11. "But, refuse to put younger widows on the list." That is a person younger than 60 years old.

(3C) Now, what should be the action of the church? ^{Please} Now, remember, we are talking about the duties and responsibilities of people within the church. We looked at PRAYER. Prayer should be number one on the agenda of all members of the church. Then we looked at the responsibilities of women within the church. Third, we looked at the responsibilities of Pastor and Deacons within the church. The last couple of weeks we looked at the tremendous reasons why we need spiritual people within the church.

So, today, we face the question: WHAT SHOULD BE OUR CARE OF WIDOWS?

You say, "I could care less." "It just doesn't bother me." May I say to you that as I read this passage --that was one of the thoughts that came to me. You know, why should I preach on I Tim. 5. After all, if some situation shows itself and the need arises then I will deal with it. But, why preach about it. Why not pass over these verses and go on to something that more people are concerned about?

And then the Lord began to speak to my heart. You know, dear friends, we need to care. We really do...Paul is writing to Timothy, a pastor in the church of Ephesus. And the whole body of Christ is to be concerned about the neglected. Everyone of us must be concerned. We cannot remain indifferent. And if Christ is in our lives and we are in truth being controlled by the Holy Spirit, there will result in us a deep concern for the elderly. A concern that will result in action. James said, "what use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith be real? Faith if it has no works, is dead." Concern for people must be part of our Christian testimony.

There are many groups of people who might need the concern of the church. But, here in our scripture, we have one example. The widows. What should be the action of the church?

(1) Well, first of all, in relation to all widows who are genuine widows, Vs 3., says: honor them. Love them to the point of honor. Honor them.

(2) Then regarding those widows who have families. Notice, Vs 8, “If any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse then an unbeliever.” He has denied the faith. WHY? Because God’s Word teaches that a man will provide for his family. And that involves the care of widows. That involves our responsibilities to the Lord. He is worse than an unbeliever because some people outside of Christ have brains enough to care for their own family. And many of us who are in Christ, we are Christians, use all sort of excuses to ignore our responsibility. So, those who have families are to receive support and care from their families. Vs 16 says: “if any woman, who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.” The church is to help those who are completely without help. Those with families receive support from their families.

(3) Then what about those widows who live for pleasure and who are dead spiritual? What should we do? Definitely the word of God teaches that we shouldn’t support them. We shouldn’t encourage them to live in sin. What Should We do? Simply: it is the message of the Gospel. Win them to Christ. And thus, make them true widows.

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Then, what about the widows who are to be "enrolled" or "put on the list"

They are to be supported by the church. O.K. WHO ARE THEY? They may be some who are here in the church, today. You are a widow and you met all the qualifications of this passage. I AM SAYING AS A CHURCH WE MUST SUPPORT THEM. I AM SAYING THAT IF YOU ARE A WIDOW, A MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH, AND YOU ARE WITHOUT FAMILY AND COMPLETELY ALONE, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT IT. ^{Financial Burden} For this church has a responsibility to you. To minister to you spiritually and to see that your physical needs are taken care off. And by the way, this was the original purpose for the establishment of the Deacons Fellowship Fund. It was established in order to care for the widows within the church.

Then in Vs 9-10 we read the requirements: "Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less then sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works."

And then the good works are listed: "if she has brought up children", that is raising her family in the fear and strength of the Lord. "If she has shown hospitality to strangers." That is, caring for those that we know nothing about. "If she has washed the saint's feet."

Now, dear friends, that is not talking about showing hospitality. Paul just mentioned that idea. It is talking about what happened to the Apostles in the upper room during the last supper. Jesus in an act of humility washed the disciples feet. And in John chapter 13:15 ^{Jesus} says, "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." This is something we don't do in a Baptist church. And I have often wondered why since it is a requirement of scripture. The act of humility on the part of those who believe.

Also, "ff she has assisted those in distress and if she has devoted herself to every good work." These are the requirements for widows who should be put on the list and receive support from the church.

(5D) Now, there is one final group. The young widows. And the Bible says in Vs 11 to refuse them. You might say that that is very hard. What if a woman is 50 years old, not 60. It says to refuse them.

But, what if she doesn't have any children or grandchildren? It says to refuse them. WHY? Why should we refuse them? Paul gives 3 reasons. (1) Number one, because of their youth. He says in Vs 11 "for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? It means the desires of the marriage relationship. IS THAT WRONG?....Well, notice the ^{Key} next phrase....It says "in disregard of Christ." That is, they marry against the will of Christ. They marry an unbeliever. And so Paul is saying to be careful to enlist those who still have the desire and opportunity to marry...WHY?...Because they might marry an unbeliever against the will of God.

And the result of this is found in Vs 12, "thus incurring condemnation." The word is "judgment." It is not talking about eternal condemnation. But the idea of judgment. They will have judgment...WHY?..."Because they have set aside their previous pledge (Literally, ^{their} ~~there~~ first faith). They have set aside their first faith. WHAT WAS THAT?....A ^{pledge} ~~faith~~ that said they would follow Christ. That they would obey Him. That they would serve Him. And if they marry against the will of Christ, they will be sitting aside their first faith. And ^{thus} bring reproach to the name of Christ and to the body of Christ: The church

(2) Secondly, in Vs 13 Paul says that the younger women learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. " So, Paul is saying to be careful about these people.

(3) The third reason is given in Vs 14 "Therefore, I want widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan."

You see, it is the duty of younger widows to marry in the Lord and to develop homes for Jesus Christ.

Now, as we review this passage and we think of these widows and the responsibility of the church to support them, I wonder, what we as a church will do if someone comes up to me or to one of you and says that she meets the qualifications of I Timothy 5? I wonder what we would do? I wonder how many of us care when we see ^{These} ~~these~~ groups that Jesus said to be concerned about? Those who are neglected. Those older woman without families and any means of support. I wonder if we would give extra money in order to help meet their financial needs. We, who have the love of Christ, we should be first to be concerned.

I hope that if you are a widow and you meet the qualification of I Timothy..I hope you will let me know...or, let one of the leaders of this church know.

For I believe this church does care. And I believe we care enough to do what God wants us to do---both spiritually and financially..

Let Us Pray

Our Father in Heaven, we thank you, for this message to our hearts from I Timothy. About a group of people who need the love and understanding of God's people and God's Church. Who need ~~the~~ support and care.

Father, there are so many people we have forgotten about. Forgive us for our indifference..

And Father, we pray, that this church and the members of this church might be know as people who care.

And Father, we pray that you would do a real work in our hearts and bring us to that place of conviction and surrender and commitment. For we ask this in the name of Jesus.....Amen