

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Widows and the Church
1 Timothy 5:1-16

Last time...personal exhortation and encouragement for the pastor

1. Be a good minister of Jesus Christ by putting the brethren in remembrance of the Word of God

Remember: **Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**

(Luke 11:28)

2. Till I come...

- give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine
- do not neglect the gift in you
- meditate/think deeply on the Word of God
- give yourself wholly to the things and ways of God
- take care of yourself and to the doctrine
- continue in the Word of God

in doing this you shall both save/protect/preserve yourself and them that hear you

This time...a “widow” problem and the Church

We are in 1 Tim 5

v1-3 Timothy, the young pastor sent by the Holy Spirit to the church at Ephesus (Ch 4:12), is exhorted to be orderly and respectful in all his “Family” relationships, how to Ch 3:15:

1. do not rebuke/upbraid/chastise an elder/older man
(Who are you, you young whippersnapper?!“)
2. but entreat/call near and call alongside
 - elder/older man as a father...with honor and respect
 - Ex 20:12, Cmdmt #5 written by the finger of God in stone
 - Eph 6:2-3
 - younger men as brothers, family, being respectful
 - elder/older women as a mother...with honor and respect
 - younger women as sisters,
 - with all respect and cleanliness of thought, word, and deed
 - (as daughters of the King)
3. honor/value/hold in high regard widows who are truly widows
 - widows...women, who work in/manage the home “provided for” by the husband
 - not widowers...men, who work in the field, shop, etc to “provide for” the family

Is this a sound exhortation to Churches and Church leadership today?

- Are the elderly saints treated with respect and honor, valued for the wisdom they have accumulated with much trial and tribulation over the years of their walk with the Lord?
- Have pastors and youth pastors gotten involved with younger women in lustful, sexual relationships vs spiritual, respectful relationships, standing behind the front line of elder women to teach the young women?
- Is Child pornography, child abuse, and child sex trafficking in the Church too?

And now, since the issue about widows is very real in the church at Ephesus...
one of the reasons Timothy is being sent there to establish God's order...
a detailed discussion about widows in the Church...
and how that applies to us in our culture/nation in 2022

v4 The first line of defense for a widow is – her family

- her children
- her grandchildren (translated “nephews” by KJV translators)

She nurtured, raised, and cared for them in all their time of need and vulnerability,
so now, it is their time to respect her by caring for her in her time of need
It is right and proper in the sight of God for her children and grandchildren to “pay back”,
to return all the love and nurture and care given to them by Mom/Grandma

And where is the very best place for the children and grandchildren to do that?
“at home”...in their home where observation, access, and help are immediate
Perhaps in a casita attached to their home or on their property

I think the heart of God hurts for widows placed into “retirement homes” or
“assisted living facilities” where they are “cared for”

- by strangers vs family
- in a professional environment vs a family environment

Obviously there are medical reasons to consider in many cases and I am not
judging anyone who has placed Mom/Grandma in such a place...
I'm giving heed to doctrine, the Word of God

I was not raised in a Christian family but in a moral, somewhat religious family
My paternal grandmother, widowed when my dad was 6 years old and never
re-married, developed Alzheimer's while I was in high school
My uncle, my father's older brother who lived very nearby her in Southern
California, wanted nothing to do with her;
he was a very crude unbeliever, selfish to the core, quite unlikeable
So my dad, not a believer but a moral man who was VERY different than his
older brother, brought his mother to NC to live with us...dad, mom, 6 kids

They displaced one of us children to give her her own bedroom downstairs
 My parents took care of her as long as they were able...she was a very hard,
 harsh, mean-spirited unbelieving old woman, especially toward my mom
 Then my dad and mom moved her with us to OK, by which time her disease got
 to a point where she no longer recognized anyone, including her own son,
 my dad
 To save his marriage, my dad put Grandma Aggie in what we now call an assisted
 living facility
 He visited her every day, taking one of us kids occasionally
 She died shortly thereafter...alone in her room
 It crushed my dad
 But my mom told all of us kids that if that ever happened to her that we were
 NOT to take her into our homes to care for her...NOT God's way
 It did not happen to her but if it had, God's instruction is different than hers

The Lord sees and thinks differently from the world, so...what is a "widow"?

v5 God's definition of a widow is:

- one of His daughters
 - a Godly woman, a spiritual woman
 - trusts in Him, whose hope is in Him and depends on Him
 vs people or the world for her care/life
 - perseveres without ceasing in communication/relationship with Him
- "indeed"...truly in need, no means of support/provision
- desolate...isolated, alone

God's Family, the Church, is to care for her

v6-7 In God's eyes, a needy widow is NOT a worldly, carnal woman living in pleasure...
 "voluptuous wantonness"

Freed from that man, she is letting her hair down and painting the town red, looking for
 some fun!

