

## 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16

False teaching had distracted the local church in Ephesus from its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

So Paul writes to Timothy and the big message of his letter is: "Sort out the church for the sake of the gospel!"

Chapters 1-2: By fighting for the gospel: silencing false teachers, praying for all people, and teaching the church how to display the gospel.

Chapters 3-4: By sorting out the leadership of the church: installing elders (and deacons) and teaching them what it means to be a group of faithful elders.

Now in chapter 5, Paul turns his attention to aspects of life within the local church, and particularly areas that could damage its witness.

### A. Relationship with one another

"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." (v1-2)

#### 1. The way we treat one another matters.

Treating people appropriately (in way we talk, look, touch one another) is one of the ways in which we display the gospel.

Elders are to set an example and teach about how we are to treat one another.

#### 2. The way we treat one another should be like family members.

Older men like fathers – we are respectful; our tone is important; doesn't mean we can't disagree with them or correct them using God's Word but that we do it in a loving manner; can be as hard for a younger man to give correction than it is for an older one to receive it from them.

Younger men as brothers – as equals, even if they don't share the same responsibility or authority.

Older women as mothers – be like loving sons to them.

Younger women as sisters – no flirting allowed, no looking lustfully at them, with purity; protective of them.

#### 3. Application

When the community looks at a local church, does it see a family on display?

The way young and old interact with one another should make the church very different from the world around them.

### B. Relationship with those in need

#### 1. The church is to look after and provide for its members who are truly in need.

"Honour widows who are truly widows." (v3)

Widows (and orphans) were the most vulnerable people in society.

Paul tells Timothy to make sure that the church looks after and provides for them.

Why? For its gospel witness – it will put the God who is concerned for widows on display.

But the church is to be careful that it doesn't waste resources on those who are not really in need.

"If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows." (v4)

## 2. Not everyone is truly in need.

"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." (v4)

"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (v8)

If a widow has children and grandchildren they need to take care of them.

The church is not to offer care when the family should be providing it.

If Christian children and grandchildren don't care for their parents when they are old and needy they are worse than an unbeliever – they haven't truly understood the gospel.

## 3. Not everyone should be provided for.

"But refuse to enrol younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. Besides that, 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. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan." (v11-15)

Don't handle out support too quickly.

Younger widows are not to be provided for two reasons:

They are young enough to work, and providing for them when they should be working can lead to them being idle and getting into trouble.

They are young enough to remarry – and will likely want to. [It seems that in Ephesus that one of the qualification for being a widow in need is that you would not remarry].

## 4. Only look after those who are truly in need.

"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." (v5-7)

"Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work." (v9-10)

The church is to be proactive in caring for vulnerable people.

The list = those who qualify as truly being in need.

Who should be on the list? Over 60 (too old to work/not likely to get married), faithful in marriage and genuine believer who is a member of the local church (hope is in God, serving others, doing good works).

## 5. Application

We need wisdom in knowing the best way to care for those in need in order to make sure that we use the resources we have in the best possible way.