

THE WORK OF A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST

TEXT: I TIMOTHY 5:1-20

INTRODUCTION:

1. In I Timothy 4:6, the apostle Paul tells Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ."
2. The *Scofield Study Bible* says chapter 4 describes "the walk of a good minister of Jesus Christ," and chapter 5, "the work of a good minister of Jesus Christ."
3. So tonight, we will look at the minister's work.

I. OLDER MEN AND WOMEN (5:1, 2)

1. "Elder" here means an older man, not a pastor (5:1, 2). Correction may be necessary but it must be done with the right spirit (tactfully, respectfully, etc.).
2. Older women are to be treated as mothers -- with the same dignity, love, and respect.
3. Younger women should be treated as sisters "with all purity." We should be careful to avoid even the appearance of evil.

II. WIDOWS (5:3-16)

1. The Bible has much to say about widows. The apostolic church took care of its widows (cf. Acts 6:1 ff).
2. One of the sins of the scribes and Pharisees was the way they mistreated widows. Our Lord said in Matthew 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses..."
3. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
4. "Honour" in I Timothy 5:3 means respect and support. This is where we get our word "honorarium."
5. They must be "widows indeed" (5:3, 5). In other words, genuine widows and genuinely destitute, not pretended, fictitious, or false.
6. God's method is for the widow's children, and her grandchildren, and her nephews and nieces to take care of her (5:4). If the widow had no family then the church was to take care of her needs.
7. The whole welfare system (Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, social security, government housing, etc.) has developed because the churches have failed to do what the Bible teaches.

8. Also, many widows do not belong to good churches. I heard a while back of a widow who died in her apartment and her body was not discovered for several weeks. If she had been an active member of a good church, people would have been looking after her.
9. "A widow indeed" (5:5) is "desolate" (all alone, with no family). She "continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." God answers her prayers and her needs are met.
10. On the other hand, worldly widows who live in pleasure are dead, even while they live (5:6). This refers to the uselessness of a life that is lived for worldly pleasures. They are alive in the flesh, but dead spiritually. What a contrast between verses 5 and 6.
11. "And these things give in charge" (5:7) means, "And these things command..." Timothy was to give these instructions to the church.
12. "Infidel" (5:8) means "unbeliever." The Bible teaches us that one cannot separate faith from conduct. One cannot separate doctrine from behaviour. And a man who fails to provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
13. Even most unbelievers recognize their duty to their family. The Christian, who should know better, and who does not provide for his family is worse than an unbeliever.
14. Our Lord said in Matthew 5:46 and 47, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" God expects more from us.
15. If the widows were under the age of sixty, they could still work and therefore would not need financial support (5:9). "Taken into the number" means, "her name added to the list of widows needing assistance." Apparently the churches were well organized (cf. Acts 6:1).
16. "Having been the wife of one man" (5:9) means not a divorcee. This reinforces the position against divorced pastors and divorced deacons because the same language is used in I Timothy 3:2 and 12.
17. I read something interesting the other day. The *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* says that Jews and heathen "regarded with disfavor second marriages," and in order not to throw a stumbling-block in the way of them, the early Christians had this standard against divorce and remarriage.
18. If the church is supporting some widow, she should be helping out in the church (5:10). The church would not be responsible for