Such a woman is not His daughter but is a child of the devil, dead in her sin
 His Family, the Church, is NOT to care for her

Such a lifestyle is not God's will for her life, so Timothy is to speak the Truth in love
 to them, commanding them to repent and get right with God so they be

- unrebukable before Him
- born-again into the Family of God

Now a warning to the believers who have a widow in their family

v8 The family is the 1st Line of Defense for a widow indeed
If the believing family of a “true” widow shirks its responsibility before God to care for her, they have denied the faith...contradicted, refused

- the Word of God as the governing authority of the family
- the heart of God in this precious relationship
- the faith of Christ to do the will of the Father

And the Holy Spirit calls them out as worse than an unbeliever,
for to whom much is given, much is required

The Church in every society is called to be radically different than that society,
including in how to care for the elderly

Which leads us back to God’s definition of a widow to be cared for by the Church

v9-10 Widows to be “enrolled” into the Care Ministry by the Church are:

- 60 years old or older...beyond marrying age since beyond child-bearing years, therefore beyond the care of a husband
- married to one man...lived faithfully in a devoted relationship with a husband vs divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried who knows how many times
- a kind, loving woman with a wonderful reputation in the community who has lived a Godly life serving the Lord and others, as evidenced by one or more of these “good works”:
 - as a mother...the hardest, most demanding, and most important work in a family
 - as a person...given to hospitality
 - as a believer...humbly serving the Family of God
 - as a soft heart...helping the afflicted in their time of need
 - as a daughter of the King...faithfully following and obeying her Lord

v11-13 But the younger widows refuse...does this mean young widows with a heart like Ruth are kicked to the curb?

The Church was

- the witness of Jesus Christ in the town/city
- the ambassador of the King of kings
- the Body of Christ, each part serving the Head and the other parts of the Body
- radically different than the society in which it was planted
 - love
 - life
 - light
 - hope
 - peace
 - joy
 - its care for widows

Death...disease, accidents, crime, wars, etc...made widows of married women of all ages and beliefs

The Church was called to take care of God's own (widows indeed), not the devil's own

Timothy is being instructed to not let the Church become a

- meal ticket
- social club
- "in-person dating site"

for the unbelieving, less than 60 years old widowed women in town who will come to Church posing to be Christians in order to

- be cared for by the Church
- find a husband

"Refuse them fellowship."

"Do not enroll them into the Church's Care Ministry."

They are self-willed, coming with a dishonest and self-serving motive

They are parasites looking for a husband, not for a sincere relationship with Jesus Christ

They want to serve themselves rather than Jesus Christ

They will stir up strife and confusion in the Church

- not working but being sluggards, taking without giving
- meandering thru the fellowship being meddlesome gossips and busybodies

They will disrupt the peace and the unity of the Church

Witness Christ to them, but do not take them in as widows to be cared for based solely on physical/material need

As with all things, spiritual discernment is required

v14-15 Paul's seasoned and mature and inspired advice:

1 Cor 7:7-9 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

The younger widows

- get married...it is a blessed thing to do, ordained by God Himself
- bear children...be fruitful and multiply, as God commanded...
and those kids will keep you busy!
- guide the house...the homemaker, the heart of the family

Notice: Mommy, not Daddy

Stay at home dads with working moms is confusion
husband starts to despise his wife
wife loses respect for her husband
families unravel

“That is old fashioned! That is misogynistic!”

Don't talk to me, talk to the Creator who established order and the roles of men and women

- be very diligent about not giving the devil any opportunity to slander the Lord Jesus Christ and/or His Bride

Because this is happening, “widows” are an existing problem in the Church at Ephesus

v16 Summarizing the Holy Spirit's instruction regarding widows and the Church

- Every believer whose Mom/Grandma is widowed is to take care of, provide for, her in their family
- families are to take care of their own
- the family is the 1st Line of Defense for a widow so that they are not an unnecessary burden on the Church
- the Church is the 2nd Line of Defense for widows, as defined by God
- the Church will take care of those who have only the Family of God
- God will care for all of His widowed daughters one way or another...
in an orderly way

Application

So...is this a big deal, should we concern ourselves with this passage of Scripture?

Does Phoenix and Arizona and USA have a “widow” problem?

Yes!

America is aging

According to the US Census Bureau, 20% of US population will be older than 65 years within the coming decades...1 in 5 person will be “card carrying” old people

That segment of the population is growing faster than the younger-than-18-years-old segment...for the 1st time in history

In addition to the retirement communities of Sun Lakes, Sun City, Anthem, etc:

There are 173 Assisted Living facilities in Phoenix

(not to mention Mesa, Tempe, Scottsdale, Glendale, Peoria)

and over 650 such facilities in AZ

Cost: \$3500, \$3700, \$4000 per month

\$42,000 to \$48,000 per year!

There are about 100 Nursing homes in Phoenix and over 700 in AZ

Cost: avg \$200 per day

This is what is known as a transfer of wealth!

From individuals and families, God’s fundamental building block of an orderly society, to businesses

Why does Phoenix and Arizona and USA have a “widow” problem?