- supporting lazy or selfish widows, who have no interest in serving God.
19. "But the younger widows refuse" (5:11) does not mean young widows could not receive help occasionally. It means they were not to be on the roll of those receiving regular assistance.
 20. "They will marry" (5:11) does not mean it would be wrong for a young widow to remarry (cf. 5:14). Verse 11 refers to a young widow marrying a heathen. Faced with a choice between staying single and marrying an unsaved man, some Christian women choose to disobey God and marry an unsaved man.
 21. Second Corinthians 6:14 says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
 22. When they begin "to wax wanton against Christ" (5:11), they get rebellious and do as they please (cf. 5:6).
 23. "Having damnation" (5:12) means these rebellious widows bring down the judgment of God. "They have cast off their first faith" (5:12) and become backslidden.
 24. They are not wrong for remarrying, because in verse 14 Paul encourages young women to get married and bear children. They are wrong for "waxing wanton against Christ" and marrying unsaved men.
 25. Because they have cast off their first faith, "they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house..." (5:13). In other words, they become gossips -- "tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."
 26. It is not politically correct to say this but the Bible teaches that a woman's place is in the home (5:14). This does not mean a woman should not work outside the home, but it means homemaking should be her first priority. Her career should never come before her family.
 27. When women get their priorities wrong, they give "occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (5:14).
 28. "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (5:15).
 29. The woman's lib movement is Satanic. Yesterday (July 9, 2013), the Texas House of Representatives approved sweeping abortion restrictions, including a ban after 20 weeks of pregnancy and tougher standards for clinics that perform the procedure.
 30. Outside, abortion advocates chanted, "Hail Satan" at pro-life demonstrators, who were singing "Amazing Grace."
 31. "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (5:15).

32. Families should take care of their widows, so that the church can take care of the "widows indeed" (5:16; cf. 5:3, 5). This is a lengthy passage of Scripture, indicating that it is of great importance.

III. ELDERS (5:17-20)

1. The word "elder" is used in different ways in Scripture. In the context of I Timothy 5:1 and 2, "an elder" refers to an older man. In the context of I Timothy 5:17-19, "an elder" refers to a pastor or bishop.
2. "Honour" in verse 17 means more than respect. It means a decent salary (cf. 5:3). This is where we get our word "honorarium."
3. "They who labour in the word and doctrine" (5:17) refers to the preaching and teaching ministry of the pastor. A pastor does a much better job studying the Bible and preaching the Bible when he does not have to worry about supporting his family.
4. This principle goes back to the Old Testament. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 -- "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (I Tim. 5:18).
5. Our Lord said in Luke 10:7, "For the labourer is worthy of his hire." Both Deuteronomy and the Gospel of Luke are "Scripture" (5:18).
6. Deuteronomy 25:4 teaches that the ox which treaded the grain in order to separate the kernel from the chaff should be allowed to eat some of the kernels if he was hungry.
7. Paul also quoted this Scripture in I Corinthians 9:9. His point was the Lord has ordained that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (9:14).
8. Since elders (pastors) occupy the most important position of responsibility in the local church, they are often attacked by the devil. In Revelation 12:10, Satan is referred to as "the accuser of our brethren."
9. Job chapters 1 and 2 shows how the devil operates. The word translated "slanderers" in I Timothy 3:11 is literally "devils."
10. One common method of attack is false accusation. For this reason, the Bible says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Tim. 5:19).
11. This principle should be applied to all church members, but especially to the pastor.
12. Deuteronomy 17:6 says that if a person commits a capital crime, he should not be put to death unless there are two or three witnesses.
13. Deuteronomy 19:15 says, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth

- of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."
14. This is the principle behind church discipline. Our Lord said in Matthew 18:16, "But if he (the offender) will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."
 15. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (II Cor. 13:1).
 16. If the elder is guilty, then he should be rebuked before all, "that others also may fear" (5:20).

CONCLUSION:

I will conclude with an interesting (and apparently true) story, recorded by H.A. Ironside in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles.

Apropos of receiving accusations against an elder without full proof, may I refer to a somewhat amusing incident that I ran across lately. In a certain church bulletin that came to my hand I read the following statement from the pastor of a little church.

He said, "I have learned that a story is being rather widely circulated that on a recent occasion I forbade my wife to attend the services of another church, which were of a highly emotional character, and that when she refused to obey me and attended without my permission, I went to that church and dragged her out by the hair of the head, and beat her so severely that she had to be sent to the hospital. I feel it necessary to make a statement in regard to this story. In the first place, I never forbade my wife to attend any services to which she might wish to go; I have left her at perfect liberty to do as she pleases in matters of this kind. In the second place, I did not drag her by the hair of the head from such a service, nor did I beat her when I brought her home. In the third place, she was not so badly hurt that she had to be sent to a hospital, and she is not in the hospital now. And in the fourth place, as some of you know perhaps, I have never been married; so I have no wife to whom any of these things could apply."