Because we do not follow God’s ways, we follow man’s ways

Our Gov’ts are secular, they are not Christian

The Bible is not the governing document of our Gov’ts

Per the Bible, the national Gov’t is tasked with

- national security and foreign policy
- a fair system of justice
- overseeing a national economy

NOT with caring for the poor (social welfare)

Per the Bible, the welfare of the people was left to...the individuals and families

In the NT, to the Church/Body of Christ, the congregation of the local church in which one was

- involved personally...in-person, not on-line
- invested relationally...taking time and effort like all relationships

Like the rest of God's instruction, the secular Gov't has rejected and despised God's ways

The Ten Commandments is the moral code upon which the Founding Fathers of USA built civil law

Escaping the tyranny of a king who was also the head of the Church, the Founding Fathers implemented a concept known as "the separation of the Church and State."

Meaning: The State could not interfere with the functioning of the Church;
Separation of Church and State does NOT mean the exclusion of God from the State but the prevention of the State from meddling with, interfering against, or controlling the Church and religious expressions

So says the First Amendment – Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the Free Exercise thereof.

"Stay in your lane, bro! The Church is not your lane."

The founding concept of "separation of Church and State" has been utterly corrupted and turned upside down.

Now,

- God is excluded from all things State...which is ever-expanding
- The State is increasingly meddlesome and interfering against the Church

The Great Depression opened wide the door for the Gov't to go where it was not intended to go – caring for the poor and elderly

Public Assistance became the responsibility of the Gov't and not the local Church

- Social Security
- Welfare
- Food stamps/EBT
- Covid relief

Additionally, Gov't Public Assistance was intended to be temporary, until the needy were able to get back on their feet as a productive member of society

But over time it has become a political mainstay and a generational lifestyle, unending hand-outs that have corroded work ethic and human dignity

The secular Gov't taking the Public Assistance role has led to

- taxes that burden individuals, small businesses, large corporations
- a corrupt bureaucracy dominated by a ruling class...that has its own set of rules
- a dependence upon Gov't/man instead of on God the Provider Whose ways are like Him – wise and perfect

As such, the Gov't has undermined and hurt families, communities, and the Church by its overreach of responsibilities

And since the Great Depression, the Gov't has effectively swept aside God's Word

- the removal of the Bible and prayer from schools and Gov't buildings
- legalized "shedding of innocent blood"

Why is there a "widow" issue in USA?

- Abandonment of the Word of God as the Authority for life
- The murder of 60 million+ babies who, by participating in the national economy, could rightly care for Mom/Grandma

God's ways and instruction like in 1 Tim 5:3-16 are despised now in our society, most people walking after their own devices and living according to the imagination of their hearts

The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University [article](#)

Prov 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof
are the ways of death.

Prov 16:25

Jer 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the
counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went
backward, and not forward.

So God said 8 times thru His prophet to a dying nation established upon
the Ten Commandments

Result?

A terrible moral nosedive without a compass
Confusion, madness, calamity

What is the solution?

Hearing and keeping the Word of God, just as Jesus said
Wherein is hope, peace, joy, and encouragement...Good News

What are we to do?

1. Warn the nation/unbeliever of the end of the path upon which they walk
2. Share the Good News of Jesus Christ, inviting individual to make a course correction
before it is too late

1. Warn the nation of the end of the path upon which they walk

v7

The words of God spoken by Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, in particular

- Jer 6:10 The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it
- Jer 6:15a-16 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.
- Jer 6:19 They have not hearkened unto My words, not to My Law, but rejected it
- Jer 7:8 You trust in lying words that cannot profit
- Jer 7:19b Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: *do they* not *provoke* themselves to the confusion of their own faces?
- Jer 7:28 But thou shalt say unto them, This *is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.
- Jer 9:5-6 And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation *is* in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.
- Jer 13:25 You have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood
- Jer 17:13 all that forsake You (Me) shall be ashamed
- Jer 11:4 Obey My voice and do them, according to all which I command you. So shall you be My people and I will be your God.
- Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

2. Share the Good News – there is hope!

Rom 3:10	2 Peter 3:9
Rom 3:23	1 Tim 2:4
Rom 5:1	Ezk 18:33
Rom 6:23	James 4:10
Rom 8:1	<u>Matt 11:28-30</u>
Rom 10:9, 13	

Only the Living God can save in a time of trouble!
Hope can only be found in a right relationship with Jesus Christ
His ways are like Him – perfect!

Church,

Call the nation to repentance – return to the Living God, King of all the earth
And vote, according to the Bible as your governing document
Call the backslider home – your way leads to death, God's way to Life
Call the unbelievers to God – be ye reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, the kingdom of
God is near!
Call the believers to engage – be bold not apathetic

Judd song lyrics “I Know Where I Am Going”

I know where I'm goin'
Don't you wanna come too?
I got my reservations
And I got one for you
The train's leavin' just after dark
There's always room for a lovin' heart

I know where I'm goin'
Don't you wanna come too?
I know my destination
It's a-waiting for me
I got no hesitation
That's where I want to be

Don't you wanna come?
Don't you wanna ride?
Don't you wanna be there by my side?
Hand in hand holding on to
A sweet salvation that is waiting for me and you